ADVANCED SCHOLARLY RESEARCH: Fall 2017
16:762:626:01

Wednesday, 1:10-3:50 p.m. Civic Square, Room 173

Bob Noland
OFFICE HOURS: by appointment (send email, rnoland@rutgers.edu).
tel: 848-932-2859, rm 449

The objective of Advanced Scholarly Research is to produce and present a draft formal dissertation proposal. The class will be run as a workshop where you will work on various elements of your proposal, discuss these with fellow students, and ultimately present a complete draft of your research proposal, similar to a formal proposal defense.

During the course of this semester I will serve as your guide to the basic process of thinking through the components of a proposal. While each of you will have your own specialty area and substantive topical interest, the process of composing a research proposal is similar. We will work together in class on various components of the dissertation, discuss and critique these, and you will present various pieces of work.

The key to a successful proposal and ultimately a successful dissertation is engagement with the literature on which your topic is built. This is a continuous process and I expect you to be studying the literature in your area throughout the semester. You should maintain an ongoing annotated bibliography (i.e., a brief summary) of each article you read. You should read about 10 papers each week within your relevant literature, summarize these and note which ones are critical to your research path. Your supervisor can provide guidance on relevant literature if you are unsure where to start.

It is important to actively involve your anticipated dissertation chair in the work related to this class. If possible, also try to involve the other members of your dissertation committee. Your chair’s and committee members’ input is vital at all stages: relevant literature as well as commenting on each of the sections of the dissertation proposal. One of the central objectives of this class is to catalyze ongoing, constructive dialogue with your dissertation chair and committee. If this is not happening, please come talk to me outside of class.

You will also benefit greatly from the comments and recommendations of your classmates. All of you will be asked to critically review your classmates’ draft sections and to present constructive recommendations. Your presentation will benefit from seeing the work of others, and you will hone your “critical reader” skills.

Letter grades are not assigned in this class; only “satisfactory” / “unsatisfactory”. Just show up and participate and produce the required pieces of your proposal to pass.
The bottom line is that I want you to benefit from this class and produce a draft dissertation proposal.

The highest standards of academic integrity are expected in the class; this personifies an original dissertation proposal. Use citations extensively, following the *Chicago Manual of Style* or other standard social science citation guide. I would recommend that you use a citation manager, such as RefWorks or Endnotes, both of which are provided for free by the university. I have been told that Zotero is an excellent citation manager and it is open source.

This is not an easy class—but it is crucial toward your program as a doctoral student. With the draft proposal done, you should be able to formally propose your dissertation topic early in the next semester. Your proposal serves as a guide to what you will do on your dissertation – it is also a contract with your committee as to what you will produce.

During this class you will encounter periods of angst and sometimes near panic. It will sometimes not be clear what your specific topic is and how it builds from and adds to the extant research. Deciding on your exact central and secondary hypotheses is also often a challenge. Methods and data are a work in progress. You will also experience the pleasure of “Eureka!” moments of intellectual achievement. All of the above is to be expected and is the companion of creative doctoral level study. Just forge ahead, speak to your chair (or other faculty), speak to me, and be confident in your skills. I hope that the format of this class provides all students with mutual support to get through this process. Things do fall into place in time; just do one step at a time. The goal is to finish in a timely fashion, to complete a solid body of work (your dissertation is not your last research), and to move on to an academic or other suitable research position befitting your doctoral training.
## Schedule of activities and assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>PREPARATION</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to first class</td>
<td>List of relevant readings</td>
<td>Be prepared to discuss what your research topic is. What is the motivation for you to do this research? Why is this an interesting topic?</td>
<td>Prepare a list of relevant papers and/or books that are relevant to your research interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 6</td>
<td>Introduction and Discussion</td>
<td>Present your problem statement to the class. Bring enough hard copies for everyone. Discussion will focus on what the relevant Research Questions are.</td>
<td>Develop at least three Research Questions. Provide supporting evidence as to why these are interesting questions to pursue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>Problem Statement</td>
<td>We will discuss your research questions and offer critical feedback.</td>
<td>Prepare an annotated bibliography of at least 10 papers relevant to your research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 20</td>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>Critical assessment of your bibliography and how it links to your research questions.</td>
<td>Analysis of a key paper in the literature (see handout)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 27</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>Present the paper</td>
<td>Data and Methods: Prepare a brief memo outlining what data and methods you think are needed for your research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Analysis of the Literature</td>
<td>ACSP practice presentations, invite your supervisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 5 @12:00, rm 490</td>
<td>Pizza colloquium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>ACSP travel</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Data and Methods</td>
<td>Discussion of data sources, methods, and link to research questions</td>
<td>Begin preparing a literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 25</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>Discussion of issues that you are finding in the literature</td>
<td>Complete literature review, including brief powerpoint presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>Present key findings from your review of the literature</td>
<td>Continue to expand and refine your literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 8, class will end by 3:00</td>
<td>Research Questions and Hypotheses</td>
<td>Discussion of how you will devise testable hypotheses given your knowledge of the data and methods available to you.</td>
<td>Start putting the pieces together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Draft presentation</td>
<td>We will critique and provide feedback on both your presentation skills and the substance of your topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Thanksgiving</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>Draft presentation</td>
<td>We will critique and provide feedback on both your presentation skills and the substance of your topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>Final presentation</td>
<td>This will be a practice run of what could be your proposal defense – INVITE YOUR SUPERVISOR and any other faculty you would like feedback from.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 13</td>
<td>Final presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Submit draft of proposal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Almost all of your reading should be directly related to your proposal topic. However, I have produced a list of readings that you might find helpful and/or entertaining. I would recommend you also occasionally peruse the blog “The Professor is In” at https://theprofessorisin.com/pearlsofwisdom/

**READINGS**

This is a very useful guide to how to write academically, especially on how to engage the literature.


**OTHER READINGS**

These are a variety of papers that cover topics related to writing, presentations, and case studies. You will find some of these useful during the course. All are on Sakai.


RECOMMENDED READINGS

Some of these readings may be useful.


