

WRITING A DISSERTATION PROPOSAL IN THE HUMANITIES: **ENGLISH**

Note:

This information is intended to serve as a general guide to outlining a dissertation proposal in English. 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 15-20 pages in length.

Contents:

1. *Description of the Dissertation Project (approx. 2-5 pages)*
 - a. This section should introduce the particular problem you plan to focus on in your dissertation, along with the main argument you plan to make and a brief summary of what sources and approaches you will employ to illustrate this claim. You should specifically identify the gap in the existing research that you plan to fill, what unanswered questions you will address, and the larger significance of your work to the field as a whole.
2. *Theoretical Framework (approx. 3-5 pages)*
 - a. This section should address the specific influences that have shaped your approach to the project and which you plan to utilize in the dissertation. This will likely consist of key secondary sources that have had a major impact both on your particular field of study and your own personal approach to analysis.
3. *Methodology (approx. 2 pages)*
 - a. The methodology section should outline what texts you plan to do a close reading of in the course of your dissertation, as well as what methodological approaches from your field you intend to employ to guide the structure of your analysis.

4. *Limitations (approx. 1-2 pages)*

- a. This section should address any limitations you anticipate encountering. These may be related to your sources, approaches, methodology, etc.

5. *Chapter Outline (approx. 5 pages)*

- a. The chapter outline should lay out what specific topics/themes you plan to cover in each individual chapter. This may include sub-questions to be asked and what secondary readings will support your use of primary sources. You should also explicitly address how each chapter will modify, extend, or deepen the overall argument of your dissertation.