

Thesis Writing Advice from Ted Lascher, Professor of Public Policy and Administration



1. Pick a topic that really interests you.
2. Make sure you can explain the question/problem in a sentence or two.
3. Always remain conscious of what *you're* doing as opposed to what *other* people have done in the area--regardless of anything else out there, what is *your* contribution?
4. Put your initial ideas on paper and then talk to an advisor; **don't** wait until you've finished a chapter to provide something written.
5. Tell a story.
6. Make sure any literature review does *work* for you; it shouldn't simply be background. That is, the literature review should (for example):
 - a. Make clear what's already known (or not known) in your area, and therefore what gap you are trying to fill.
 - b. Make clear if there are any controversies you are trying to resolve.
 - c. Suggest research approaches, appropriate variables, etc.
7. Don't expect this to be like any other assignment, especially with respect to feedback and iterations: there's likely to be much more give and take with your advisors than for any other assignment you've had in your educational career.
8. Don't hang on tooth and nail to every word you've already written.
9. Don't disappear from faculty view when things get tough.