

Professional Writing for Justice Services

Sociology 501

Virtual Classroom Thursdays 6-7:50 pm

Instructor Information

Dr. Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur

marthur@ric.edu (preferred)

Meeting with Me: I will often be available right after class & am available at many other times throughout the week. You can schedule a meeting with me at <https://calendly.com/mmlarthur> – advising meetings are 15 minute blocks for quick questions, class office hours meetings are 30 minute blocks for more sustained discussion.

Phone: 401.456.8681 (be sure to leave a callback number & note when is a good time to reach you)

This course is a virtual classroom course. You will need to have reliable Internet access on a computer or tablet. You will also need to check your email regularly and be available during scheduled meeting times. Live Zoom meetings are scheduled on Thursdays; don't plan to join class while driving or in other circumstances where you will not be able to fully engage. If conditions allow & the group agrees, we may choose to meet in person at points during the semester.

Course Description

This course services as the gateway course for the Master's program in Justice Studies. By the end of this course, students will have gained proficiency in a variety of genres of writing valuable in both professional and academic settings within the broad field of justice studies and will be better prepared for subsequent graduate coursework, including the development of a master's thesis or project.

Materials

ASA. 2019. *American Sociological Association Style Guide*, 6th Edition. ISBN 9780912764559. Available in paper or Kindle versions and in Adams Library Reference. List price \$35.00

Calarco. 2020. *A Field Guide to Grad School*. ISBN 9780691201092 Available in paper and e-text formats and electronically from Adams Library. List price \$18.00.

Optional: Elbow. 1998. *Writing Without Teachers*, 2nd Edition. ISBN 9780195120165. Ebook available at Adams Library, so you can download the chapters we will read.

Additional reading materials will be made available via Blackboard.

THIS SYLLABUS IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Course Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet learning outcomes of the Justice Studies MA program¹:

1. Articulate knowledge of the major issues facing the justice system locally, nationally, and globally, as well as new research findings in the field.
2. Apply research findings to problems with social service agencies within or related to the justice system.
3. Communicate professionally and knowledgeably in oral and written formats on a variety of academic and justice-related topics.

Course Requirements & Grading

Course requirements for Sociology 501 include:

- A substantial volume of written work, including three large writing assignments and numerous smaller ones, along with a final course portfolio. Many smaller writing assignments will be posted in the course discussion board, where you should frequently interact with and comment on your classmates' work.
- Productive, respectful participation in peer review processes with classmates
- Attendance at and participation in scheduled synchronous Zoom sessions
- Completion of supplementary assignments designed to build writing skills (these may be added as we go to address the needs of the class).

Note: federal guidelines expect students to complete three hours of work (including both in-class and out-of-class time) for every credit hour earned.

Grades will be determined based on the totality of work submitted over the semester, with larger assignments weighted more heavily. Improvement over the course of the semester, especially the final portfolio and self-assessment, will be taken into consideration. Individual assignments, especially the smaller weekly writing assignments, will not often receive typical grades, as the goal in this course is to write as part of a developmental learning process rather than in pursuit of specific external rewards.

This is a graduate class and as such it assumes substantial motivation and responsibility on the part of students, as well as dedication to completing the advanced and significant workload graduate education implies. Please note that success in graduate studies requires grades of B or above in graduate courses. Therefore, it will be my assumption that students who complete assignments in keeping with adequate graduate-level performance will earn a B, outstanding work will result in a grade of A, and grades of B+ and A- will be assigned for performance that is better than adequate but not quite outstanding. Work that does not meet graduate-level standards—even for students who have worked hard all semester—will result in a grade of less than B.

¹ See <https://www.ric.edu/departments-directory/departments-sociology/justice-studies-undergraduate-and-graduate-programs/justice-studies-ma> & click on “learning goals”

Course Schedule

Note: readings, videos, and smaller assignments are due **prior to** the Zoom session in which they will be discussed. Always check Blackboard for details about specific deadlines.

Week of September 9: Introduction to Soc 501, to graduate study, and to each other

Reading: Calarco 1-9, 84-107; Elbow, 18-22

Writing: in the course discussion board, introduce yourself and your work; ask questions of and answer questions from your classmates.

Assignment: Complete the getting to know you survey in Blackboard

Assignment: Add your photo (or a photo representing you) to Blackboard

(<https://utlv.screenstepslive.com/s/faculty/m/BlackboardLearn/1/185518-uploading-a-profile-picture-to-blackboard>)

Week of September 16: Conducting library research

NO CLASS

Reading: Calarco 177-211; ASA style guide, 51-93 and 125-139

Writing: in the course discussion board, post a summary of subtopics, keywords, and avenues of exploration you want to pursue in relation to your writing and research topic (**must be submitted by Monday, September 13 at 10 am**—review my feedback before meeting with librarian)

Assignment: complete online library tutorial (*prior to meeting with librarian*)

Assignment: schedule appointment with Reference Librarian Dragan Gill (dgill@ric.edu). After your appointment, send me an email summarizing what happened at your appointment, what you learned, and what you intend to do going forward. Be sure to do this **this week**, and after you complete the online library tutorial.

Week of September 23: Developing a professional focus

Reading: Calarco 108-118; Baker-Smith *et al.*, “#RealCollege2020: Five Years of Evidence on Campus Basic Needs Insecurity;” Broton & Goldrick-Rab, “Going Without: An Exploration of Food and Housing Insecurity Among Undergraduates”

Writing: in the course discussion board, post a paragraph in which you summarize the topic you intend to focus on this semester and explain why this topic is important for knowledge or policy.

Writing: as an individual assignment, write a 1-2 page reflection paper on the differences in genre between this week’s two assigned readings.

Assignment: Academic Integrity Tutorial (<https://plagiarism.iu.edu/index.html>) & Master’s/ Doctoral Level Certification Test

Week of September 30: The research process

Reading: articles for your literature review

Writing: complete initial annotated bibliography

Week of October 7: The literature review

Reading: Forsyth, “The Regulation of Witchcraft and Sorcery Practices and Beliefs;” Elbow, 93-106; Calarco, 228-234

Writing: complete draft of literature review

Writing: peer review of classmates’ work

Week of October 14: The revision process

Reading: ASA style guide, 1-50; Elbow, 38-47; Elbow, “Revising by Reading Out Loud”; Gottshalk & Hjortshoj on writing errors & editing, 97-102

Assignment: Finish literature review. I am available for individual consultations as needed.

Week of October 21: Writing with visuals and data

Reading: Klass, 71-122

Writing: in the course discussion board, outline additional data, literature, etc. needed to complete the policy paper.

Writing: Locate an image, a graph, and a table relating to your policy topic and explain each.

Week of October 28: Writing as part of job-seeking

Reading: Purdue OWL: Job Search Writing; RIC Career Development Center Resources

Assignment: Schedule meeting with Career Development Center Staff *optional but recommended* (instructions at <https://www.ric.edu/departments-directory/career-development-center>)

Writing: Select a specific job listing in your career field and complete a resume and cover letter appropriate for that job. Optionally, create and submit a profile on LinkedIn or another relevant career networking site.

Writing: Develop initial policy suggestions for policy paper & post in course discussion board.

Week of November 4: Writing in the workplace/Writing about policy

Reading: Reading: Cunningham, “Rules for Writing a Policy Brief”; Sample policy papers in Blackboard; Young & Quinn, “An Essential Guide to Writing Policy Briefs”; Guillory, “The Memo and Modernity;” Picardi, “Writing Memos and Letters that Achieve Your Goals”

Writing: professional memo reflecting on your policy paper project so far

Writing: letter to the editor, with submission ideas

Week of November 11: Catch-up week

Reading: @biblioracle on writing a report

Writing: Submit draft policy paper

Writing: Complete peer review of classmates’ work

Week of November 18: Social Media and Professionalism

Reading: Promoting Sociological Research Toolkit 1-8, 61-66, & 80-83 are required; also read 2-3 other sections of personal interest; Calarco, 255-264; Ollier-Malaterre & Rothbard, "How to Separate the Personal and Professional on Social Media"

Writing: submit final policy paper and revision memo

Writing: twitter thread on your white paper (submit either the text of your thread, or a link to the twitter thread if you choose to post it, to the discussion board)

Week of November 25: No class meeting, Thanksgiving

Reading: Calarco, chapters 2, 5, 6, and conclusion

Week of December 2: Writing for the public

Reading: Calarco 224-225; Op-ed Writing: Tips and Tricks; Promoting Sociological Research Toolkit 75-76; sample op-eds in Blackboard

Writing: In the discussion board, post an op-ed based on your whitepaper

Assignment: Create a 30-second elevator pitch video on yourself and your project

Assignment: Appointment with Career Development Center (required; send me an email report after your meeting)

Week of December 9: Writing for presentation

Reading: ASA style guide, 107-120; Calarco, 265-284; Cargan, "The Research Proposal;" Raj, "Writing Effective Grant Proposals"

Writing: Plan for final assignment

Assignment: PowerPoint or other slide show & a presentation video of roughly 10 minutes (post in the discussion board)

Week of December 16: Bringing it all together

Reading: None assigned

Writing: Work on writing portfolio, which must include your research or grant proposal, revised policy paper, finalized resume and cover letter, at least one additional revised assignment, and performance review/self-assessment

Week of December 23: Submit writing portfolio

Individual meetings as needed

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

All students enrolling in this course are expected to abide by the Rhode Island College guidelines on academic honesty. More information about academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, as well as RIC policies, can be found at <http://ric.libguides.com/proethics>. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarizing written work, including copying some or all of your work from a book, a website, or another student's paper. Think about how you would feel if someone passed off your hard work as their own.
- Using sources without proper attribution. Remember that all claims in a paper that did not spring fully formed from your own head need attribution, regardless of whether or not they are paraphrased, and all direct quotes should appear in quotation marks. If you are unsure how to document sources, please reference the ASA Style Guide assigned for this course.
- Turning in research reports that are fabricated or which do not accurately represent the research activities in which you engaged.
- Turning in work completed for other classes without prior permission.
- Working together with other students or seeking help from professionals or peers on assignments which prohibit such activities.
- Destroying course materials or otherwise preventing other students from achieving fully in this course.

Cheating successfully is often harder than you think, and you might as well just put your effort into doing the assignment legitimately. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and include receiving a 0 on the assignment for the first minor offense, receiving an F for the class for a repeated offense, and report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs at RIC for all offenses. If you feel the urge to engage in academic dishonesty, stop and think about what you are doing, and then come see me so we can work out a plan together to ensure your success in the course.

Extensions, Absences, and Attendance

Please make every effort to attend all scheduled live Zoom sessions. These will not be recorded to protect other students' privacy. Your participation in these sessions is vital to the collective work we will do together to improve our writing. There is a policy outlining expectations for student behavior and engagement in Zoom sessions posted in Blackboard. Be sure to read and abide by this policy.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due in Blackboard at specific times as indicated in Blackboard. Assignments that are not posted directly to a Blackboard application (like blog posts) **must** be saved in *.rtf, *.doc, or *.docx (preferred). Blackboard does log your submissions; you can return to an assignment yourself to see if you have submitted it correctly, and I am happy to show you how to do this so that you will not need to email me to see if I have received your work. If unavoidable circumstances require you to seek an extension on your work, I am generally open to providing one **if** you request the extension via email at least 24 hours prior to the due date (unless

the extension is due to a major emergency such as a health crisis or death in the family). If you submit your blog post late, you will only be eligible for credit for any questions we did not discuss in class.

Course Technology

Students are expected to check their RIC email addresses and Blackboard frequently. Given that this course will take place online, you should expect to check your email and Blackboard multiple times per week. If you primarily use another email account, you must forward your RIC email, as I do use email to disseminate important information about the course. Students are also responsible for being able to access Blackboard. If you are not able to access email or Blackboard, you should seek assistance from User Support Services (<https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/user-support-services> or 456-8803) right away. You will also need to have access to the Internet and to a device that can manage Blackboard, office applications, and Zoom in order to be successful this semester.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a **disability** that might interfere with your ability to perform at your best in this course, it is your responsibility to come and speak with me as early as possible in the semester so that we can develop a plan together. All reasonable accommodations will be made. Students with disabilities should be sure that they are registered with Disability Services in order to ensure access to the full range of services available at Rhode Island College. Information about these services and about registration is available at <https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/disability-services-center>

Supplemental Services

Everyone, even excellent students, benefits from having another set of eyes on their writing, so visit the **Writing Center** early often to help develop your ideas, organize your writing, and improve your drafts: <https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/writing-center>

- Seek support to develop your academic & study skills at **OASIS**: <https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/office-academic-support-and-information-services-oasis>
- Visit the **Counseling Center** to obtain support with anxiety, depression, or other distress you may be experiencing. Services are free & confidential: <https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/center-health-and-wellness/counseling-services>
- **Any student who faces challenges securing food, housing, or other basic needs is urged to contact the Learning for Life (<https://www.ric.edu/department-directory/learning-life>) and/or the Dean of Students' Office (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?RhodeIslandCollege&layout_id=33).**

If you would like more information about the resources available, you can ask me at any time this semester. You do not need to tell me why you are asking to get help for a friend, another student, or yourself.

These services are available and free to all students. Use them!