1) **Preliminary Step: Develop a set of related ideas into a coherent topic.**
   a) Before you even begin writing a proposal, much less a thesis or project itself, you need to have a well-defined topic. To this end, think about the following:
      i) What are the ideas that interest you enough to want to write about them in a sustained manner?
      ii) What **main question** arises from your general ideas on this topic?
      iii) Will you proceed by providing a systematic answer presenting a number of views or will you go on to argue for a position, i.e., defend a conclusion?
      iv) Who and/or what kinds of scholarly work or evidence will you use to answer this question critically?
      v) Having considered the scholarly material, what general logic will your study follow?
      vi) What theoretical models will you consider and/or employ to systematically answer your question and/or argue for your position?
      vii) Which of the following acceptable formats will suit your investigation best: research study; scholarly paper; work/internship related applied project?
      viii) If you are doing a research study, which research method(s) will you consider using to answer your research question.
   b) Once you have addressed these questions, you can begin to think about your proposal.

2) **Proposal**
   a) Your proposal provides a map for your larger project. It formally organizes your thinking about the topic, states the question you will answer or the thesis you will defend. Most proposals include four main components: Introduction to the study, theoretical framework(s) and/or a statement of methodology to be used, a review of the literature, and analysis of your content. If you cannot address these four areas, you are probably not ready to write a proposal. If you can, then follow these guidelines to organize your proposal's content.

   b) Develop a working **title** that encompasses the scope of your proposed research and gives the reader a “heads up” on what your proposal will address.

   c) **Introduction**
      In one paragraph, briefly introduce your research topic and identify the sections that that your paper is going to cover.

   d) **Research Question/Statement of Thesis**
      What is your research question? Will you systematically answer this question or will you turn the question into a thesis and defend it?
      (Please state this clearly in a brief paragraph.)

      i) Why is your research question or thesis to be defended important enough to be the subject of your Master's thesis or project?
      ii) In the case of a work-related or applied project, state the key question(s) and concepts that your project will address and how.
         For example,
         (a) What important questions will your educational curriculum or grant proposal pose?
         (b) What controversies will be considered?
         (c) How will your project present those controversies and attempt to answer critical questions?

   e) **Review of Relevant Literature**
      What is currently known on your question(s) from scholarly, peer-reviewed research? Here you explain the background and the current state of the topic and outline briefly the most significant scholarly studies in the area, how you will use them, and why they are important contributions to the question.
Research Study: What is left to find out that your study will address? What analysis or arguments will you add?

Scholarly Paper/Work-Related/Applied Project
(a) What have you drawn from the scholarly literature regarding your specific key questions and concepts?
(b) How will your study add to, corroborate, or modify what has been done?

*Be sure to include citations.

f) The Role of Theory
i) Specifically, what theory/theories and related concepts form the framework of your thesis or project?
ii) Define the concepts you will use and how they relate to your work. In the case of a research study, propose a hypothesis that you will test. Be sure to include citations as appropriate.

g) Methodology

Research Study:
i) What social science research methods will you propose to use to answer your research question?
   Your study can use either quantitative or qualitative methods or an appropriate combination.
ii) What is your justification for the methods you have selected?
   Present elements of your research design.
   (a) For example, you will need to include information about the population or textual material you will be using (and why), how you will sample the population or textual material, data collection techniques and measurement instruments/interpretive methods you will use, the ways in which you will record your data, how you plan to analyze your data, and limitations of your approach.
   (b) Brief information about human subjects’ protection and related ethical issues is appropriate in this section.

Scholarly Paper:
   This section should describe the methods or tools you are proposing to use in order to answer your question and/or support your position.
   (a) What kinds of evidence you will present?
   (b) How will you systematically approach your question or argue for your position?

Work Related Project:
(a) How will you systematically approach the development of your project, whether it is an educational curriculum; grant proposal; program evaluation; description of a professional experience or an internship?
(b) What research will provide you with specific methods or tools to use?
   Describe those methods and tools.

h) Concluding Section
   Summarize your study. Explain what you will uncover, why it will be valuable, and to whom it might be useful.

i) Consulted Works:
   This section presents your reader with your bibliography to date. It should be formatted according to standard bibliographic guidelines.

j) Formatting
   (a) Your proposal should be approximately 10-15 pages in length, double-spaced.
   (b) It should have a well-developed title, and include your name, committee member names (if available), and date on the title page.
   (c) It needs to include at least ten (10) bibliographical references. Be sure to list these on a separate “references” page at the end.
   (d) Use major headings, and level 2 and 3 sub-headings, as appropriate.
   (e) Use either APA, Chicago, or MLA style or any recognized style that is used correctly and consistently.
   (f) Citations should be complete – containing all the requisite information.
k) References


l) Other Useful Resources for Thesis and Project Writers


