

186 Assignment : Proposal--First Draft

Senior Sequence Urban Studies & Planning

Grade Value	20%
Due Date	Tues., Oct. 19, 2010 (turn in printed copy at the beginning of class)

Write a complete draft of your Senior Research Project (SRP) proposal. Your research proposal should present a well defined topic and research strategy for your SRP. A good proposal has a clearly defined question, argument, or problem. It convinces the reader that the proposed study is interesting, significant, and possible to complete within the timeframe indicated. A good proposal is rooted in the scholarly literature; it should aspire to contribute to this literature. Other objectives may be equally important--e.g., to contribute to policy-making.

Below is an outline of the major sections you must include in your proposal

Cover Page with Abstract

Body of the proposal

1. Introduction (1-2 pages)
2. Conceptual Framework/ Literature Review (3-4 pages)
3. Research Design/ Methods (2-3 pages)
4. Concluding Section (Expected Outcome/ Deliverables) (1 pg)

Bibliography

Appendix (optional)

Before you turn in your proposal please make sure it passes the **PROPOSAL CHECKLIST** test (it passes when you can check off the box next to each requirement). The items on the checklist are what we look for when grading your proposal. You can download a copy of the PROPOSAL CHECKLIST on the class web site: http://www.seniorsequence.net/images/uploads/Proposal_Checklist.doc

Detailed Instructions

COVER SHEET

The top page of your proposal should include your title, identify the agency to which you are submitting the proposal, the date, your contact information and your abstract. See Illustration #1 at the end of this set of instructions.

ABSTRACT

Write an abstract that succinctly states the issue you will be addressing in your Senior Thesis and how you will do the research. The abstract should be no longer than 150 words, and it should address these specific questions.

Your abstract should succinctly state the issue you will be addressing in your Senior Thesis and how you will do the research. The abstract should be no longer than 150 words, and it should address these specific questions:

1. Opening sentences: What is the research question or problem?

2. Middle section: Why is your topic significant? How is the study to be conducted? What methods will you use to answer your questions?

3. Ending sentences: What is the scholarly context and how will your investigation add value to the literature in this area? What is the objective of the research?

Don't write your abstract like an FAQ to the above questions. The abstract should be self-contained---that is, it should make sense as a stand-alone document, without the reader having the list of questions in front of them. Proposal abstracts are very important; often reviewers (evaluating proposals for prospective funding) will make their first cut decisions based on the abstract alone.

Below are two exemplary abstracts. These are good models.

1. Recent studies suggest that watershed initiatives offer a more proactive and whole-systems approach to pollution prevention, yet current regulatory arrangements thwart progress. This proposal examines new regulatory approaches to watershed-based pollution prevention in the San Diego Hydrologic Basin. The research strategy focuses on a case study of San Diego County's Project Clean Water. The analysis aims to provide critical insight into "regulatory innovation" and efforts to promote more efficient methods of inter-jurisdictional collaboration. Evidence will be gathered through archival research, interviews, and participant observation as a research intern for the City of San Diego, Department of Water. The study will contribute to the literature on environmental policy and regulatory innovation. The results will also be shared with public sector officials in the hope that the findings will help improve water quality management.

2. Researchers have found that Hmong immigrants in California lack trust in Western medicine. Part of the problem stems from language and cultural barriers. Consequently, the Hmong suffer lost opportunities for disease prevention and treatment. This proposal aims to examine how healthcare workers adapt their behavior to facilitate communication and make medical encounters less threatening to Hmong immigrants. The research design is based on in-depth interviews with healthcare providers, members of the Hmong community, and scholars from various fields. Other data sources will include Hmong and American films relevant to the practice of medicine (e.g., documentaries and practitioner training videos), census data, government policy reports and other archives. The study will contribute to the literature on medical anthropology, public health, and ethnic studies. The results will be shared with healthcare providers in the hope that findings will facilitate better communication between practitioners and patients, resulting in improved health outcomes.

If you get stuck trying to write your abstract, try using this template (fill in the blanks)

This proposal outlines a research strategy to examine [1] in [2]. Current research on [1] suggests that [3]. This raises three fundamental problems: [4]. This proposal outlines a research strategy aimed at addressing these three problems. Specifically, the study will [5]. The research will contribute to the literature on [6], but it will also be shared with [7] in the hope that [8].

[1]. Fill in this blank with your object of study: e.g., watershed-based approaches to pollution prevention, the affordable housing crisis, digital divide, economic redevelopment, environmental planning.

[2]. Fill in this blank with your target area or unit of analysis: e.g., San Diego, a neighborhood, a school district, the San Diego-Tijuana crossborder region, network, association.

[3]. Fill in this blank with highlights that underscore the significance of your topic: e.g., Recent studies suggest that watershed initiatives offer a more proactive and whole-systems approach to pollution prevention, yet current regulatory arrangements thwart progress.

[4]. Fill in this blank with the three specific questions/issues/problems/concerns that drive your study.

[5]. Fill in this blank by listing your methods: e.g., I will do a case study of San Diego County's Project Clean Water. I will also rely on archival research, interview data, and participant observation as a research intern for the City of San Diego.

[6]. Fill in this blank by identifying the field of literature to which your study aims to add value: e.g., This research will contribute to the literature on environmental policy and regulatory innovation.

[7]. and [8]. Here you can add other objectives of your research outside the scholarly dimension (that is, if you have other objectives). For example, The results of this study will also be shared with public sector officials in the hope that the findings will help improve water quality management.

BODY OF THE PROPOSAL

Format and Length

* Use 1" margins all around and include page numbers!

*Double space all text except extended quotes, tables, and other elements that stand apart from the main text (like the caption to a figure or photo). Use single-space for the bibliography and abstract.

The body of your proposal can be up to 10 pages long, not including the cover page or the bibliography. This is a serious limit. Do not turn in more than 10 pages for the main body of the proposal (approximately 2,500 words). You can turn in less--quality, not quantity is what counts. Your total count may be a maximum of 15 pages once you add the cover page, bibliography and a possible page or two of attachments. Most funding agencies asking for proposals have very strict page limits. If they say 10 pages for the main body of your proposal, and you turn in 11 pages--- it will be rejected, simple as that. Often proposals have to be read by a team of people and they want short concise statements. This is the logic behind our limits. We are trying to help you get acclimated to a real proposal writing culture. You will have more room to flesh out the substance of your argument, findings, etc., in your SRP.

Content

The main body of the proposal should clearly spell out the objectives of the proposed work, its expected significance and contributions, the research design and methods to be used, and the position with respect to related research and literature. There is no one best model to follow as far as format is concerned. Marshall and Rossman (1995:22) suggest organizing the body into three sections: "(1) the introduction, which includes an overview of the proposal, a statement of the problem and significance, the focus of the inquiry and research questions, and the limitations of the study; (2) the review of the related literature; and (3) the research design and research methods." These sections should not stand alone; they should come across as interrelated; each one building on the other (ibid.).

However you decide to organize your proposal, it should provide succinct answers to the three sets of questions noted below:

1. Conceptual Framework

- (1). What is your research question, argument, or problem? Why is it important?
- (2). How is the research you propose to do related to other previous and ongoing research? Is anyone else doing what you propose to do? Here is where you weave in a literature review.
- (3). What are your specific objectives? How do you expect your research to provide insight into the general topic or problem?

2. Research Design and Methods

- (4). How will you do the research? What strategy will you use? What methods?
- (5). Are you especially competent to do the research? You don't need to tell the reviewer that you can read and write, or that you are a serious student with high grades. This much is assumed. Only say something about competence if you have special talents (e.g., advanced skills in a particular language, or information technology such as GIS).
- (6). What contribution will the research make to the development of theory in its field and/or to the development of policy?
- (7). What is your timetable for the research? What will it cost to complete

3. Outcome

- (8). What will be the outcome of the research (e.g., an explanation, exploratory case study, survey results).

Additional Notes:

Think about the spatial dimension of your research. Being explicit about the spatial element in your study can strengthen your conceptual approach and research outcome

Think about the “where” component of your prospective object of study (i.e., your research topic). Tracey Hughes crafted the paragraph below to get you thinking spatially. As planning students, spatial imagination and reasoning are very important. We want you to identify the spatial component of your research.

Where: Are you interested in San Diego? In the region? In California? In a particular neighborhood? Bounded by certain streets or landmarks? Inside a building? On a campus? Does it happen in more than one place or is the idea confined to a certain location (if so, why?)? Does your issue deal with things that are close together and thus impact each other, or far apart and thus impact each other? If you look at the issue from another angle, does it look different? Are there particular objects that are important to your topic, such as street lights, benches, parking spaces,

buildings, sunshine, views, transit routes? Did your issue/topic happen because of where it is (i.e., how important is the place itself)?

The spatial aspects of your research may be the same as your research topics major aspects. For instance, if your research is focused on asthma rates of children living in Los Angeles and how that relates to proximity to major roadways, then there are three elements that are spatial and easily identifiable—namely, Los Angeles, data that pertains to children/where they are/if they have asthma, and major roadways.

Keep these questions in mind as you describe your research design:

- (1) What is the geographical focus of your research? The answer to this might be a state, country, municipality, neighborhood, building, etc. If it is a neighborhood, you will need to identify the streets which enclose that neighborhood and if it is a building(s), you will need their physical addresses.
- (2) What are the key spatial factors that have a bearing on your research? For instance, if you are studying transit accessibility, then transit routes, transit stops and residential locations are all key spatial factors that have a bearing on your research. If you are studying environmental justice, then residential locations, zoning and park locations might be key spatial factors.

There are a lot of great resources to help you strengthen your spatial literacy (i.e., your ability to comprehend the geographic of spatial dimension of your object of study).

In his classic book titled The Sociological Imagination , C. W. Mills (2000) describes the art of critical thinking and imagination. Using the sociological imagination, Mills says, empowers people to "grasp what is going on in the world, and to understand what is happening in themselves as minute points of intersections of biography and history within society" (2000, 7). This is terrific. But it doesn't include explicit reference to a spatial dimension.

Moving us closer to the challenges of urban and regional planning, David Harvey's (1973) influential book *Social Justice and the City* makes a strong case for imbuing the sociological imagination with "spatial consciousness" or what Harvey called a "geographical imagination:" "This imagination enables the individual to recognize space and place in his own biography, to relate to the spaces he sees around him, and to recognize how transactions between individuals and between organizations are affected by the space that separates them. It allows him to recognize the relationship which exists between him and his neighbourhood, his territory... (p. 24)."

Below are some helpful resources:

Peter Folger (2009) *Geospatial Information and Geographic Information Systems (GIS): Current Issues and Future Challenges*. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R40625.pdf>

A collaborative web site devoted to promoting applications of spatial concepts and spatial tools in teaching and learning: <http://teachspatial.org>

The Spatial Decision System Knowledge Portal : <http://www.spatial.redlands.edu/sds/welcome.html>
The SDS Knowledge Portal is developed to help people involved in a spatial decision process (decision makers, practitioners, researchers) gain a holistic view of the spatial decision process and better access

to the vast amount of knowledge, information, and various resources that can be applied during spatial decision making.

Donald G. Janelle and Michael F. Goodchild (2009) **Concepts, Principles, Tools, and Challenges in Spatially Integrated Social Science**. <http://www.teachspatial.org/janelle-and-goodchild-2009-press>
Janelle and Goodchild spell out five examples of spatial reasoning: (1) identifying changes in the uses of, and regional differentiation of, space(s), (2) measuring the physical arrangement and clustering of phenomena to detect spatial patterns, (3) documenting spatial patterns over time to infer processes, (4) studying flows (e.g., migration, trade, and shopping patterns) between specific locations as indicators of spatio-temporal interactions, and (5) measuring spatial associations (and space-time associations) for testing hypotheses" (2009).

The literature review: What is it? What should be included?

A literature review for a proposal is much different than an annotated bibliography. A good literature review goes beyond merely summarizing distinct sources. It should describe your sources in a thematically organized, and/or argument-driven style that clarifies and supports the aims of your study.

Length and format: Please be sure to include a mix of peer reviewed journal articles (at least three) and books (at least two). Other sources can be cited as well (e.g., book chapters, conference proceedings, theses, dissertations, government reports), but make sure the bulk of your citations are taken from published scholarly (peer reviewed) sources. The literature review component of the proposal's body should be no longer than 3 or 4 pages of double-spaced text. Of course, references to literature can be made throughout the entire body of the proposal (including the introduction, methods discussion and findings/conclusion). However, the literature review is where you frame your proposal in the context of the main discourses in your field of study.

Neuman (2000: 446) outlines six types of literature reviews:

1. Self-study reviews increase the reader's confidence.
2. Context reviews place a specific project in the big picture.
3. Historical reviews trace the development of an issue over time.
4. Theoretical reviews compare how different theories address an issue.
5. Integrative reviews summarize what is known at a point in time.
6. Methodological reviews point out how methodology varies by study. (Box 16.2)

The literature review for a research proposal is mainly about providing context (#2). But other elements can be woven in as appropriate (e.g., historical, theoretical, integrative, and methodological perspectives). There are several reasons why one might write a literature review. The two reasons listed below are the most relevant for this assignment:

1. To show the path of prior research and how a current project is linked to it. A review outlines the direction of research on a question and shows the development of knowledge. A good review places a research project in a context and demonstrates its relevance by making connections to a body of knowledge.
2. To integrate and summarize what is known in an area. A review pulls together and synthesizes different results. A good review points out areas where prior studies agree, where they disagree,

and where major questions remain. It collects what is known up to a point in time and indicates the direction for future research. (Neuman 2000, Box 16.1)

Robson (2007) —one of the required books for the Senior Sequence—gives this good advice about doing a literature review:

The 'literature review' ... provides an account of previous research that has been carried out, together with attempts that have been made to provide frameworks within which the research can be placed and understood. All too often such reviews degenerate into an ill-digested listing of an inordinate number of references, which simply demonstrates that many more or less relevant sources have been unearthed by the writer. ...For my money, less can be more. In other words, there is greater value in homing in on a relatively small number of really key references and giving a full account of what they contribute and why it is relevant to your own study. (p. 54)

Here are the types of questions your literature review should address:

1. How much do we know about your object of study now? Is there much published work on your topic?
2. Why is the topic considered important? What are the most significant studies completed to date?
3. What are the trends in this type of research? what are the gaps? how does your study fit in?
4. What are the different scholarly approaches (schools of thought, discourses) concerning your topic? What are the most relevant concepts (key terms) and theories?

One way to approach this task is to imagine yourself as taking part in a conversation, and telling us where you stand in it:

Position yourself in the conversation.

That is, describe:

- (a). how the conversation looks to you.
- (b). how you agree with others [typically implicit in describing the conversation].
- (c). how you disagree with them.
- (d). how you're going to contribute to the literature [this frames the importance of your project].
- (e). the different schools of thought within your community of interest, for example:

Charter schools:

Are EFFECTIVE because they cut down bureaucracy (the result intended by advocates).

Are EFFECTIVE because they tend to gather most ambitious students and faculty.

Are EFFECTIVE because people act differently when they are watched (Hawthorne effect).

Are INEFFECTIVE because the idea of charter schools is based on a false premise (school bureaucracy the problem).

Are INEFFECTIVE because they are still too bureaucratic and the ideal has not been put into place.

Are INEFFECTIVE and the evidence supporters use is the wrong kind of evidence.

Are INEFFECTIVE and the evidence supporters cite is gathered or analyzed incorrectly.

REFERENCES

Your proposal's bibliography should include at least 5 scholarly (peer reviewed) sources from journals and/or books. Other sources in addition to these 5 may be included as well.

This year for consistency we are requiring that all written assignments (style, spelling, usage, references and footnotes) conform to requirements set forth in the Chicago Manual of Style, FIFTEENTH edition (University of Chicago Press 2003). This is what the *Journal of Planning Education and Research* (JPER) requires. JPER is one of the most respected and authoritative journals in the field of urban and regional planning.

Citations and Notes: References should be cited in the text using the author's last name, year of publication, and page numbers where appropriate. For example: (Chapin and Kaiser 1979), (Reade 1985, 81), (Florida Department of Environmental Regulation 1987, 129-143). Page numbers are necessary whenever a specific argument or finding, rather than the general focus of a work, is cited. All works cited should be listed alphabetically by author's last name at the end of the manuscript. For details, see the Chicago Manual. Examples given below. Note: this is how we want you to format the bibliography (single spaced entries with a double space between them).

Examples

Florida Department of Environmental Regulation. 1987. *Agency Functional Plan*. Tallahassee, Fla.

Harris, Britton, and Michael Batty. 1993. Locational models, geographical information, and planning support systems. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 12(3):184-198.

Innes, Judith E. 1990. *Knowledge and Public Policy: The Search for Meaningful Indicators*. 2nd edition. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers.

Appendices (optional)

An appendix can be attached if you have significant material to present that would otherwise obstruct the flow of your proposal. For instance, you may want to attach a map, an organizational chart, or copies of letters from research site administrators who have promised you access and cooperation.

Illustration 1: A Properly formatted cover page for a Senior Sequence SRP proposal

Developing an Urban Heat Island Mitigation Policy

Understanding the relationship between science and society in environmental policy

A research proposal submitted to the Urban Studies and Planning Program
University of California at San Diego

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October 21, 2008

Abstract

The City of San Diego is currently developing an Urban Heat Island Mitigation Policy and Program, which is an important new type of environmental policy. This study will look at the interaction between science and government, between government and other organizations, the role of public participation, and how knowledge is transferred and shared between these realms in regard to policy development. The objective is to understand barriers and bridges to regulatory innovation and effective science communication. The hypothesis is that science communication has greater impact when the communication involved is culturally sensitive and in tune with the needs of user communities as active participants. These issues will be addressed by conducting extensive interviews, engaging in participant observation, surveys, and analyzing documents. This research adds to a fast growing body of literature that examines sustainability science in an urban context.

Key terms: science communication, regulatory innovation, environmental policy

Introduction

The development of an Urban Heat Island effect (UHI) mitigation policy and program in the City of San Diego represents a new type of environmental policy that is being developed in local governments around the state and nation. This study seeks to understand how the City of San Diego has come to lead the nation in environmental policy development in its goal to mitigate the effects of the UHI. In order to understand their involvement the study will look at the role that science is playing in the development of policy and specifically how knowledge is shared and transferred between the governmental and scientific realm.