

SOC6511HF: Professional Development Seminar
Professor David Pettinicchio
Associate Graduate Chair
Department of Sociology
University of Toronto
Fall 2024

Course Description:

This course is required for students in the first year of the Sociology PhD program at the University of Toronto. The goal of the course is to help situate new PhD students in the discipline and profession of sociology. This course focuses on ten key themes: grant writing, the PhD experience, sociology as profession, TAing and RAing, research, writing for academia, the peer-review process, writing for non-academic audiences, online profiles and self-presentation, and work-life balance. The course aims to build “soft skills” that are helpful for navigating the graduate program and the profession more broadly, such as interacting with people in the department and beyond. We will discuss strategies to achieve program milestones in a timely manner, as well as career goals beyond program requirements. The Prosem is focused on the more practical sides of being a PhD student and doing academic work. To that end, each weekly meeting will feature guests (faculty, senior grad students, or university staff) who will provide their insights on these topics.

Objectives:

The course aims to equip students with practical information about working in sociology, introducing them to essential resources for research and teaching. It fosters a collegial environment conducive to asking questions, exchanging ideas, and promoting a professional yet creative and fulfilling approach to sociological work. The seminar emphasizes understanding professional ethics, aligning faculty and student research interests, and familiarizing students with the structure of the profession. Additionally, it guides students in understanding practical aspects of the research process and communicating research as well as one’s research agenda/persona. By providing a space for discussing presentations and offering practical insights into academic life, the course also encourages the development of a professional identity that reflects one’s accomplishments and goals.

Requirements:

Students are expected to not only attend but also actively engage in discussions during each meeting. This involves presenting one’s own ideas and respectfully responding to those shared by others. Clear communication and thoughtful discussion are essential soft skills in academia, and practicing them in class will help students develop these skills early on. Additionally, students are required to actively participate in the intellectual life of the department. Seek out events related to one’s interests, such as job talks or other research presentations within the department.

Evaluation

This is a required credit/no credit course for 1st-year Ph.D. students in sociology. Given the learning objectives of this course, there are few required readings or assignments. You will obtain credit for this course if you attend and participate fully and submit the few required assignments.

Mini Exercise 1: Reverse CV—find people whose jobs you want—what did they have to do to get there?

Mini Exercise 2: Summary of Research Interests - < 250 word summary of your research agenda

Mini Exercise 3: Peer-Review Article Evaluation – Read a published article along with its reviews and editorial feedback. Provide an analysis. Were the reviews fair? Did the authors respond adequately to the reviews?

*** Possible reflection of UTSG job talk (pending scheduling)

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/ppnov012004.pdf>.

In working toward this goal, the University will strive to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities, participate in the full range of activities that the University offers, and achieve their full potential as members of the University community. We take seriously our obligation make this course as welcoming and accessible as feasible for students with diverse needs. We also understand that disabilities can change over time and will do our best to accommodate you. Students seeking support must have an intake interview with a disability advisor to discuss their individual needs. In many instances it is easier to arrange certain accommodations with more advance notice, so we

strongly encourage you to act as quickly as possible. To schedule a registration appointment with a disability advisor, please visit Accessibility Services at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>, call at 416-978-8060, or email at: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca. The office is located at 455 Spadina Avenue, 4th Floor, Suite 400.

Additional student resources for distressed or emergency situations can be located at distressedstudent.utoronto.ca; Health & Wellness Centre, 416-978-8030, <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>, or Student Crisis Response, 416-946-7111.

Course Schedule:

**Note: while visiting speakers have mostly been confirmed, this schedule remains tentative and is subject to change.

Week 1 Writing grants: a lifelong professional skill (Sept 9)

Reading:

- Sherri Klassen's Tip Sheet
- Students' winning proposals
- The Art of Writing Proposals by Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon

Scheduled speakers:

- Aurelie Etienne, Graduate Student
- Alex Wilson, Graduate Student
- Mimi Nadon Belanger, Graduate Student

Please note: Writing Workshop on Research Proposals for SSHRC Applications (Committee 3: Geography, Anthropology, Sociology, Criminology, etc) with Daniel Aureliano Newman, Director of Graduate Writing Support, Faculty of Arts & Science Wednesday September 11, 10am-12pm (in person, room TBA)

Week 2 Navigating the PhD Program (Sept 16)

Reading:

- Milestones on course website, departmental policies
- Adler, P.A., Adler, P. The identity career of the graduate student: Professional socialization to academic sociology. *Am Soc* **36**, 11–27 (2005)

Scheduled speakers:

- Melissa Milkie, Professor, Current Graduate Chair
- Pelin Gül, Graduate Student, (remote)
- Mircea Gherghina, Graduate Student

Week 3: The Profession of Sociology (Sept 23)

Reading:

Schulman/ Silver: The business of becoming a professional sociologist: Unpacking the informal training of graduate school

Scheduled speakers:

- Shyon Baumann, Professor, Current Department Chair (SG)
- Sharla Alegria, Assistant Professor
- Andrea Alfaro, Former Graduate Student, Assistant Professor (UNM)

Exercise 1 Reverse CV exercise due

Week 4: TAing and RAing (Sept 30)

Scheduled speakers:

- Mitch McIver, Assistant Professor (Teaching Stream)
- Blair Wheaton, Professor, Former Department Chair
- Alexa Carson, Graduate Student, (remote)

Week 5: Developing a research agenda and writing a paper (Nov 4)

Scheduled speakers:

- Daniel Silver, Professor, Former Department Chair
- Andrew Miles, Associate Professor
- Andy Holmes, Graduate Student

Exercise 2 – Summary of research agenda – due.

Week 6: The Peer-Review Process (Nov 11)

Reading: How double-blind peer review works and what it takes to be a good referee Eloísa Martín

Scheduled speakers:

- CRS Editorial Board
 - Michelle Maroto, Professor, Graduate Chair (Alberta) (remote)
 - Roberta Pamplona, Graduate Student
 - Maria Finnsdottir, Former Graduate Student, Postdoc UVictoria (remote)
- Martin Lukk, Graduate Student

Exercise 3 (peer-review evaluation) due

Knowledge Mobilization ((Nov 18)

Scheduled speakers:

- Daniel Hill, Graduate Student
- Ferdouse Asefi, Graduate Student

Reading: Pettinicchio - USA Today Op-ed

Reading: What Counts?

https://www.asanet.org/wp-content/uploads/tf_report_what_counts_evaluating_public_communication_in_tenure_and_promotion_final_august_2016.pdf

Resource: <https://www.theopedproject.org/resources>

Week 7: Presenting yourself online (Nov 25)

Scheduled speakers:

- Prentiss Prentiss, Associate Professor
- Jillian Sunderland, Graduate Student
- Joana Peppin, Assistant Professor

Week 8 Time Management and Work-Life Balance (Dec 2)

Scheduled speakers:

- Scott Schieman, Professor, Former Graduate Chair
- Josée Johnston, Professor, Department Chair (UTM)
- Kevin Byer (Health Promotion Program Associate)