

## I. GENERAL PURPOSE/AUDIENCE

Sociologists study human social behavior and write to explain how people are shaped by social groups (families, nations, etc.); how the world is experienced through various lenses (of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, etc.); how groups are created and maintained; and who someone is as defined by the group he/she belongs to.

Sociologists look for connections between individuals, their stories, and their relations to the wider world. Audiences include scholars and scholarly journals, psychologists, politicians, behavioral scientists, economists, community organizers, lawmakers, newspapers, other social scientists, and the general public.

## II. TYPES OF WRITING

- Critical Thinking/ Social Issues:
  - Examine an issue from social, political, economic perspectives
  - May apply theory, take a position with supporting evidence, and/or critique an existing position
- Literature Review:
  - Identify a question or topic to be investigated
  - Conduct library research for relevant scholarly articles, books, Internet sites
  - Create a synthesis of material to develop a new way of considering the issue or offer suggestions for further research
- Quantitative Research Paper:
  - Present a problem, question, or hypothesis to be tested (as above)
  - Conduct original research that includes quantitative and qualitative analyses of data
  - Compare opinions of sociologists and the public about an issue
  - Apply sociological theory to current events
  - Analyze socio-historical changes (interpretive analysis)
  - Ethnographic/field research (observational research, participant research, interviews)
  - Write in report format with Title, Abstract, Introduction, Review of Literature, Methods, Results (analysis of data), Discussion, Conclusions, References, Appendices

The following writing assignments may be incorporated in the papers listed above or may be preparation for the above:

- Abstracts (outline of essential elements of a work; typically 250 words, 1-2 paragraphs)
- Annotated Bibliographies (five sentences or fewer with bibliography)
- Summaries (concise outline of main ideas and their relevance to topic)
- Textual Analysis
- Summary/Analysis/Evaluation
- Explain main points of a text; critique an argument
- Develop relationships between evidence and conclusions, between concepts in text, or compared to other texts

- Use logical reasoning to examine rhetorical devices and determine how effectively an author makes his/her argument
- Proposals:
  - Frame a question and propose a method of answering the question
  - Include 1- to 2-page statement of intent (or abstract)
  - Explain why the topic is important or relevant with Thesis, Hypothesis, Methods, References

### **III. TYPES OF EVIDENCE**

- Primary Sources (questionnaires, surveys, interviews, observations)
- Secondary sources (books, scholarly journals, newspapers, Internet)
- Library research (using scholarly sources)

### **IV. WRITING CONVENTIONS**

- Quote only when it is essential to make a point; be sure to explain a quote's relevance or significance.
- Substantial evidence and support is required.
- Active voice is preferred.
- Analysis and summary are two different skills; analysis should help readers understand topic, text, or data.

### **V. COMMON TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

- American Sociological Association (ASA)
- American Sociological Review
- ASA Code of Ethics
- Ethnography
- Field research (Interviews, observations, surveys)
- Textual analysis
- Logical fallacies
- Hypothesis
- Quantitative data
- Qualitative data
- Dependent/independent variables
- Control
- Tautology
- Positivism

### **VI. CITATION STYLE**

- American Psychology Association (APA)
- American Sociology Association (ASA)
- Writers may also write in the format of the journal(s) in which they wish to publish.