**SOCI 625D1/D2: Professional Development Seminar in Sociology**

**Fall 2019 and Winter 2020**

*Class Location:* LEA 819  
*Class Meeting Time* (for exact dates see ‘Course Schedule’ below):  
Tuesdays 11:35 a.m-12:25 p.m. (in Fall term)  
Tuesdays 4:05-4:55 p.m. (in Winter term)  
*Instructor:* Professor Barry Eidlin

---

**Course Description**

The purpose of this professional development seminar is two-fold: first, to acquaint incoming sociology graduate students with the department’s faculty members and second, to familiarize students, more broadly, with the norms of the discipline.

---

**Course Materials**

Rojas, Fabio. 2011. *Grad Skool Rulz: Everything You Need to Know About Academia from Graduate School to Tenure* (available for electronic download at [https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/93455](https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/93455) Cost $3.00)

---

**Course Organization and Requirements**

**Class format:** Seminar format (1 hour every other week, for exact dates see ‘Course Schedule’ below). 7 seminars will be held in the fall term and 6 in the winter semester.

**Course requirements:**

- Course Attendance/Participation = 75%  
- ‘Talk’ Attendance = 25% (*Students are required to attend the Sociology Department Speaker Series talks and one non-departmental talk (e.g., Social Statistics and Population Dynamics Seminars, Social Studies of Medicine Seminars)*)  
  - NOTE: Students are required submit a one-page summary of the non-departmental talk

---

**Course Schedule**

**Seminar #1: Applying for External Funding**  
**Tuesday, September 10th**  
*Guest Speaker: Professor Jason Carmichael (Graduate Program Director)*  
- What are you eligible for?  
- How many times can you apply?  
- When are the deadlines?  
- How should you prepare your application?  
- When, from whom and on what should you solicit feedback?  

*Required Rojas Reading:* Chapter 3
Seminar #2: Speed Socialization

**to be held Friday, September 13th 3:00-4:00 p.m. in Thomson House Ballroom**

This event brings together students of the incoming graduate cohort with departmental faculty members in an informal setting to get acquainted with unprecedented speed!

Assignment: Read the faculty profiles and come up with 1-2 questions you might ask them.

Seminar #3: Assistantships: Research and Teaching
Tuesday, September 24th
Guest Speakers: Professor Sarah Brauner-Otto and Yvonne Chang (PhD Candidate)

- What can you expect from an assistantship?
- What's the point of an assistantship?
- How do you balance your need for money and completing your degree?
- What are your contractual obligations?

Required Rojas Reading: Chapter 21

Seminar #4: Priorities and Program Timeline: What Should You Be Focusing On and When?
Tuesday, October 8th
Guest Speaker: Professor Axel van den Berg

- What courses should you take and when?
- What do certain courses (e.g., reading and research, bibliographic methods) involve?
- What should you be doing during the summer?
- When can you expect to finish your program?
- When should you begin the job search?

Required Rojas Reading: Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

Seminar #5: Finding a Supervisor, Forming a Committee, Finding a ‘Second Reader’, Etc...
Tuesday, October 22nd
Guest Speaker: Professor Poulami Roychowdhury

- How do you choose a supervisor?
- What’s the role of your supervisor?
- What’s the role of committee members, a ‘second reader’ etc...?
- How do you negotiate expectations?

Required Rojas Reading: Chapters 12, 13, 19 and 20
Seminar #6: Area Exams
Tuesday, November 5th
Guest Speakers: Sakeef Karim (PhD Candidate) and Winnie Yang (PhD Candidate)

- What are they?
- What’s the purpose of them?
- What ‘areas’ are available in which to take an exam?
- How should you prepare for an area exam?
- What happens if you fail an area exam?

Required Rojas Reading: Chapter 9

Seminar #7: Presenting Your Work
Tuesday, November 19th
Guest Speakers: Professor Jan Doering

- How are conferences and workshops useful?
- How do you choose a conference venue for your work?
- How do you fund your conference attendance/presentation?

Required Rojas Reading: Chapter 29

Seminar #8: Balancing Academia and the Rest of Life
Tuesday, January 14th
Guest Speakers: Professors Luca Pesando and Shelley Clark

- How do you cope with academic obligations and everything else?
- How do you set limits?
- How do you avoid ‘burnout’?
- What can you do when faced with personal or family crisis?

Required Rojas Reading: Chapter 11, 22 and 23

Seminar #9: Academic Writing: Tips and Tricks
Tuesday, January 28th
Guest Speakers: Professor Jennifer Elrick and Yvonne Hung, McGill Writing Centre Graduate Program Coordinator

- How do you structure your ‘writing’ days?
- When should you seek feedback on written work?
- How do you co-author a manuscript, in practical terms?

Required Rojas Reading: Chapter 17 and 18
Seminars #10 and #11: Publish, Publish, Publish
Tuesday, February 11th and Tuesday, February 25th
Guest Speakers: Professor Barry Eidlin (Feb. 11) and Professor Zoua Vang (Feb. 25)
- How can you revise a research paper (for a class) into a publishable piece of scholarship?
- Should you send out your manuscript and if so, where?
- What are predatory presses?
- How is writing book reviews valuable?
- What is the average review time?
- How do you respond to reviewers?
- How do you deal with rejection?
- How do you get a book contract?
- Can more than one press/journal review your manuscript?
- How do you write for broader publics beyond academia?
- What if English is not your first language?

Required Rojas Reading: Chapters 26, 27 and 28

Seminar #12: Doing a Dissertation
Tuesday, March 10th
Guest Speakers: Milaine Alarie and Xavier St-Denis, recently-graduated McGill PhDs (Sociology)
- Why do a dissertation?
- Should you write a ‘book’ or ‘article-based’ dissertation?
- What does a dissertation proposal involve?
- How should you go about preparing it?
- What does a ‘defense’ involve?

Required Rojas Reading: Chapters 14, 15 and 16

Seminar #13: Job Prospects
Tuesday, March 24th
Guest Speaker: TBA
- What different opportunities are there for you in academia (e.g., liberal arts college vs. research university)?
- What opportunities are there for you outside of academia?
- What are Canadian sociologists doing?
- How do you network?
- How can/should you use social media to promote yourself?

Required Rojas Reading: Chapters 30, 31, 32, 34, 38, 39, 40 and 41
Other Useful Resources

At McGill

1. GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES (GPS) http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/students
2. POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS’ SOCIETY (PGSS) an association of all graduate students and postdoctoral fellows at McGill... We are here to support you throughout your academic work at McGill and to serve as a resource if you ever need help dealing with the University or life in Montreal.” https://pgss.mcgill.ca/en
3. SKILLSETS “a centrally-managed program that is jointly hosted by Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and Teaching and Learning Services. We develop and promote interdisciplinary professional development offerings to all Graduate Students and Post-Doctoral Fellows.” http://www.mcgill.ca/skillsets/
4. CAREER AND PLACEMENT SERVICES (CaPS) http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/

PhD blogs

1. THE DUTCH PHD COACH http://www.thedutchphdcoach.com/blog/
2. DR. SUSTAINABLE http://www.drsustainable.com/
3. GET A LIFE, PHD http://getalifephd.blogspot.nl/p/about-me.html
4. GRADHACKER http://www.gradhacker.org/
5. PHD2PUBLISHED http://www.phd2published.com/
6. THE THESIS WHISPER http://thethesiswhisperer.com/
7. THE PROFESSOR IS IN http://theprofessorisin.com

Higher Education News

1. UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS (for Canada) http://www.universityaffairs.ca/default.aspx
2. CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION http://chronicle.com/section/Home/5

Academic Job Listings

1. UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS (for Canada) http://www.universityaffairs.ca/default.aspx
2. AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
   http://www.asanet.org/employment/employment.cfm

Other Professional Materials

1. THE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGIST (journal) “The American Sociologist publishes papers, comments, and other writings on topics of professional and disciplinary concern to sociologists. The contents examine intellectual, practical, and ethical issues affecting the work, careers, and perspectives of sociologists.” http://link.springer.com/journal/12108