

## **WRITING A DISSERTATION PROPOSAL IN THE HUMANITIES:** **CULTURAL STUDIES**

### **Note:**

This information is intended to serve as a general guide to outlining a dissertation proposal in Cultural Studies. Specific expectations may vary by committee. You should always ascertain the requirements of your specific advisor/committee members before completing the dissertation proposal.

### **Length:**

The dissertation proposal is typically about 20 pages in length including the works cited list.

### **Contents:**

#### *1. Introduction*

- a. The introduction should consist of approx. 2-3 pages and provide context for your project, the main primary source/sources you plan to examine, some of the specific questions your project will address, and reference to how your work fits into the larger scholarly conversations of your field. This section should provide a compelling and engaging introduction to your topic, similar to what you would hope to achieve in the first paragraphs of a research paper.

#### *2. Methodology and Sources*

- a. This section should elaborate on your specific primary sources (be they written, oral, or visual) and how you plan to use them in your dissertation. It should also briefly lay out the specific methodological approach(es) you plan to employ in analyzing your sources. This might include the specific theoretical frameworks you intend to utilize, which fields you will borrow methodological approaches from, and how these elements will ultimately come together to connect your sources to the larger argument you are making in your dissertation.

#### *3. Literature Review*

- a. The literature review should give a comprehensive overview of the most relevant existing scholarship related to your work, and should also show how your

dissertation will fit into this conversation/what gap in the research you intend to fill. Footnotes may be used to introduce additional sources and context as necessary.

#### 4. *Chapter Outline*

- a. The introduction to your chapter outline should consist of a brief paragraph in which you lay out the number of chapters you plan to include in your dissertation, along with a brief summary of what each chapter will address.
- b. Summary of each chapter: Your introductory chapter outline should be followed by a more in-depth (approx. 2-3 paragraphs each) summary of the topic of each chapter, what specific sources you intend to focus on, and how the chapter's theme is relevant to your overall approach. You may also include a working title for each chapter.
- c. In addition to each body chapter, you should also give a brief overview of your intended conclusion, and how you plan to tie your arguments together / how your work might continue to contribute to growing the scholarly literature in your field or specific area of research.

#### 5. *Works Cited*

- a. Your works cited section should include a comprehensive list of all of the secondary works cited in your proposal, as well as any other sources you have found particularly relevant. The works cited section may consist of 4-5 pages of sources, to be included in overall page count.

A sample dissertation proposal in Cultural Studies may be found here:

<https://cgu0.sharepoint.com/sites/SAH/SitePages/Cultural-Studies.aspx>