INTL 607, Proposal Writing Proseminar  
Thesis or policy paper proposal outline

The following outline is to assist in the preparation of a thesis or a policy paper proposal. Deviations from this outline are acceptable if approved by your Thesis or Exit Project Committee. Proposals for the project should be six to eight pages (plus outline and bibliography), double-spaced typewritten pages. Proposals are expected to be clear, concise and logical.

A. Title

B. Statement of the problem or what is to be studied.
   1. Identify the area of study in its broadest terms; why is this an important arena to study?

   2. Define the specific area of interest.

   3. Define the research problem clearly.

   4. What is the argument that you are making, i.e., what is your thesis statement?

C. Purpose of the study
   1. Public purposes: if you were asking for a public hearing for the study, what would be some compelling reasons you might use to elicit support? Why is this study important to others?

   2. Private purposes: why are you investigating this particular topic?

D. Importance and significance of the study
   1. How does this study affect the existing state of knowledge and/or research needs in this particular arena?

   2. Who might use the information and how?

E. Limitations and delimitations of the study
   1. Define the boundaries of the study, e.g., geographic area to be covered, time period, community, etc.

   2. Limitations define some of the important constrains that are beyond your ability to control, e.g, irregularities in international data sets, gaps in the available literature, time constraints, etc.

F. Definitions of terms
   1. Any terms used in a specific way, or in a way that may be unfamiliar to the reader or ambiguous, should be defined.
G. Data collection and analysis, or what methods will be used to conduct the study?
   1. Study design: comparative/historical, case study, interviews, participant observations, etc.

   2. Data collection: Elaborate how data are to be collected and from what sources(s). For example, the nature and selection of the sample and/or population to be studied, and the survey instrument-questionnaire, interview or observation schedule to be used. Provide examples of questions or prompts.

   3. Analysis: a brief discussion of how the data are to be presented and analyzed (comparative profiles, analysis of interviews, statistical tests, etc.)

H. Bibliography (list at least three key sources for now; more to be in actual thesis proposal)

I. Thesis Outline
   Recommended content usually includes:
   a. Title page and Table of Contents
   b. Abstract: 1-2 paragraphs stating the importance of the thesis and captures its findings.
   c. Chapter 1: Introduction. An overview of what is to be studied with a preview of the remaining topics in this recommended outline. The theoretical framework should be clearly stated in this section as well as an introduction to the place under study.
   d. Chapter 2: Methodology. Discussion of how the project was conducted, e.g., research design, data collection and analysis procedures. This may be incorporated into the Introduction.
   e. Chapter 3: Presentation of data. This should clearly and logically present the information collected. You may decide if this should occur in multiple chapters.
   f. Chapter 4: Analysis of data. This section discusses relationships and explains why they exist, enhancing understanding of what has been studied. A word of caution: data analysis takes time, conscious concern, and the desire to understand deeply what you have studied.
   g. Chapter 5: Summary and conclusions, issues raised of generalizable significance, recommendations. Keep the summary short and simple. At this point you tell the reader what you intended to do, what you did, and what you learned. The conclusion should have two parts: 1) If you had to do it over, what would you do differently; and 2) what problems need to be looked at next? Some theses will include generalizations and/or recommendations as part of the final chapter or section.
   h. Bibliography: Non-English language sources are also to be included in the bibliography.
   i. Appendix (if necessary)