

### **Moderation Debriefing: Preparing the Research Proposal**

This article has several quirks and differences due to the fact that it is targeted towards PHDS and their dissertations. While this article was written with PHDs in mind, most of the advice in it holds true to writing a thesis, and may have helped the class in writing the proposal if read before a large share of the work was done. With that said, it was an interesting article to read in retrospect and I felt was a good source to compare and contrast our current proposals and the format of the class itself to the author's suggestions.

- Many differences due to the different disciplines were discussed within this article.
  - This article was written with History PHDs in mind. This discipline has a much different way of structuring their papers as well as their methodology and terminology on their research.
    - These difference included:
      - Naming conventions of formatting.
        - Research Problems = hypothesis / research question
        - Procedure = Methods
        - Sources of evidence and authority = data
      - Format of paper itself. The example of Weyland's paper was set up in a way to create a narrative about the topic he was researching. In the historical discipline they are doing qualitative work, and as such have no true way of determining truth. Thus, the set up of their methods and paper are a reflection of this.
        - The use of secondary questions is an example of this as well. One of the key points made about secondary questions is they could still prove valuable to our class, but we have to keep in mind that they have to have a direct connection or effect on our hypothesis or research proposal.
- The discussion then led through the several key elements that Madsen say are the composition of a proposal.
  - Cover page

- Everyone agreed it is still something that can be included, although a telephone number may not be necessary anymore.
- Everyone agreed that an abstract is not needed for our thesis proposals, although maybe it is more needed for dissertation proposals. The class also mentioned that many of the reasons Madsen makes for using an abstract are accomplished within the introduction and the proposal itself.
- Four part statement of purpose
  - This section seems to be very similar in nature to ours, although the secondary question in some cases may not be needed.
  - Mention was made of when researching a topic there may be a point where you are reading the same authors again and again quoting each other. This is called the “Quoting Circle”, and is the point at which you have probably hit the frontier of knowledge.
- The procedure. AKA Methods
  - One of the more noticeable differences is that in historical research they many times have to use a theoretical framework, which is not always the case in Geography.
  - The timetable example provided was criticized as unrealistic and also not well thought out. There were no overlapping parts, and many things had timeframes that obviously would not work.
- Trial table of Contents. AKA Outline
  - The outline example within this paper was another of the weakest points. It merely had headings for multiple chapters and did not go into any depth at all.
- Brief Bibliography
  - Discussion moved between the difference between a bibliography and a reference list. We talked about how our work will have reference list, and not bibliographies. This is a movement made by the journals in geography as many times a 10 page paper might have a 10 page bibliography.
  - Several programs were talked about that can help to organize these reference lists. These programs were Refworks and EndNotes.
    - Refworks is free from the CSULB library site, and EndNotes is a pay program.

- The charts that Madsen shows within the article could have been very helpful in some cases. It was mentioned how Linda's and Janice's work sort of lend themselves to this.
- When talking about human subjects and the IRB it was funny how Madsen talks about how this may have stunted our ability to perform scientific research.
  - This article was written before the IRB and all of that stuff was in place.
  - Students who are going to go through the IRB process may want to talk to Dr. Thien and Dr. Jacoy as they have helped others get their proposals through the IRB.
- Lastly, we can change advisors and the article makes mention of this.