

San José State University
College of Social Sciences / Environmental Studies
ENVS 297, Research and Proposal Development, Spring 2015

WRITING YOUR THESIS OUTLINE

NOTHING SAYS "I'M ALMOST DONE" TO YOUR ADVISOR/ SPOUSE/PARENTS LIKE PRETENDING YOU HAVE A PLAN

STEP 1 Aim for a respectable number of chapters:

STEP 2 Fill in the "freebies":

STEP 3 Make up titles for the "meat" chapters:

STEP 4 Voilà! You just bought yourself another two years

5 = "That's IT??"
 6-7 = "Not bad"
 8+ = "Are you crazy??"

1. INTRODUCTION
 2. LIT REVIEW
 3. METHODOLOGY
 4.
 5.
 6.
 7. CONCLUSIONS

6. LIT REVIEW
 3. METHODOLOGY
 4. (THAT STUFF YOU DID YOUR FIRST YEAR)
 5. (STUFF YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING NOW)
 6. (MAKE STUFF UP)
 7. CONCLUSIONS

(It'll be years before you actually have to work on that later chapter, and by then your thesis topic will have changed anyway)

So, how's your thesis going?
 i have an outline!

JORGE CHAM © 2006
 www.phdcomics.com

- Instructor:** Will Russell
- Office Location:** Washington Square Hall 115E
- Email:** will.russell@sjsu.edu
- Office Hours:** Monday 1:00 - 3:30 pm
 Wednesday 1:00 - 2:00 pm
- Class Days/Time:** Monday 4:30 – 7:15
- Classroom:** Washington Square Hall 115
- Prerequisites:** Graduate Standing in Environmental Studies or consent of instructor

Catalog Description

Students develop their thesis topic through extensive literature research. The product will be a draft thesis proposal to be circulated among potential committee members. Prerequisite: Graduate Standing in Environmental Studies or consent of instructor.

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to give graduate students an opportunity to develop their thesis/project proposal under close faculty supervision, to give graduate students an opportunity to work with and receive constructive criticism from their own colleagues through the various stages of proposal development, to give graduate students an opportunity to formally defend their complete draft proposal before their peers. My personal objective is that each student in the course will produce a **proposal that is 100% complete and officially signed off by the thesis committee/project chair before the end of the semester.**

Texts/Readings

Turabian, K. 2007. A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Seventh Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers - Seventh Edition. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
SJSU Thesis Guidelines.pdf. from: <http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/thesis/>

Assignments and Grading Policy

The primary assignment for this course is a complete thesis proposal approved by your full thesis committee. We will be working through each step in the proposal writing process together in class and will address individual sections of the proposal through separate assignments and exercises. Because this course is based on one main goal (**completion of a signed thesis proposal**) your grade in the class will be task oriented. If you are able to complete your proposal and get it signed by your thesis committee chair within the timeframe of the semester you will automatically receive an “A” in the class, if your proposal is signed by your full committee you will receive an “A+,” if you are not able to get your proposal signed your grade will be based on points earned. Points will be earned through successful completion of the following assignments:

Final Complete Proposal

Front Pages (Carefully follow instructions, including pagination, from graduate studies guidelines).

- Title Page (title is no more than 80 characters, including spaces and punctuation)
- Thesis Committee Page
- Abstract (one double spaced page maximum)
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures (if appropriate)
- List of Tables (if appropriate)

Introduction – Should include the following:

- Motivation/Scope
- Related Research
- Problem Statement
- Objectives, Questions, and Hypotheses

Methods

- Study Site/Sample Frame – where, what, and whom?
- Study Design – organized by research objective(s) & hypotheses
- Data Collection – organized by research objective(s) & hypotheses
- Data Analysis – organized by research objective(s) & hypotheses

Citations and Referencing

The ‘reference and citation style’ required for your thesis, and thesis proposal, is determined by your thesis adviser. The SJSU Graduate Studies office suggests Turabian, however your adviser may ask you follow another style guide, or the citation guidelines for a research journal in your field. In either case citation style and format must be precise and consistent throughout the document. All references should be peer-reviewed academic

journal research papers or other primary sources in your field. Internet-only sources should be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

Thesis Proposal Segment Drafts – Prior to the submission of the complete thesis proposal, the following sections will be reviewed as separate documents. See syllabus for due dates for each section – not necessarily in the same order as below.

Motivation/Scope

In this section you will build the groundwork for the rest of your thesis proposal. Begin by addressing the question, what environmental problem will your thesis be addressing (think big picture)? Next, consider what lens you will be looking at this problem through (social science, life science, physical science, etc.). Finally you will need to develop the broad logic leading to your specific choice of research questions (2-5 pages).

Related Research

In this section you will summarize the body of literature that relates to your thesis topic (10 to 30 pages, with 30-45 primary references). Organize this section like an academic essay - from the general to specific. Begin by describing the theoretical framework that you are using to address your thesis topic. Follow with detailed descriptive information pertinent to your specific topic. Use subheadings to reflect internal organization may include subsections.

Problem Statement

In this section you will present a concise statement (< 3 pages) of the central problem leading to your specific research objectives, questions, and hypothesis.

Research Questions/Objectives and Hypotheses

In this section you should clearly state the central, and specific, objectives or questions that your project will address, and 3 to 5 specific testable predictions (active or null/statistical hypotheses). The portion of the proposal should be one page or less.

Methods

The bulk of this section should be completed in ENVS-200. Be sure to include methods related research, a description of your sample frame (where, or who), and a complete and repeatable detailed description of how the project will be completed, including data gathering and analysis (5-10 pages).

Budget, Timeline, and Curriculum Vitae

These additional sections are required for your thesis proposal, but not your final thesis (2 to 3 pages). The budget should include all projected costs directly related to completing your thesis project. The timeline should address each step in the process from this point forward to the publication of your thesis research. The Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a detailed academic resume. Unlike a standard resume, the CV is not limited in length, and should include all pertinent experience (volunteer, work, academic), honors, and achievements. Use tables and figures where appropriate.

Article Presentation

You will present one peer reviewed journal article directly related to your thesis/project topic during class time. Choose an article that you find interesting enough that you will be able to lead a lengthy discussion focused on it. The a **high quality** copy (digital or hard copy) of the full article will be made available to all class members one week before the scheduled presentation date. Presentations should include a summary of the article, a critique, and a discussion (approximately 30-45 minutes total). In addition, you should come prepared with a list of discussion topics/questions to create dialog in class.

Proposal Defense

Each student will present their thesis research proposal to the class including all aspects of their proposal **including their proposed methods**. You should plan on 30 minutes for your presentation and 15 minutes for critique. The presentations should be professional in style and quality.

Class Participation

Attendance

You are required to attend every class meeting unless you are ill or have an emergency. If you need to miss class for either of these reasons e-mail me as promptly as possible especially if you are expected to present that week.

Peer Reviews

Participation in the review of fellow students is an essential part of this course and is required. Reviews are expected to be critical, substantive, and productive.

Participation in discussions

Participation does not mean being verbose. In many cases allowing or encouraging others to speak is more valuable to the group dynamic. Providing the group your insights in an engaging and respectful manner is appreciated. Statements are always more interesting if they are backed up by logic and evidence.

Presentations

As a presenter it is your job to make your subject informative and entertaining. Please be professional and creative!

Respect and decorum

All class participants will behave in a manner that provides a positive and comfortable learning environment for everybody.

Assignment Values

Assignments	Points
Final Complete Proposal	20
<i>Motivation and Scope</i>	5
<i>Related Research</i>	10
<i>Problem Statement</i>	5
<i>Objectives, Questions, and Hypotheses</i>	5
<i>Budget, Timeline, and CV</i>	5
<i>Methods</i>	5
Article Presentations	10
Proposal Defense	20
Participation	15
Total	100

Grading Rubric

Level of Completion	Grade
Complete proposal signed by full thesis/project committee	A+
Thesis/Project proposal signed by at least one member of the committee.	A
> 90 points	A-
88-90	B+
83-87 points	B
80-82 points	B-
< 80 points	Fail

Grading Policy

No late work will be accepted. All assignments must be uploaded to Canvas by the due date. There will be a **zero tolerance policy on plagiarism** in this class.. Any act of plagiarism will result in a report to the Academic Integrity Office and a failing grade in this class. If you do not know what plagiarism is, please review the University policies below. If you are still unclear, please speak to the instructor.

University Policies

Academic Integrity (Plagiarism) –

Students should know that the University's Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf.

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors ENV5 297, Research and Proposal Development, Spring 2009

Course Schedule

This outline is subject to change. Attend class regularly to stay current. Readings for class meetings are to be completed *before* you come to class.

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
1/26	Introductions Thesis Topic and Committee Visit with Candidate Dr. Anne Luna-Gordinier		
2/2	Article Presentation Visit with Candidate Dr. Jason Douglas	<i>Article TBA</i> SJSU Thesis Guidelines	
2/9	Peer Reviews Article Presentation Visit with Candidate Dr. Keith Miyake	<i>Article TBA</i>	Motivation and Scope
2/16	Peer Reviews Article Presentation	<i>Article TBA</i>	Curriculum Vitae, Budget, Timeline
2/23	Peer Reviews Article Presentation	<i>Article TBA</i>	
3/2	Article Presentation	<i>Article TBA</i>	
3/9	Article Presentation	<i>Article TBA</i>	
3/16	Peer Reviews Article Presentation	<i>Article TBA</i>	Related Research
3/23	SPRING RECESS		
3/30	Peer Reviews Article Presentation	<i>Article TBA</i>	Objectives/Research Questions and Hypotheses
4/6	Article Presentation	<i>Article TBA</i>	
4/13	Peer Reviews Article Presentation	<i>Article TBA</i>	Methods
4/20	Research Proposal Defenses		
4/27	Research Proposal Defenses		
5/4	Research Proposal Defenses		
5/11	Research Proposal Defenses		Proposals Due Signatures Due

**Department of Environmental Studies, San Jose State University
Master's Thesis Proposal Approval Form**

Students Name _____ **Date** _____

Thesis Title

Thesis Adviser

Printed Name

Signature

Additional Committee Members

Printed Name

Signature

Printed Name

Signature

Thesis Committee Etiquette

Always maintain a professional demeanor when consulting with your thesis advisor and thesis committee members. These are the people that can help you the most. To encourage a positive relationship, be respectful of their time and busy schedules.

Before submitting either your thesis or thesis proposal to any other thesis committee members **consult with your thesis adviser**. Always give your thesis adviser the first opportunity to review your work before you send it to anybody else connected to the thesis process.