What is the Purpose of the Writing Project?

3 Primary Goals
1) Read and synthesize academic research
2) Write in a professional academic style
3) Use evidence to support an argument

Identifying academic research
• Journal Quality
  • Articles must be from listed journals or approved by me
  • These journals use blind peer review
  • Articles must be original research and NOT review

Paper organization
• Use checklists on assignment description
• Make an outline based on main argument and supporting points
  • Do not organize your paper just as a series of article reviews

Outline example
Argument: Wives’ employment stabilizes marriage.
Introduction: Importance of studying relationship between women’s employment and divorce
Supporting Point #1) Income provides economic cushion
Supporting Point #2) Wives’ more satisfied with marriage when they work outside the home
Supporting Point #3), . . .
Concession: Wives’ income provides means to leave marriage
Conclusion

Structure of a research article
• Introduction
• Literature review and hypotheses
• Data and Methods
• Results/Findings
• Conclusion
Summarizing research
• For most articles you reference, you should include at least one or two sentences about the research design, sample, and measures.
• Every summary should include the KEY FINDING(S).
  • These findings should relate to your argument

ASA citation format
• See Canvas help documents
• Applies to two parts:
  • REFERENCES
  • IN-TEXT

Writing professionally
• Should “sound like” a journal article
  • Not personal
  • No first person
• Seek help if needed (Writing Center)
• Read out loud
• Spell check and other errors
• When in doubt, use shorter sentences
Sociology 326 Writing Project: Due Monday, November 27th

You will draw on findings from these readings to answer one of 3 possible questions.

1. Does the employment of mothers with young children enhance or detract from the well-being of children?

2. Is the decision to cohabit beneficial or harmful for those involved?

OR

3. You may submit to me a thesis of your own choosing. You must discuss this with me over email or in person no later than November 13th.

On Wednesday, November 15th you will turn in to me, for a small portion of your paper grade:
   1) Your question choice
   2) 2 article citations you have found on your own, cited in ASA style
   3) Paragraph-length summaries of these 2 articles
   4) A tentative outline of your paper, where the first heading is “Introduction: Your Tentative Title, the headings in the middle are the points you plan to make, and the last heading is “Conclusion.”

Checklist 1: Content: The paper should:

- Include your own synthesis of at least 3 research articles I have identified (see references and links below)
- Include your own synthesis of at least 2 research articles of your own choosing
- Include reference to at least one reading from class.
- Discuss research articles (3 of mine and 2 of yours) that contain empirical analysis. They should not be reviews or research summaries. Each article should include sections titled “data” or “data and methods” and “findings” or “results.”
- Make reference to at least 6 readings
- Be structured with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion
- In the body you should support your position based on your interpretation of the findings in the articles
- Include at least one paragraph that argues against your position (a “concession”), supported with findings in at least one of the articles you have chosen
- Include some detailed information about at least 5 studies (sample characteristics/data, study design, measures) and clearly state relevant findings
- Not be organized as a summary of consecutive articles. Rather, your main supporting and opposing points should be clearly identified in the introduction and supported in the body paragraphs.
- Should include a topic sentence for every paragraph, along with supporting information from relevant studies as appropriate
- Should not include direct quotes longer than 4 consecutive words, with most paragraphs having no direct quotes. The goal is to paraphrase in your own words except when there is a phrase that cannot be expressed differently.
Checklist 2: Formatting: The paper should:

- Be 5 to 7 pages in length
- Be typed and double-spaced, not including references or tables
- Be formatted according to the ASA style format. The easiest way to learn this is to read and emulate articles that use these styles (Hint: *American Sociological Review* uses ASA). I have also posted two documents on citation formatting guidelines.
- Have page numbers at the bottom right corner of every page
- Have no extra spaces between any paragraphs (no “double double” spacing)
- Have a meaningful title at the top of the first page (but no cover page)
- Have your name at the top of the first page
- Have 12-point font (Times New Roman preferred)
- 1 inch margins on all sides
- Be stapled
- Be turned in at the **start of class** on the day it is due
- Have a reference section on the last page, starting after the end of the text, and clearly labeled “REFERENCES.”
  - Each citation should be in the reference section
  - Each reading in the references should be cited in the paper
- Your paper should **never include article titles in the text**. Refer to all readings in text by author(s) last name according to ASA formatting guidelines

**Journal Article Criteria**
The 2 articles you select should be from 2010 or later (more recent). They should be chosen from the list of journals below or be directly approved by me. They must be **research** articles to count toward your total of 6, unless they are one of the course readings. (This means that they cannot be **review** articles.) One good way to tell whether it is a research article is that there must be a section of “Data and Methods” as well as a section of “Findings” or “Results.” Ask me if you are unsure whether the article is appropriate.

**Acceptable Journals for Chosen Articles**
**Writing Project Reference Articles**

**Question 1: Does the employment of mothers with young children enhance or detract from the well-being of children?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**Related Readings from Class**


### Question 2: Is the decision to cohabit beneficial or harmful for those involved?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James, Spencer L. and Brett A. Beattie. 2012. “Reassessing the Link between Women’s Premarital Cohabitation and Marital Quality.” <em>Social Forces</em> 91:635-62.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Related Readings from Class (there may be others)
