

## **Doctoral Research & Professional Development Seminar: 1<sup>st</sup>-year Ph.D.**

Fall 2020 - Fridays 12 p.m.-2 p.m. – Prof. M. Milkie

This course (SOC6511H) supports students in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the PhD program at U of T sociology. This course offers discussion on topics relevant to sociology as a profession, helps 1<sup>st</sup>-year students build academic skills such as proposal writing, and 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 present at each of our class meetings.
  2. Voice your ideas and respond thoughtfully to others’ contributions. Participate at each meeting. Articulating 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 are beginning to take on the role of a professional sociologist. In doing so, we all make accommodations to the professional world, but at the same time we strive to keep passions about our work and capitalize on our assets.
  4. Look for ways to get involved in the intellectual life of the department. Be an active scholar by identifying area events, departmental or outside professional and research talks you will attend.
- \*Note that by design, there are few scheduled readings or assignments for this course.

### Evaluation

This is a required credit/no credit course for Ph.D. students in sociology. Credit for this course will be determined by your participation. If you attend and participate fully, you will receive credit for the course.

**Course schedule: \*= material/ideas to submit prior to/bring to class** Given conditions of the pandemic, some of the content or timelines may shift slightly. We’ll try to be consistent but flexible.

\*During some weeks, we will “Meet the Faculty,” a number of whom will drop in to Prosem to introduce themselves and talk about their research. This is especially important this year given limited social interactions and events and fewer opportunities to have casual conversations.

### **Sept. 11 (week 1): Grant writing as setting the stage for your Ph.D.: SSHRC and OGS applications**

**Leaders:** U of T Sociology Research Coordinator Sherri Klassen; Associate Grad Chair Markus Schafer  
\*submit a draft grant document before class with the following: 1 sentence with a research question, 1 sentence saying how you will answer the question (what method you will use) and one sentence explaining why this research will be important for the academic field.

Topics: creating a research question; writing and perfecting an abstract; starting the brief research proposal; be prepared to write, read, provide feedback and revise your application materials in class.

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

**Leaders:** U of T Sociology Research Administrator: Sherri Klassen; Associate Grad Chair Markus Schafer

\*submit a draft 2-page proposal to class. Be prepared to provide and receive feedback on your application material during class.

Topic: Writing and perfecting the research proposal

**Sept. 25: No formal Prosem meeting in lieu of Sept. 11 start**

**Oct. 2 (week 3): Becoming a Sociologist; “Working as an RA” Panel**

**Leaders:** Advanced Ph.D. students and faculty will join

Topic: Advanced students and faculty will reflect on the opportunities and challenges that work as a research assistant can bring, with opportunities for questions.

**Special Session: Department Colloquium, Thursday Oct. 8**

**Oct. 9 (week 4): Becoming a Sociologist; “The Ph.D. Experience” Panel**

**Leaders:** Advanced Ph.D. students will join

Topic: Advanced students will discuss their experiences and what they wish they knew at the beginning of the Ph.D. program, with opportunities for questions.

**Oct. 16: (week 5): Challenges and Growth in the Teaching Assistant Role, I; Meet the Faculty**

**Leaders:** Advanced Ph.D. students and faculty will join

Topics: What are the most important aspects of a TA position? What are things that can make the experience more successful? How do you work as a team with your faculty member and other TAs?

**Oct. 23 (week 6): Finding, Critically Reading and Arguing with Literatures; Meet the Faculty**

**Leaders:** Advanced Ph.D. students will join

\*suggested reading: Wohl, Hannah and Gary Alan Fine. 2017. [“Reading Rites: Teaching Textwork in Graduate Education.”](#) *American Sociologist* 48:215-32.

Topics: Mapping a subfield and its journals; using Browzine; multiple purposes of “lit reviews”; when and how to take shortcuts.

**Oct. 30 (week 7): The CV as a Motivational Document; Meet the Faculty**

**Leaders:** Faculty will join

Topics: Why is the CV so important now? What components are essential? Audiences--showcasing your expertise in multiple ways; using the CV to advance your scholarship.

**Nov. 6 (week 8): Challenges and Growth in the Teaching Assistant Role, II; Meet the Faculty**

**Leaders:** Faculty will join

Topic: A continuation of the discussion of growing in the TA role; focus on specialized topics and questions

**Nov. 13 (week 9): SMART Goals & Writing Workshop with Dr. Dan Newman, FAS**

\*submit a one-paragraph abstract for a project you are working on currently or will begin now, by Friday morning through Quercus. This could be a course paper, a practicum paper idea abstract, or a new project/paper to be developed for submission to a conference or journal, among other pieces of writing [It may be helpful to consider the SSHRC language for proposed work - “Provide a brief summary (max 1800 characters including spaces) of your Outline of Proposed Research in *language the public can understand*”].

Topics: Audiences; products; course papers vs. journal articles; practical and psychological tips; reverse engineering the sociology article; organizing the writing process; sections, paragraphs -- topic sentences; headers, and more.

**Nov. 20 (week 10): Post Ph.D. Pathways; Meet the Faculty**

**Leaders:** Alumni and faculty will join

Topics: Where do U of T Ph.D. graduates establish careers? What are the varieties of positions geographically? How does graduate school prepare students for different pathways?

**Nov. 27 (week 11): No formal class. At any time during fall, attend and evaluate a Research Talk/Conference Talk/Academic Job Talk**

**Dec. 4 (week 12): Wrapping up & Celebrating Successes of the Term**

Topics: First term is almost complete – let’s celebrate smaller and bigger accomplishments!

\*Mark your calendars to attend the Practicum Annual Conference (PAC) in April 2021!

### Academic Integrity

Copying, plagiarizing, falsifying medical or other certificates, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be referred to the Dean's office for adjudication. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties. Students are expected to cite sources in all written work and presentations. See this link for tips for how to use sources well: (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>)

According to Section B.I.1.(e) of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters it is an offence "*to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.*"

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the university's rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/code/the-code-of-behaviour-on-academic-matters>) and *Code of Student Conduct* (<http://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/codeofstudentconduct.htm>) which spell out your rights, your duties and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offences at the University of Toronto.

### Accessibility Services

It is the University of Toronto's goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and treats all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the University aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all persons. Please see the University of Toronto Governing Council "Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities" at <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppno v012004.pdf>.

### Equity and Diversity Statement

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.

Additional information and reports on Equity and Diversity at the University of Toronto is available at <http://equity.hrandequity.utoronto.ca>.

### NOTE:

A portion of this syllabus has been 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 discussions with U of T faculty and the grad office.