

Sociology 952
Mathematical and Statistical Applications in Sociology
Path Analysis and Structural Equation Models

Guidelines for Seminar Papers

(Rev. January 2008)

1. Write clearly.
 - a. Assume the reader is not necessarily a specialist in your discipline or area.
 - i. Define specialized terms.
 - ii. Describe major scientific issues in full.
 - iii. Explain why the causal assumptions in your model(s) are either right or useful for other reasons.
 - iv. “Avoid needless words.” (Read Strunk, William and E. B. White. 1979. *The Elements of Style*. 3rd ed. New York : Macmillan.)
 - b. Describe major empirical findings and their implications in full. Don’t stop with, “Here’s my model and its coefficients. Make of it what you will.”
2. Document your work.
 - a. Make a table (in fixed font or in a worksheet) for any model worth taking seriously, that is, which has not been rejected on the way to a better model.
 - i. Report parameter estimates *and* their standard errors.
 - ii. Report fully standardized coefficients, especially for measurement models.
 - iii. Avoid “*” as indicators of statistical significance.
 - iv. Avoid *t*-statistics. Anyone can see the ratio of a parameter estimate to its s.e.
 - v. For each model, report the LR test statistic, *df*, *n*, BIC, and RMSEA. Avoid other indices of fit unless you also offer a specific justification for their use in this instance.
 - vi. Report reduced form coefficients, direct, and indirect effects whenever they are appropriate to the model (use the command EF on the OU line of LISREL).
 - b. Use path diagrams as well as equations to describe your model. Do not use LISREL-created path diagrams unless they are clear and complete. It may be much better to draw your own, even freehand.
 - c. Appendices (fixed font, readable size)
 - i. Means and standard deviations, possibly measures of skew.

- ii. Information about multiple imputation, including method(s) and amount of imputation for each variable.
 - iii. Correlations (not covariances).
 - iv. Input run-streams and output for major runs.
3. Aim for professional style.
 - a. Always use a spell-checker.
 - b. If your native language is not English:
 - i. Find an editor, or
 - ii. Ask a native English speaker to read and help you edit the text, or
 - iii. Take your manuscript to the Writing Lab for editorial advice.
 - c. Fonts
 - i. Never use a base font smaller than 12 points.
 - ii. Use Times Roman, Dutch, Palatino, Georgia, Schoolbook, or other similar fonts for text. (Courier or prestige elite are acceptable, but less attractive.)
 - iii. You *may* use Helvetica, Swiss, Ariel, Calibri, or similar fonts, but **only** for titles or headers.
 - iv. **Never** use Swiss, Helvetica, Ariel, or similar fonts for text or for table entries.
 - v. Unless you are skilled in laying out tables, use a fixed font like Courier, Courier New, or Prestige Elite for tables.
 - vi. Place footnotes on the same page as the citation to them, and use a font no more than 1 point smaller than the base font. Avoid long textual footnotes.
 - d. Other formatting issues.
 - i. Use ample margins, e.g., 1" all around.
 - ii. Double-space all text.
 - iii. Number text and reference pages, after the first page.
 - iv. Order the components of the paper as follows: Cover page, abstract, text, references, tables, figures, appendixes.
 - v. Print the above-named components only on *one* side of the page. It is difficult to read a text closely when it is printed on both sides.
 - vi. Staple the cover page through the figures in one packet; staple the Appendix; use a strong metal clip to attach the two packets.
 - vii. Read the paper and attachments before you turn it in. Look for typographical errors and poor language, and make sure the print quality is good.

I will not read papers that are not in acceptable form. They will be returned unread.