

SOC 200B –Thesis Prospectus/Project Preparation Seminar

Amador 261

W 4-5:50

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SacCT: www.csus.edu/sacct

Suggested Texts: *How to Write a Thesis* by Harry Teitelbaum

Writing Literature Reviews by Jose Galvan

Style Guide of the American Sociological Association

Writing for Social Scientists by Howard Becker

Objective: To provide faculty and peer support for the process of developing a draft of a thesis prospectus or project proposal. This includes the clarification of expectations, familiarization with research resources, and support provided through feedback in a structured environment. You should leave this class with a working DRAFT of a paper, but it is up to your chair to say it is done.

Method: A series of interactive work sessions involving students reporting on progress and problem solving with peer feedback and consultation. Students must present their assignments at every meeting. Students will be assigned due dates for submission of draft sections to the instructor who proctors the seminar. Students will also be expected to maintain on-going consultations with their thesis committee throughout the semester. While the seminar coordinator will provide feedback, all final decisions regarding prospectus content resides with the thesis committee. It is the student's responsibility to consult regularly with her or his chair as the project develops.

Group: You are required to work in groups of three to offer feedback to one another about your projects. You will need to either bring or send copies of your sections to your peer group members, to allow them to read through your paper prior to the class. You must give it to them one day before the class is to meet, so they have adequate time to read and comment on your ideas and work.

Prerequisite: Completion of a minimum of 6 hours of graduate study. Completion of (or concurrent enrollment in) SOC 216 is suggested.

Readings: Your readings will be focused on your specific thesis. You will be turning in an annotated bibliography on the day of class. This means you will give a bibliography (in ASA format) for articles you will use in your thesis. After each individual reference, you will offer a short statement as to what specifically in the article is useful in your thesis: findings, methods, discussion, ideas, theories, etc. Be specific as to how it relates. You will complete at least 20 by the end of the semester. If you already have a number of articles ready, then you can use those. This is a starting point for organizing your

ideas/thesis. You must turn in at least 2 each time we meet (submit on Sacct). Do not turn in separate sheets. You should just be adding to the previous reference sheet.

Expectations for each Meeting: Students will attend each meeting and come with the required work completed in order to engage with the group and the rest of the class. Students will need to have read and commented on, when required, other student's papers prior to the class. Students will bring in comments and questions about the process to be answered in each of the classes. The beginning of each class will be used to discuss where students are at, questions they have and future directions. **IMPORTANT:** While myself and your fellow students will assist you in the structure and direction of your paper, it is more important what your chair has to say. Rely on their comments, and if you have questions, feel free to bring them into class to better understand them.

If you are not prepared for a class, we will have to meet one more week to make up for the lost week.

Introduction: (*September 4*) Discussion of the class, introduction of materials, guest speakers to talk about writing and research.

Session 1: (*September 11*) Discussion of how to find a committee chair, explanation of thesis structure, content of literature review, methods, discussion of research resources, and the formation of peer groups. Students will have an opportunity to informally discuss thesis ideas and potential research questions.

Group Assignment: We will together try to determine the groups, then, in your groups, you will discuss potential thesis ideas and research possibilities.

Individual Assignment: Due next week, typed (two copies): Prospectus Outline: A major research question, a basic hypothesis, areas of literature that need to be considered when discussing the topic, a possible committee (especially a chair) and a focused thesis. You should also begin working on a proposal summary, if you have a topic. The first several paragraphs should discuss the main issue or idea, and describe the need for this research project. The second part is a formal statement of the research question. The third part is a brief discussion of the proposed methodology. Students will be expected to line-up a chair and discuss the summary with her or him. The proposal summary is due Sept. 25.

Session 2: (*September 18*) Possibly meet in library to discuss library searches, if not already had a presentation. Review of literature searches. General discussion of potential methods, data sets, research problems, obstacles, etc. We will review what we need to accomplish in the literature review section of the thesis.

Group Assignment: Discuss your research question, hypothesis, and focused thesis. Discuss and determine method best applicable to your proposed research. Discuss the important areas of research that need to be reviewed in your topic.

Individual Assignment: Find dataset and/or begin literature review. Assignment for next week: Your proposal summary will be due next week to be reviewed by your peers. Bring two copies for each member to review. Also, prepare a brief outline of your preliminary findings (or future focus) concerning the literature review to be presented in class (this is solely to present to class, and not for group discussion: This will be brief.).

Session 3: (*September 25*) Discuss Literature Review. Each student briefly identifies where they are in the process. Discuss structure of paper and the Statement of the Problem. What is the point of it? What should be included in it and what is not necessary. *Thesis:* 3x5 Index card written in class

Group Assignment: Summaries will be read and discussed, with feedback from the proctor and classmates. It is best to email these to students prior to class, but since they should be between 2-3 pages, you can hand them out in class to be read and commented on by your group members. Students will be expected to revise the summary and review the revisions with chair (this is more important than making me happy).

Individual Assignment: Turn in your revised proposal summary to me by October 6. Students write Statement of the Problem (Chapter 1), and turn in to group members before class (October 23). Also, need to fully develop an outline of literature review and continue to obtain articles to be used in the literature review, due next week in class.

Session 4: (*October 23*) Bring an outline of your literature review and a bibliography of a minimum of 10 articles and books that will be included in the lit review. You will present this information to the class, describing your outline. We will discuss them in class, and in groups. Student should review the bibliography with their thesis chair prior to class.

Group Assignment: Review chapter 1 (statement of the problem) with group members. Also, engage the outline of the literature review in class and discuss potential problems and limitations. We will discuss this in detail. (If more help is needed, need to schedule a meeting with me that week of class to go over and help further structure the ideas.)

Individual Assignment: Submit a draft of the Statement of the Problem chapter by November 10. Write a Literature Review (based on the revised outline), which should be given to your group members before class (November 20).

Session 5: (*November 20*) Discuss methodologies that exist and are appropriate for each one. Identify the utility of each. Discuss obstacles in the papers.

Group Assignment: Review literature reviews with your group partners, and discuss potential areas to address and problems that have been cited.

Individual Assignment: Submit a draft of the literature review to me after revising with the comments December 1. Write methodology chapter to be given to group partners before class (December 11).

Session 6: (*December 11*) Discuss any problems, obstacles, or concerns with any part of the process.

Group Assignment: Review methodology chapter with your group partners, and discuss potential areas to address and problems that have been cited.

Individual Assignment: Submit a draft of methodology chapter to me by December 18.

Grades: Credit / No credit. **No Incompletes.**

This class only meets 7 times. Absences excused only for birth, death, and Nobel Prize. Be there!

Due Dates:

September 4: Class

September 11: Class: Annotated Bibliography 1 due Sacct submission link

September 18: Class: Prospectus Outline due in class (2 copies) and through Sacct submission link

Annotated Bibliography 2 due Sacct submission link

September 25: Class: Thesis Proposal Summary due in class (2 copies)

Annotated Bibliography 3 due Sacct submission link

October 6: Revised Proposal Summary due to me via Sacct submission link

October 20: Statement of the Problem due to group members (use SacCT Discussion board)

October 23: Class: Annotated Bibliography 4 due Sacct submission link

November 10: Revised version of Statement of the Problem due to me via Sacct submission link

November 16: Literature Review due to group members (use SacCT Discussion Board)

November 20: Class: Annotated Bibliography 5 due Sacct submission link

December 1: Revised version of Literature Review due to me via Sacct submission link

December 7: Methods section due to group members (use SacCT Discussion Board)

December 11: Class: Annotated Bibliography 6 due Sacct submission link

December 19: Revised version of Methods section due via Sacct Submission link