

## Narrative Memo – WI Application – SOCI 303

The purpose of SOCI 303 is to actively engage students in original inquiry meaningful to themselves and their communities. Students learn to write as professional sociologists engaged in a scientific conversation. This course guides students to formulate problems and design research, culminating in a formal research proposal. It teaches students the techniques of professional and scientific writing, guiding them through the expectations and conventions characteristic of these advanced modes of writing.

It is an upper division requirement of the sociology major (prerequisite: SOCI 101). After taking SOCI 303, students may enroll in a companion course, SOCI 485, a capstone course in which students carry out the original research projects they proposed in SOCI 303. Alternatively, students may enroll in SOCI 416 or SOCI 481 to fulfill the capstone experience requirement of the major. SOCI 303 meets the following WI criteria:

1. SOCI 303 is capped at 30 students.
2. SOCI 303 is a requirement of the sociology major.
3. SOCI 303 is a 3-credit course.
4. Significant instructional time is devoted to guiding students through assignments and to teaching writing (see course schedule for details).
5. This application includes copies of assignment guidelines and grading rubrics. These explicitly state learning goals and detail the evaluative criteria of written assignments.
6. Students in SOCI 303 receive instructor feedback on their writing and are required to revise multiple assignments based on feedback (see syllabus for details).
7. Students write a minimum of 3,500 words in this course.

### SOCI 303 - Learning Outcomes

#### *Writing to Communicate*

Students in SOCI 303 develop writing skills that align with the major conventions of formal sociological inquiry. They learn these primarily through composing a sociological research proposal. This course guides students along this path using (1) in-class instruction and assigned readings that detail how to write research proposals (2) assignment guidelines and rubrics that explicate expectations, (3) supplemental examples of research proposals written by previous students in the course, (4) step-by-step scaffolding of assignments, (5) and instructor feedback and peer dialog. SOCI 303 integrates ‘writing to communicate’ by enhancing students’ capacity to meaningfully engage in scholarly conversations. These elements of the course culminate in a final paper that demonstrates the student’s ability to engage in scholarly inquiry and wield appropriate writing conventions. The concrete modes of assessing these learning outcomes are contained in the rubrics provided in this application.

#### *Writing to Learn*

Students in SOCI 303 (1) compose a literature review, (2) situate original research question within relevant secondary sources, and (3) engage the iterative process of feedback and revision. The literature review synthesizes and evaluates theoretical frames and research findings.

Students identify key debates and perspectives in their field of interest and connect these to an independent project of scientific inquiry. They contextualize secondary sources in relation to one another and use them to situate an original research question/problem. Students in SOCI 303 ‘write to learn,’ as this process enables them to gain a deeper awareness of empirical findings and intellectual currents in sociological research. *See the attached course schedule and assignment guidelines for more details on how these are achieved within SOCI 303.*

### *Writing as a Process*

Central to SOCI 303 is an engagement with ‘writing as a process.’ The course scaffolds multiple assignments with instructor feedback and peer-to-peer discussion, building towards a final research proposal. At multiple stages, students draft ideas, refine and revise their written work, and re-organize writing for clarity. Perhaps most importantly, they regularly participate in a dialog with peers and the instructor regarding how to best incorporate feedback to improve writing (see course schedule). Incorporating these contexts into the fabric of the course encourages students to see writing as an ongoing conversation that includes drafting ideas, reading the work of others, reflecting on feedback, and re-writing.