

SOC 776/978

WRITING SOCIOLOGY

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Room 3.59

Consultation Hours:

Tuesdays 14.00-15.00

or by appointment

Book/Article Review

- **Book/Article Review** – min. 600 words; max. 1000 words
- **Final Version** – due April 18 by 12 pm.
- **BRING LAPTOP TO CLASS**

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE BOOK REVIEWS

- Generally, need less description and more analysis/evaluation
- Are you reading them aloud?
- Eliminating wordiness – remember Becker and making sure each word is doing a job. Please cut at least 75-100 words from what you think is your final version. I'll be specifically looking for that.

The word “interesting”

Don't use it. Use a thesaurus and say what you really mean:

- engaging
- appealing
- compelling
- provocative
- pleasurable
- stimulating

TQS shorthand:

- I am working on the TOPIC of...
- ...because I want to find out how or why... (QUESTION)
- ...so that I can help others understand how or why.... (Significance/SO WHAT)

- Two types of research questions – **practical** (what we should do) and **conceptual** (what should we think?)
- Think of your **argument** as the container for answers to readers' questions.

CLAIM + REASONS + EVIDENCE

- **DON'T FORGET ALTERNATIVE ARGUMENTS & COUNTERFACTUALS!**
- But what about this other view? Give **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & RESPONSE.**
- **WARRANT** – mosquito example.

Use the parts of an argument to guide your research:

- What's the answer to your research question (**CLAIM**)
- Why should I believe that? (**REASONS**)
- How do you know that reason to be true (**EVIDENCE**)
- But have you considered this view? (**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & RESPONSE**)

- Working with an **assigned topic** – assume it's shorthand even if not phrased like a question. Explore X or analyze X or discuss X means, “Find an issue in X that raises a questions about a specific aspect of X, whose answer will help us understand some larger theme, feature or quality of X.”
- Think about your **personal interests**. These can often come out through free writing.
- Keep your topic **manageable**.

Creative Disagreements. Jaworsky claims that ... but I will show...

- **Kind** – Jaworsky claims that ----- belongs in category A, but I will show that it really belongs in category B.
- Jaworsky claims that ----- is normal/good/significant/useful/moral, but I will show that it is really -----.
- **Part-whole** Jaworsky claims that ---whole-----always has ----part---as one of its defining features/components/qualities, but I will show that ---part--- is not essential.

- **Change** – Jaworsky claims that -----is changing in a certain way, but I will show that it is really the same as it was.
- Jaworsky claims that -----is changing in a certain way, but I will show that it is really changing in a different way.
- Jaworsky claims that -----is a stage/process in the development of -----, but I will show that it is not.
- **Cause and effect** Jaworsky claims that ----- causes -----, but I will show that it really causes -----.
- Jaworsky claims that ----- is caused by -----, but I will show that it really is caused by -----.
- Jaworsky claims that ----- is sufficient to cause-----, but I will show that ----- is also necessary.

Build on Agreement. Jaworsky claims---- about this and I will show this about that.

Look for surprises (Expected-Surprised-Problem)

When I first read this text, I expected to find....So I was surprised when instead I found...I have a problem because my old understanding of this text/author/argument makes sense only with (what you expected) ... not with (what you found).

Four ways to create an argument:

- **Figure out how you have to change your understanding of the text:** At first, it made sense to understand the text (the way you did), but I will show why we should really understand it in a different way.
- **How and why you were wrong:** At first, it made sense to expect the text to (what you expected) but I will show why that is based on a mistaken understanding of the text.
- **How and why what you found actually fits in:** When the text did not do (what you expected) I thought at first I was wrong to expect it. But I will show that (what you expected) would have fit perfectly
- **How it would have been better if author did what you expected rather than what you found:** At first, it seemed surprising that the text did not do (what you expected) but I will show that it would have been better if it had.

Evaluating your questions:

- You can answer too easily
- No one could plausibly disprove the answer because it seems self-evident
- You can find the evidence to support the answer
- You would find so many sources that you cannot look at all of them (Except for general theory)

Planning for an answer:

Propose some working answers (**WRITE** don't just think them)

- *If you can't find an answer, argue for your question.*
- Build a storyboard to plan and guide your work.
- *State your question and your working hypothesis; state your reasons.*
- -Different ways of organization – chronological, cause and effect, relative importance, complexity, length etc.
- *Sketch in the kind of evidence you should look for.*

My elevator story (90 seconds or less)

- I am working on the problem of (state your question).
- I think I can show that (state your hypothesis) because (state your reasons).
- My best evidence is (summarize your evidence).

NEXT WEEK

REQUIRED READING:

- Turabian, Ch. 4-5, pp. 44-62 (18 pp.)
- Somekh & Lewin – Chapter 2 “Working with Literatures” (8 pp.)
- *Becker, Writing for Social Scientists*, Ch. 8 (14 pp.)

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Potential Topics

- Gun control
- Abortion rights
- Freedom of Speech
- Voting
- Education