

INLS 781-001 Proposal Development (1.5 credit hours)
Fall Semester 2017 (8/22-10/10)
T/Th Manning 001 11:00am -12:15pm

Instructor: Denise Anthony
Email: anthonyd@email.unc.edu
Office hours: Mon/Wed 1 – 2 pm. or by appointment
Room 214A Manning Hall

Course Description

During this course, each student will develop a proposal for the work to be completed during the following semester in the master's paper/project (INLS 992).

Objectives

- Express the functions of a research proposal.
- Explain the general framework of a research proposal and critique its component parts.
- Design a literature review that supports and frames a research area.
- Formulate a concise and focused research question.
- Select and justify the choice of research method(s) for a proposed study.

Prerequisite: INLS 581

Textbook and readings

The required text for the course is: Punch, K.F. (2016). *Developing Effective Research Proposals*. Sage. It is available in the UNC book store or online through other booksellers. We will read all of this book and use it to structure our work together. In addition, we will read several chapters from Wildemuth, B.M. (2009). *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*. Libraries Unlimited. (It may be useful for you to have a copy of it available for your own use but it will be available on reserve in the SILS Library along with the Punch text.) Additional required readings are listed on the class schedule.

Assignments and grading

The final deliverable for this class is a proposal for a research study that consists of three chapters:

1. Introduction - provides an overview of the problem that you've identified, a specific research question and motivation for pursuing your chosen research study
2. Literature Review - synthesizes sources that already exist that are relevant to your intended research and (very importantly) what gap there is in the literature that you'll be addressing with your research

3. Research Design - describes the data collection and analysis methods to be used to address the research problem/question.

The final proposal is due on November 30th and is worth 80% of your grade for the class.

The other 20% of your grade is based on your attendance and participation in the classes, including times allocated for individual work, and the completion of a number of assignments designed to help you move towards the final proposal. Some of these assignments will be for peer review within class; others will be for my review only. All assignments will be posted to your blog in Sakai. These posts can be made available to either all members of the site (A) or just the site administrator, i.e., the instructor (I). The assignments, type of review and due dates are listed below (coming shortly). Please make sure to set your blog post accordingly.

The Assignments:

1. Preliminary research topic: a short document (maximum of one page), that elaborates your initial ideas about what you would like to pursue for your masters paper research. It should include topic area(s), questions that interest you and why you want to research this topic. **August 24**
2. Literature search strategy: for the literature review, you will be searching for articles, chapters, proceedings, etc., that will "make your case." Post a description of what you have found, where (database, discipline) and where you will be looking next. In other words, describe what you are currently doing for the literature search and any ideas of other avenues you will be exploring. **September 1**
3. Finalized research question: The process of coming up with a research question is iterative. You will start your literature search based on your initial thoughts, but as you proceed you may find that you are not finding what you expected and have to shift course. This happens; it is expected. Before you leave this class, however, you will need to have your research question locked down. I will have a lot to say about this in class. **September 15**
4. Literature review outline: the structure of your literature review including section headings, summary of the content of each section and references to articles used to support that section. The literature review is designed to support why you are doing the research and why it has merit. As such, it includes an overview of the currently accepted understanding of a topic and why it is important, leading up to a 'gap', problem, or issue you have identified and want to study. **October 2 end of day**
5. Methods summary: a concise, one page description of what data you will gather (what you will be analyzing), how you will gather it and what methods you will use to analyze it. Include a statement about why these methods are appropriate for your study. **With proposal draft**

NB Peer review: when assigned to review another student's posted assignment in class, please summarize your feedback (what you discussed in class) to them as a comment to their post by the end of that day.

Guidelines

- You are encouraged to discuss the issues raised in class or by the readings with each other. Class time will be used for this purpose, but feel free to have such discussions outside of class meetings as well
- You may give and receive assistance regarding the use of hardware and software, including statistical analysis software.
- You will be expected to read and critique your classmates' work, as noted on the class schedule. While this activity may also provide ideas for your own work, each student's proposal is expected to be unique. If you have any questions about the influences of your classmates' thinking on your own work, please discuss them with me.

Other policies

- You are encouraged and expected to participate in discussions
- Reading assignments should be completed before class so that you can ask questions and participate.
- If there is something you don't understand, please ask a question. If you don't want to ask during class,
- Please feel free to visit me during office hours or by appointment although it is likely someone else will benefit from you asking the question in class.
- Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of the class in which they are due.