“THEY SAY”: HOW TO INTRODUCE THE ARGUMENTS OF OTHERS

Introducing what “They Say”

• A number of sociologists have recently suggested that X’s work has several fundamental problems.
• It has become common today to dismiss X’s contribution to the field of sociology.
• In their recent work, Y and Z have offered harsh critiques of Dr. X for ______.

Introducing something implied or assumed

• Although none of them have ever said so directly, my teachers have often given me the impression that ______.
• One implication of X’s treatment of ______ is that ______.
• Although X does not say so directly, she apparently assumes that ______.
• While they rarely admit as much, ______ often take for granted that ______.

Introducing an ongoing debate

• In discussions of X, one controversial issue has been ______. On the one hand, ______ argues ______. On the other hand, ______ contends ______. Others even maintain ______. My own view is ______.
• When it comes to the topic of _______, most of us will readily agree that ______. Where this argument usually ends, however, is on the question of ______. Whereas some are convinced that _______, others maintain that ______.
• In conclusion, then, as I suggested earlier, defenders of ______ can’t have it both ways. Their assertion that ______ is contradicted by their claim that ______.

Capturing authorial action

• X acknowledges that ______.
• X agrees that ______.
• X argues that ______.
• X believes that ______.
• X denies/do not deny that ______.
• X complains that ______.
• X claims that ______.
• X concedes that ______.
• X demonstrates that ______.
• X deplores the tendency to ______.

• X reports that ______.
• X suggests that ______.
• X urges us to ______.
• X observes that ______.
• X reminds us that ______.
• X refutes the claim that ______.
• X questions whether ______.
• X insists that ______.
• X emphasizes that ______.
• X celebrates the fact that ______.

Adapted from They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkstein (2006).