

SOC265—Gender & Society
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TUTORIAL: EFFECTIVE WRITING AND STUDYING

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✘ Office Hours:

+ Tuesdays, 11AM before lecture

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OVERVIEW

- ✘ First Steps and Essay Structure
- ✘ Thesis Statements
- ✘ Citations
- ✘ Plagiarism
- ✘ Grammar and Syntax
- ✘ Writing Resources

FIRST STEPS

- ✘ Know the **type of essay** you are expected to write
 - + Understand the assignment. Ask if you have questions.
- ✘ Review lectures and class materials relevant to the topic
- ✘ Take notes on the topic with the assignment in mind (e.g., the question it asks or problem it poses)

ESSAY STRUCTURE

- ✘ Before writing, make an **outline**.
- ✘ In point form, jot down what you will say in each of your paragraphs and note how the main idea of each paragraph flows logically from the previous to the next.

ESSAY STRUCTURE

✘ Introduction:

- + Do not repeat the assignment question. Respond to it by making a claim, or a statement that can be debated. Be brief.
- + Do not begin with a sweeping generalization.

✘ Examples of poor opening statements:

- + *Gender inequality is universal in human societies.*
- + *Through history, people have always formed some kind of family.*

ESSAY STRUCTURE

- ✘ Introduction:
- ✘ Examples of better opening statements:
 - + *Differences in women's and men's roles have decreased in recent decades, but sexual relations among young adults still feature inequality.*
- ✘ Get to the point quickly. It should be clear in the introduction.
- ✘ Do not give definitions from popular sources like the dictionary, or Wikipedia.

THESIS

- ✘ a “road map” for the paper
- ✘ a sentence that presents your argument
 - + the body paragraphs should be an organized presentation of the discussion and evidence that supports your thesis statement
- ✘ most importantly, your thesis is the answer to the question (that the assignment asks you to answer, or of the problem that your assignment explores)

THESIS

- × **Note:** a thesis is not a simple statement of fact, or a statement of your interests. It should be a strong statement that you can support with evidence and with the logic of your argument. It should be the product of your thinking about the question, and the main idea and point of the paper. It should make a *specific* claim, or take a *specific* position.

THESIS

- ✘ Examples of poor thesis statements:
 - + Sapolsky has done research on the effects of testosterone on behaviour.
 - + This paper will review Sapolsky's argument about the effects—or lack of effects—of testosterone on behaviour

THESIS

- ✗ Common problems:
 - + Making an observation rather than making an assertion
 - + Being vague or not specific
 - + Making several points instead of one main point

THESIS

- ✘ An alternative, better thesis statement:
 - + Although there is a firm belief in popular culture that hormones cause certain behaviours, biologist Sapolsky's research shows that testosterone does not cause aggressive behaviour.

THESIS

✘ Weak thesis:

- + There are many new communication technologies in the world today.

- ✘ Does not take a position

✘ Stronger thesis:

- + New communication technologies are changing the way we live and how we interact with each other on a daily basis

- ✘ Takes a position

BODY PARAGRAPHS

- ✘ Each body paragraph should have *one point* that you will argue and defend with **supporting evidence**.
- ✘ Use a topic sentence
 - + States the main point of the paragraph.
 - + The topic sentence transitions from the last paragraph to the new paragraph
 - + The rest of the paragraph should support and elaborate on the main point.

EDITING

- ✘ A vital part of the writing process involves **editing** and **rewriting**
 - + Read sentences aloud
 - + Re-read for clarity. Pretend you are new to the topic. Have you made your point clearly to your audience?
 - + Check for grammar, spelling, and sentence structure.

CITATIONS

- ✘ Your essay must rely on your ideas and words. It is necessary, however, to draw on course materials and academic resources to support your argument. This requires proper academic citations.
 - + APA or ASA are preferred citation guides in sociology.

PLAGIARISM

- ✘ Remember: any ideas, including direct quotes or paraphrases that you use from another source **must be cited** in-text and referenced in your bibliography.
- ✘ Failure to do this is **plagiarism**, a serious academic offence.

CITATIONS

- ✘ **Important**: always provide a citation for direct quotes and paraphrases
- ✘ When do I cite?
 - + When using the exact words of another writer, including full sentences or fragments of a sentence
 - + When paraphrasing the words of another writer (changing some words, but using others while summarizing another author's point)
 - + When drawing on facts, statistics, and other data not commonly known

CITATIONS

✘ How do I cite?

- + Identify authors by their surnames, as well as the date of publication
- + Use quotation marks “x” when copying text word-for-word
- + Page numbers are necessary for all direct quotes and paraphrasing, including close summaries of arguments, and detailed information or facts.

CITATIONS—IN TEXT

✘ APA short quote examples:

- + According to Jones (1998), “students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time” (p. 199).
- + She claims that “students often had difficulty using APA style,” but she did not offer an explanation why (Jones, 1998, p. 199).

CITATIONS—IN TEXT

- ✘ Long Quotations: Place direct quotations that are 40 words, or longer, in a free-standing block of typewritten lines, and omit quotation marks. This entire block should be indented:

England (2010) provides us with a frame of analysis from a perspective that:

...considers race, class, and gender as patterns of interaction shaped by relations of production, of reproduction, and of distribution. Acker (1999) reminds us that race, class, and gender are best understood not as rigid positions in a social hierarchy, but as a set of experiences vis-a-vis the labor market, care obligations, and other individuals and institutions that can provide access to income. (p.568)

GRAMMAR/SYNTAX

- ✘ Spelling is important! Do not rely solely on spellcheck; it often makes mistakes.
- ✘ Use **active voice** in academic writing. Avoid passive voice.
- ✘ Make sure your punctuation is accurate.

GRAMMAR/SYNTAX

× Examples using **active voice**:

- + Couples build families through hard work, as well as love.
- + Hochschild argues that women work a *double shift*.

× Examples using **passive voice**:

- + Families are built by hard work and love.
- + It is argued by Hochschild that women are working a *double shift*.
- + It is known that...

“I” STATEMENTS

- ✘ Can you use the first-person personal pronoun “I”?
 - + Yes, but you should have a very clear reason why you are using it. If your reason is sound, it is unlikely that you will need to say “I” more than once or twice in an essay.
 - + Academic writing eschews personal claims. Instead, your claims should be grounded in evidence and argument, not opinion.

“I” STATEMENTS

- ✘ Most “I” statements are unnecessary even if you are making your own claim:
 - + I think fathers should do more housework to alleviate the burden of women’s *double shift*.
 - + To alleviate the burden of women’s *double shift*, fathers should do more housework.

PUNCTUATION

Let's eat grandma!



Let's eat, grandma!

**PUNCTUATION
SAVES LIVES!**

WRITING RESOURCES

- ✘ Writing at University of Toronto
<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>
- ✘ U of T Library workshops:
<http://resource.library.utoronto.ca/workshops>
- ✘ Useful citation guides at Purdue Owl:
 - + <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- ✘ Thanks to Dr. Andrea Williams for ‘Advice on Effective Essay Writing’ materials