Advanced Pro Seminar Questions, Topic 2: Publishing

1. **Should a grad student look for co-authorship (with a professor) or would it be better to work on a paper independently? If both options are available, which one we should pick?**

Andrew Gray

- Both!
- In my experience, I've benefitted a lot from working with the faculty. When working with the faculty, you have other avenues that will open up to you – other people that they work with or that they know better. This allows future co-authorships. This is an important route that you should look into. But it's also important to work on your own papers, and make sure you get your own voice on what you're talking about. If you're able to have a professor to work with and who can support you with your projects, that's great.

Dr. Miller

- I say both as well. Try to find something that is unique to your interests and a contribution to the field, but you also want to develop these connections. You need people to give you feedback and to help you market yourself when you're looking for work. Do something with a professor, with a friend, and on your own.

Dr. Michalec

- I definitely think doing both is the best, but it's good to do it on your own too. It can be challenging and frustrating to publish on your own. I still have problems with formatting for publishing. Every time you publish to new journals, you have to reformat – and doing this on your own can be really frustrating. Doing it with a mentor, advisor, or faculty member can help you learn the ropes. In my perspective, the best thing you can do is learn the ropes first and then do it on your own.

Dr. Longazel

- When you submit your resume, it's important to present yourself as having a coherent identity. This is a person who studies X. As someone who is on search committees, I've seen people with scattered topics and are fourth author a bunch of times. It makes you wonder what's happening and how they can be defined as a scholar. If you're thinking about doing something independently or with someone, just keep this in mind. You don't want to publish something that is way out from what you're doing. My master's thesis was completely different topic, so I'm kind of glad that it didn't get published. I have a relatively coherent

2. **What are your best strategies for breaking down larger written works into journal-length articles?**

Dr. Longazel

- It's about finding a hook for the article. Rather than starting with the larger written work in mind, start with the article in mind. What's the hook for this article, then pull in from the larger work. There's a lot of opportunity to do this, thesis or dissertation for example. A good place to think about publishing is a journal like Sociology Compass (check this) – it takes what you

Dr. Michalec

- The only experience I have with this is dissertation. I happened to have chapters that worked with well with articles. I had to regurgitate certain parts repeatedly to different articles, which was weird. I thought ahead when I wrote my dissertation in how I could break it down into separate articles. I typically go into it thinking about articles. I don't write large-scale – so my situation is different.

Dr. Miller

- Your comp paper is a really good possible publication. I really love large projects because I usually include an ethnographic component. I've just finished my ninth book, and a few of them are coauthored. For me, every chapter in my dissertation can end up being a different article, and that's how you should think about your dissertation. The first largest work you'll have is likely your dissertation, and so you'll have to think if this will end up being a book or an article. What's your research question? That should drive if it's a publication or a larger project and book. As a graduate student, you're typically thinking "articles".

Andrew Gray

- My largest work was my thesis, which I broke down into two articles. I really had to pay attention to the page limit. My writing has always been wordy, and with lit reviews I always want to include everything. So, I've always struggled with making sure they meet the journal limits. Some of what I've done to help with that is reading a lot of books on writing – how to write more directly, how to cut out the fluff – I have a list of books that I can recommend to you all. A couple of them were ones that Ronet had on her syllabus – and they were all so helpful.

3. **Should we choose a topic based on whether it can get published or based on personal interests? In other words, should we decide which journal we want to publish in and frame a research question based on the requirements/interests of that journal? If so, how do we find the right journal?**

Dr. Longazel

- 100% based on your personal interests. I think it feels that there are enough journals out there now that you'll find the space for your topic. I'm saying 100% because I feel strongly that you should want to be in control of what you're doing to a degree. But that's just me – I can see if your goal is to publish in a specific journal, and you want to write a paper to fit into that journal. But, papers can change as you go and as your write or collect data – so I usually have a few journals in mind that it might work for, and once I get further along in the writing process, I pick the journal and what their word count and

formatting is. I usually decide about 75-80% through the process what journal I'm going to choose. I try to match the idea of the paper to the list of journals.

Dr. Michalec

- I usually start with three journals in mind. I tier them – I go for the big guns first with the hope of getting some feedback or an RNR. I've never gotten a direct acceptance, and that's fine. That will happen. I never choose a journal first, I usually choose them toward the end. I always think and critique writing with "so what?" – and this is something to keep in mind. We all have great interests – you have to think more broadly about your topics and where does that topic matter. Ask yourself early, "so what?" and answer that question quickly and put it in writing.

Dr. Miller

- Have an elevator talk. This is my research, and this is why it's important. I agree that my work is always based on my interests and is fueled by what is missing and what is relevant for policy. At the same time, there was someone specifically that I really wanted to work with, and so I worked with them. It also depends on where you are in your career. If you're approaching the job market or tenure, you may approach this a different way. What's quick – what is a hole you can fill quickly with a publication? Time is precious, and you want to be able to do other work that will enhance your life. You want to have passion about your work.

Andrew Gray

- Do research that you're interested in. I look for journals after I start the process. I usually use a tiered system, where I have a couple of backups just in case it gets rejected. I've only reframed an article to get into a special issue – but most journals I look at are broad topics and it's a bit easier to meet your topic interests.

4. **What time management strategies do you use for completing articles for submission, especially when submitting to journals with rolling submission acceptance policies (rather than hard deadlines)?**

Andrew Gray

- I try to set my own deadlines, but it's easier if you're working with faculty. They keep you on track and make sure you're getting your work done. I try to make deadlines based on other things I'm working on, but it's hard.

Dr. Miller

- It's hard for some people to get started. You have a million ideas, and it can be really hard. Set your timer for an hour, and see where you can get. If things are going well, you'll blow past that timer. But if you're struggling, at least you started. If you have different projects going on, you can switch projects and go to the literature review or the analyses. Deadlines are really good – it almost scares you. You know you have to get a certain amount done by a certain date – I like hard deadlines, not rolling ones.

Dr. Michalec

- Deadlines can be fuzzy. I use conference deadlines. I utilize the conference presentations to guide my topics, and I do a stream of consciousness of writing afterward which really helps. I do a presentation on it which helps build the organization of what the paper should look like. I use a table that has the different stages of things – this helps me not take in too many projects. If one project isn't past half-way written, I won't take on another project.

Dr. Longazel

- I usually start with a conference paper as well. It's key, because this makes it real. It exists, and is more than idea. After the conference, it becomes a little monster that is going to wake you up and remind you that it isn't written yet. This makes me get to it. I finish it because I want to slay that monster and I'm sick of it bothering me. At a certain point you burn out, and you're going to want to move on. I let stress be my motivator. But don't burn yourself out, and work in rest. I don't work at night, and this is because if I work too many hours on a project I don't get good work done on it.

5. **I'd like to hear more about how you plan your projects for publication. In other words, we know that to be effective and productive, it's ideal to identify and work on several projects throughout any given year, often at various stages of completion and scope. Can you discuss important aspects of your process for conceptualizing, planning, and executing your publishing projects for the upcoming year?**

Dr. Longazel

- I don't think of it as year-wise. It's just really hard to get that right, because of review phases and acceptance. I try to take advantage of the gaps that are built into the process of publishing. For example, after I send in a paper for RNR, I can then start a new project. This idea of pipelines and knowing what is going to be a priority and when, and what's coming up next.

Dr. Michalec

- I work with someone who edits all my work, and I use their feedback. I have to think about whether this is an active topic, and if I see other people publishing on similar topics, you want to publish when the "buzz" and wave are relevant. When I see something is hot, it gives me a fire to publish it. It becomes the priority.

Dr. Miller

- I don't really think about what I'm doing on a year-basis. As a faculty member, we get annual reviews and merit assigned to our publications, which may effect your projects. The projects I work on often extend more than a year. I keep a notebook of ideas that are sparked from my current projects. Working hard and playing hard is important, because the playing hard inspires ideas. You can make connections you wouldn't have made. Even though it's down time, you're still thinking about it. This will also be different if you're working with a grant or with the community – you'll have different deadlines and needs to be met for them. I'm always juggling numerous projects, which never feels problematic because I'm interested in all of them.

Andrew Gray

- I've never thought about it as a year either. I've always thought about it as a process. What has been ideally recommended to me is to have something under review, something you're finishing up, and something you're starting with. Having those three on rotation has been good advice.

6. **Realistically, how many journal articles is it possible to publish during a PhD program?**

Andrew Gray

- It has been recommended to have about one publication a year by the time you're done. I'm not sure if this is realistic, but this was told to me as an ideal

Dr. Miller

- Teaching colleges are looking for one a year. I wrote down three with a question mark. I'm basing this on being on search committees. This is a combination of shared publications and independent. But graduate school shouldn't only be about publication – you'll never have this time again, and part of it is learning and seeing the connections in your field. How can you contribute to this field? What kind of quality will these pieces be if you're pushing out more than three? This could be such a long process. Don't beat yourself up. One suggestion is to get a lot of information from a variety of mentors – someone who does quantitative work is going to suggest a larger number of publications.

You want to aim to high impact journals, or be attached to somebody who will get your name out there. If you have 0, 1, or 2, you will look different than someone competing for the same job. You should be looking at publishing at least three.

Dr. Michalec

- Being on committees, I think 2-3 is good. Being first author on one, and then being second or third on others is good. I take into consideration that you were able to be a top author and were able to take the lead. I also look at book chapters because that's a different type of writing. Three-ish, if I had to put a number on it, makes sense.

Dr. Longazel

- I just checked my CV to see how many I had when I finished, and I had three. I had a good fellowship on my resume as well, and got a job at a place that was teaching-focused but also had plenty of room for research. But again, this was also eight years ago. You want to be doing other stuff in graduate school – take this chance to read Marx! Later, you'll wish you took more classes and different types of classes. It really comes down to striking the balance of developing as a writer and scholar, and making sure you're productive.

7. **How do you shop around for where you should publish? How do you handle rejection from journals without being completely discouraged?**

Dr. Longazel

- To shop around, in time you become familiar with certain journals. I usually give an extra look anyway – I try to look for new-ish journals who are up-in-coming and will try to look around for them. I look at articles I'm referencing in my literature review as well to see what journals they used.
- After being rejected, I don't always read the reviews right away. If the email isn't good, I'll wait to read what they commented. My psychology is usually that if this journal doesn't want me, shame on them, and I'll find another one. I don't try to put this on me at all. You need to familiarize yourself with academic personality types, which you can see in reviewers. You'll see consistent types of reviewers, and a lot of the time it just depends on who happened to get the review. Keep that in mind, and don't take it personally. Also, to get an RNR is best case scenario. And even with rejections, there are recommendations. Your paper will always come back with some type of negative feedback. Just remind yourself of that.

Dr. Michalec

- A good strategy is to look to see where others are publishing. I also always have a few journals I work with that I aim for.
- For rejection, I write an immediate "how dare you" response. I cut and paste the comments and address each one as a response to reviews. The ones I really don't like, I do first. And I write the email you should never write, which I don't actually send – but I let it sit for a few days, and then I reread my paper. And most of the time, I can see where they're coming from. Get the emotionality out of it in the email, and then return to your paper. This is part of the game. There's only so much room in these journals, and there's

top people being rejected. In the beginning, I thought my work was terrible and that's why I was being rejected – but you get used to it.

Dr. Miller

- I'm an associate editor on a few journals, and some only accept 5-11%. Big names get rejected all the time, and they have a hard time to find reviewers. You have to address every single response to how you addressed their comments – but leave the emotion out. You will also get some personalities – where someone was offended because they weren't cited. I've pushed back a few times in my career, where I felt the editor had a responsibility to address the reviews more closely. If after the initial anger goes away and you still feel that it wasn't fair, you should confront those reviews. I think you can push back in a very diplomatic way. Don't take it personally.

Andrew Gray

- Use it as a chance for growth. This can be somewhere else that working with a faculty member can be helpful. They can guide which comments are more important than others, and what you should focus on.

<u>Questions from the Audience:</u>

Is publishing how you are evaluated in your career?

Dr. Michalec

- Yes, As you move further in your career, you can develop a different niche where it's not as important. But in the beginning, it's a hidden curriculum which is very important to your evaluations

Dr. Miller

- Until you get rid of tenure, that is how you will be evaluated.

Where do you see your impact as professional? What is the most rewarding, teaching or publishing?

Dr. Miller

- I'm a people person, so for me it's more inspiring to see students move on and do great things. But my research can impact policies, and that will affect people. For me, it doesn't matter so much as how many publications or awards I have, as long as I feel like I'm making an impact on undergrads and grads.

Dr. Michalec

- For me, research is the impact on program policy and classes that are being offered. It I can affect how classes are being taught or the application process, that's great. And teaching I love and I think that it's rewarding at its front.

Dr. Longazel

- For me, it's teaching and then the organizing work that I do, and then publication last. For teaching, the personal interaction is what I like the most. After some recent work, I've been working on the organizing realm to fight and make problems public. This is a unique topic that may not translate to others, but this has been humbling. And journal articles are useful for my career, but it's less rewarding than working directly with people.