

Doctoral Research & Professional Development Seminar: 1st-year Ph.D.

Fall 2017 Room 240 Mondays 2-4 p.m. (on occasion time/day shifts)

The first part of this course (SOC6611Y) supports students in the 1st year of the PhD program in sociology at the University of Toronto. (Note, Part II of Practicum takes place in Fall of Year 3). This course offers discussion on topics relevant to sociology as a profession, helps 1st-year students build academic skills such as proposal writing, gathering and understanding relevant literatures and data sources for producing scholarship. It nurtures “soft skills” like communicating with others in the department and profession, and discussing one’s ideas. It motivates students to achieve milestones in a timely way, and sets them on pathways toward career goals. The course focuses on the practical matters of professional life, and of reaching goals, including creating a meaningful life as a professional sociologist.

Learning objectives:

1. Provide practical information about sociology as a profession.
2. Introduce resources or re-familiarize you with resources likely to be useful to you.
3. Provide a collegial place to ask questions and learn as you transform into professional sociologists.
4. Foster an environment promoting creativity and exchange of ideas.

Requirements:

1. Be there at each of our class meetings. Unless otherwise noted, the only preparation expected is that you ask yourself what you would like to know about each topic before course meetings.
2. Voice your ideas. Participate at least once in each meeting. Articulating your ideas is a fundamental soft skill that is enhanced each time you speak up and listen and respond thoughtfully to comments and questions about your idea.
3. Be yourself. We do not want you to merely “learn about” the professional world of sociology. Instead, you will start taking on the role of a professional sociologist. To do so, you will need to make accommodations to the professional world but at the same time keep your passions about your work and capitalize on your own assets and ideas.
4. Look for ways to get involved in the intellectual life of the department no matter how busy you are. Be an active scholar by identifying area events or departmental talks you will attend. During the term, email me a one-paragraph “review” of an event you attended within 1 day of event and report to class about your experience there.

Note that reading is (virtually) forbidden! By design, there are few scheduled readings assigned for this course. For some topics, you will visit websites, see a list of publications on a topic, or examine some “ambient” materials that cross our paths.

Evaluation

This is a required pass/fail course for Ph.D. students in sociology. Your course grade will be determined solely by your participation. If you attend and participate fully over the two terms (Fall-first year of Ph.D.; Fall-third year of Ph.D), you will pass the course.

Course schedule:

Sept. 11 (week 1): Setting the Stage for your PhD program

introductions what kinds of work do professional sociologists do? what do the data suggest about U of T Ph.D. graduates? who am I as a professional sociologist? how should I shape my graduate career to meet my goals? milestones & pathways being an active scholar

*Identify fall events or talks you will attend and report on; email to me your plan

Sept. 18 (week 2): SSHRC and OGS applications

Leader: U of T Sociology Research Administrator: Sherri Klassen

creating a research question writing a brief research statement

*Bring a one-paragraph research question to class, and be prepared to write, read, provide feedback and revise your application materials in class.

Sept. 25 (week 3): Becoming a Sociologist

NOTE: SPECIAL TIME & PLACE: begins at 12 noon in the Lounge, followed by lunch

Leader: Professor Tina Fetner, McMaster University

Becoming a Sociologist -- The Place of Social Media (12 noon-1.15 p.m.) (lounge)

the graduate student role & social media how & when are social media appropriate? social media as useful tools & positioning of expertise social media problems twitter facebook groups public sociology

Becoming a Sociologist – Tricks of the Trade (2-3 p.m.) (Room 240)

nurturing your advantage broad training, narrow specializations learning in your area, on your topic, and in sociology generally hierarchies & power mentors, advisors, supervisors and committees ranks & positions in department & university marching forward & upward through graduate school & beyond

Oct. 2 (week 4): Becoming a Sociologist, continued: Mapping the fields of Sociology

Leaders: Advanced students may join in at 3 p.m.

how & when to integrate into the profession Canadian sociology CSA US Sociology ASA ASA journals ASA sections plugging in to these worlds deadlines & advancing projects

Oct. 9: Thanksgiving Holiday

Oct. 16 (week 5): Time Management -- the Ph.D. Program & Life

Leaders: Advanced students may join at 3 p.m.

time management for courses & projects prioritizing research tools data sources writing tools
bibliographic tools strategies & styles quadrants of priority for deadlines feeling overwhelmed?
getting help

Oct. 23 (week 6): An Academic Job Talk & evaluation (attend this week, next week or both)

Attending & learning from these events each year

Oct. 30 (week 7): An Academic Job Talk & evaluation (attend this week, prior week, or both)

Attending & learning from these events each year

Nov. 6: No seminar scheduled, Fall break at UTSG undergrad

Nov. 13 (week 8): Mapping out & Reading the Scholarly Literature

NOTE: SPECIAL LOCATION: Room 385

mapping a subfield and its journals choosing the best sources finding difficult sources looking outside
the subfield the annotated bibliography the craft of connecting with the literature 3Rs: recent, relevant
and regularly cited following citations when to stop reading

Audiences products lit review?—never “review” the lit! course papers journal articles practical and
psychological tips reverse engineering the sociology article organizing the writing process sections,
paragraphs, topic sentences

*Reading: Hannah Wohl and Gary Alan Fine. 2017. “Reading Rites: Teaching Textwork in Graduate
Education.” *American Sociologist*

*Reading: Zuckerman, Ezra W. 2008. “Tips to Article-Writers.” MIT Sloan School of Management
<http://mitsloan.mit.edu/shared/ods/documents/?DocumentID=2468>

**Nov. 20 (week 9): Data collection through: Experiments, Surveys (Qualtrics), and International
Field Work**

Leaders: Experienced graduate students and faculty.

Nov. 27 (week 10): The CV as a motivational document

Leaders: Junior faculty may join at 3 p.m.

Local, national and international audiences in-house versus public/website what belongs on the CV?
showcasing your expertise in multiple ways

bring a draft copy of your CV to class

Dec. 4 (week 11): Networking skills – Active interactions with scholarly Communities

Leaders: Junior faculty may join at 3 p.m.

purposes for networking how to do it right etiquette, introductions, conversation skills, and the art of socializing professionally worst case scenario stories from the trenches

Dec. 7 (week 12): Networking skills – Socializing in a Professional setting

NOTE: SPECIAL DAY, TIME & PLACE

Thursday Holiday Party, 5.30 – 7.30 p.m. Exact Time and Location TBA

Students completing the Prosem, part I will enjoy a beverage & appetizers together, while we have low stakes practice of networking skills with grad student colleagues and U of T faculty

NOTES:

On several occasions, graduate student from more advanced cohorts and/or faculty with special interests or expertise will lead key discussions.

Portions of this syllabus have been blatantly copied with permission from Tina Fetner, and from the addendum of Chris Uggen and Heather Hlavka's 2008 article, "No More Lame ProSems: Professional Development Seminars in Sociology." The rest owes much to the spirit of that piece and to earlier discussions with U of T faculty and the grad office.