

EDCP 772: Dissertation Proposal Writing Seminar

University of Maryland, College Park

Fall 2017

Tuesdays, 9 - 11:45 AM

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Availability: I have office hours on Tuesdays from 1-3 pm. There is an electronic sign-up sheet at <http://bit.ly/NYBGLV>. If you are not able to find a time that works for you, please do not hesitate to email me or speak with me directly, and we will figure out a time to meet for an appointment. In terms of the best ways to reach me – I am the best and quickest on email, and not as good with the office phone. You are also certainly welcome to drop by the office anytime, although I'm often in meetings when I'm in.

Course Description

In this class, we will focus on the development of your individual research ideas and dissertation proposals. It is important to note that this course is intended to be a foundation for your work and serve as a jumping off point for conversations between you and your advisor. The learning community we create is here to support and offer constructive feedback as students' develop their research ideas. However, the feedback given in this class does not replace or supersede the importance of frequent meetings and collaboration with the dissertation chair. We are here to help with the thinking, but the final product is a negotiation primarily between the dissertating student and chair.

The goal of this course is not necessarily to walk out of this class with a complete draft of your dissertation proposal, although that can be a possible outcome. The purpose of this class is to work individually and collectively to clarify the foundational components of students' research projects and create space to develop drafts of each dissertation proposal chapter. In many ways, this is a course where you'll get out what you put in - there are many small (and some larger) assignments and tasks that build on each other, helping us move closer to building strong arguments and sections for our dissertation proposals. The readings and conversations we will have in class are all designed to help you solidify your ideas, make progress on your writing, and reach your individual goals in the dissertation process.

We will also be using this class as a writing workshop, incorporating many of the principles implemented in KerryAnn Rockquemore's academic productivity programs (learn more at <https://www.facultydiversity.org/>). Dr. Rockquemore recommends short, regular writing sessions rather than just budgeting big chunks of time. If you're open and willing, we'll try to do

that this semester, working collectively on Google Drive to track our daily productivity and clarify our writing goals from week to week. We'll also do a lot of our work in Google Drive to facilitate feedback and input from colleagues, and to keep us making progress on our work.

Finally, it is my intention that this class balance between structure and fluidity, as we adjust to meet students' needs. Consider this syllabus a tentative plan - we will be prepared to adjust as where students need support and guidance become clearer.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the components and structure of a dissertation proposal
- Clearly articulate the problem, purpose, and research questions guiding their dissertation research
- Describe the value of a theoretical/conceptual framework and how it guides their specific research project
- Explain the differences between qualitative and quantitative methods, and describe the implications of their methodological choice on their proposed research
- Develop a timeline to completing and defending their dissertation proposals
- Give thoughtful and consistent feedback on the content and structure of colleagues' writing
- Develop and implement a writing schedule that allows them to make consistent progress

Required Texts

Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Terrell, S.R. (2016). *Writing a proposal for your dissertation: Guidelines and examples*. New York, NY: The Guildford Press.

Additional readings will be posted on Canvas or distributed in class

Suggested Texts

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). (2009). Washington, DC: Author.

Evaluation & Grading

Students will be graded based on the following point structure:

Class participation	20%
Peer reviews	20%
Completion of drafts and developmental tasks	20%
Presentation of proposal	10%
Draft of dissertation proposal	30%

Final Grading Scale

A = 100-94	B = 86-84	C = 76-74	D = 66-64
A- = 93-90	B- = 83-80	C- = 73-70	D- = 63-60
B+ = 89-87	C+ = 79-77	D+ = 69-67	F = < 60

Class Policies

Instructor's Expectations

This course is designed to be an interactive experience for all participants, with frequent opportunities to discuss, reflect upon, and apply course readings and concepts. Rather than just summarizing the readings, we will be critically engaging and building on the ideas described in the work assigned. **Thus, everyone must come to class prepared. All students are responsible for completing the week's assigned readings and activities prior to class** to help promote the engaging environment I hope we can create together in the classroom.

This type of classroom environment also requires that students be active participants in the learning process. Students will be graded on their engagement in each week's lesson and classroom participation. This does not mean you have to make sure to speak at least one time in each class or that talking a lot will guarantee full credit; rather, students are expected to make thoughtful contributions, ask questions, listen attentively, and participate in class activities.

A note on the syllabus: it is intended to a living, fluid document, not a static set of rules for us to abide by. It may (and is very likely to) change based on need for greater depth, group interest in a particular topic, or time constraints. While sometimes this will mean additional assignments or work outside of the classroom that may or may not be graded, often adjustments to the syllabus will be in the students' favor. I am open to change and adjustment and welcome discussion and feedback.

Classroom Conduct

Eating and drinking in class are totally fine – I understand that 3 hours is a long time, and that a snack can keep you focused and awake. All I ask is that students please try to avoid bringing snacks or foods that are overly loud or disruptive when eaten.

I also understand that several students like to use their laptops to take notes in class. Using a laptop for note taking is acceptable, but **not** for checking email, IMing or gchatting with a friend, or taking a peek at the New York Times. **It is distracting and disrespectful to me or whoever is leading the class at that time.** This has been a problem in several of my classes in the past, so I am going to ask the following: if you intend to bring your laptop to class to take notes, you must submit your notes to me immediately after class.

A similar policy applies for PDAs and smart phones. I know that many classes have policies about ringing phones in class, and I also ask that you please activate the silent ring function. I also would like to request that your phones/PDAs stay off the desk, out of your lap, and definitely out of your hands during class. **To state it plainly, please no texting or playing with**

your phone during class. Any use of your phone will have a negative influence on your participation grade.

Your actual presence in class is considered as part of your participation grade. Each week, students are expected to be present and ready to begin class on time. If you must miss or be late for class for a legitimate reason (e.g., illness, family emergencies, work emergencies, court appearances, conferences), please contact me to discuss your absence in advance. One unexcused absence or two incidences of unexcused tardiness will result in a deduction of one letter grade from your participation grade. Students should also be careful not to accrue too many excused absences. Three excused absences or late arrivals/early departures from class will also result in a deduction of one letter grade from a student's participation grade.

Students must hand in all assigned work and projects in accordance with deadlines. If you must hand in work late for a legitimate reason, please contact me to discuss the situation prior to the due date (the sooner, the better!). **If you contact me within 12 hours of or any time after an assignment deadline with an excuse for a late assignment, the assignment will still be considered late.** Grades on late assignments that have not been previously discussed and negotiated with me in advance will be reduced by two letter grades. Students have one week to complete a late assignment. All assignments that are more than one week late will receive a 0.

Any time that an assignment is due, the deadline will be **8 pm**. Please note, assignments that come in after 8 pm will be considered late (even if it is 8:03pm). Most weeks, we will be working in Google Docs, so please be sure that your work is posted by 8pm. Your final paper is due to the Canvas dropbox by 8pm.

Re-Write Policy

Students will be given the opportunity to re-write or re-do any assignment on which they receive fewer than 80 points. Anyone interested in completing a re-write must notify me within a week of receiving their grade, and all re-written assignments and papers must be submitted within two weeks. Re-written assignments will be re-graded, and the student's previous grade will be replaced with the grade they are assigned on the re-written paper.

Academic Integrity

As scholars and practitioners, it is important for your written work and contributions to class to be your own. The University of Maryland Code of Academic Integrity outlines the university's policies in this regard – please become familiar with it. More information is available at <http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/III-100A.pdf>. On all assignments, papers, and exams (except weekly reflections), please hand write the following before submitting, “*I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).*”

All acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception are completely unacceptable, and any assignment which has plagiarized elements will automatically receive an F (0 points). If including sentences, paragraphs, or other portion of the work of others in papers or presentations, be sure to cite this work appropriately based on guidelines presented in the *APA Manual* (6th edition). Generally, it is safest to avoid using Control C and Control V when working on your papers and reading resources.

Assignments and Writing Style

All formal writing assignments should be completed following the guidelines for style and citation outlined in the APA manual – evaluation of proper formatting will be included in the grading of all assignments. All assignments should be typed in Times New Roman, 12 point font with one inch margins on all sides. Please do not use alternative fonts or sizes, or adjust the margins. And yes, I really do check for these things ☺.

Respecting Each Other

In order to facilitate participation and help all students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas in the classroom, it is important that we create a respectful, open environment where everyone is valued. It is more than OK to express strong feelings or disagree with classmates ideas, but I ask it is done respectfully. Please be thoughtful about your words and actions, and focus on critiquing ideas rather than an individual's qualities as a person. Also, I ask that when details regarding personal matters arise in discussion, that they do not leave the classroom.

Students with Disabilities

Any student requiring academic accommodations based on a disability is respectfully asked to discuss her/his needs with me on or near the first day of class. Appropriate accommodations to facilitate student engagement, participation, and completion of coursework will gladly be provided.

Recognition of Religious Pluralism

Accommodations will gladly be made for students who must turn in an assignment late or miss class time in observance of religious holidays. It is important to notify me of your absence/need for extension at least three weeks prior to the holiday.

Course Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic and Readings</i>
Week 1: 8/29/17	<p>Introduction to the course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early introductions of topics - Strengths and weaknesses as writers - Productivity and writing accountability - Methods and design - what are your needs? - Thinking through our “writing workshop” and peer reviews
Week 2: 9/5/17	<p>Talking about dissertations and dissertation proposals Chapter 1: Identifying a problem</p> <p>To read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maxwell - Chapter 7 (CANVAS) - Kilbourn - The Qualitative Dissertation Proposal (CANVAS) - Terrell - Chapter 1 - Creswell - Chapter 4 (Writing Strategies and Ethical Considerations - read <i>Writing the Proposal</i> and <i>Writing Ideas</i>) <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify a model dissertation or dissertation proposal (either ask your advisor or choose one from the samples on CANVAS) - Follow the models in Terrell Chapter 1 and draft a paragraph detailing the background, problem, and significance for your dissertation (Google Drive)
Week 3: 9/12/17	<p>Chapter 1: Research questions, hypotheses, and purpose statements</p> <p>To read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terrell - Chapter 2 - Creswell - Chapter 6 (Purpose Statement) & Chapter 7 (Research Questions and Hypotheses) <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read chapter 1 of your model dissertation proposal. What stands out to you? What would you like to emulate? - Draft of problem and purpose statement (Google Drive) - Draft of research questions (Google Drive)
Week 4: 9/19/17	<p>Chapter 2: Getting ready to write a literature review</p> <p>To read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terrell - Chapter 3 (pgs. 46 - 54) - Creswell - Chapter 2 (Literature Review - through section called A

	<p><i>Priority for Selecting Literature Material)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Luker - Salsa dancing into the social sciences (CANVAS) <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on Chapter 1 (Google Drive) - Read the literature review of your model dissertation - note observations about structure, form of synthesis, and how they pointed out gaps in the literature. How does the literature review build on the introduction? - Make an appointment with the education librarian (Tahirah Akbar-Williams, takbarwi@umd.edu)
Week 5: 9/26/17	<p>Chapter 2: Writing a literature review</p> <p>To read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete Terrell Chapter 3 - Complete Creswell Chapter 2 (The literature review) <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full rough draft of Chapter 1 (due 9/29 to KAG) - Bring a copy of your literature map (whatever it may look like and whatever is useful to you) to class. - Literature review outline and emerging themes/arguments and grounding ideas (Google Drive)
Week 6: 10/3/17	<p>Theoretical and conceptual frameworks, sensitizing concepts</p> <p>To read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creswell - Chapter 3 (The Use of Theory) - Maxwell - Chapter 3 (CANVAS) - Bowen - Grounded Theory and Sensitizing Concepts (CANVAS) <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on Chapter 2 (Google Drive) - Read theory section of model dissertation/dissertation proposal. What are your observations of how this study is informed by a framework? What is it useful? What does it encourage you to see that you didn't see before? - If applicable: brief paragraph or list of HOW your framework guides your study. Why do you need it? Where does it appear in your research questions and design? (Google Drive)
Week 7: 10/10/17	<p>IRB, ethics, choosing your committee, building relationships with advisors, and other dissertation related stuff</p> <p>To read:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review IRB forms and process (https://www.umresearch.umd.edu/RCO/New/IRBForms.html#initialapp) - Brandt, Racism and Research (CANVAS) <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on Chapter 2 (Google Drive) - CITI training (if not done already) and set up a profile in IRBnet (if haven't already)
Week 8: 10/17/17	<p>Writing workshop in class Editing, feedback, and writing time</p> <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on Chapter 2 (Google Drive)
Week 9: 10/24/17	<p>Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods</p> <p>Discuss content with class - based on needs and interests</p> <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full rough draft of Chapter 2 (due 10/27 to KAG) - Revisit your research questions - how will your proposed methods allow you to answer them? (Google Drive) - Review sample dissertation/dissertation proposal. How can this work inform your own? What parts of the methods stand out to you as aligning with what you want to do?
Week 10: 10/31/17	<p>Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods</p> <p>Discuss content with class - based on needs and interests</p> <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on Chapter 3 (Google Drive)
Week 11: 11/7/17	<p>ASHE Week - No Class Meeting</p> <p>Writing!</p> <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on Chapter 3 (Google Drive)
Week 12: 11/14/17	<p>TBD based on needs and interests - Navigating writing challenges, maybe revising methods and design, or writing and editing workshop - FINAL</p>

Comment [KG1]: Guests in class, pairing with similar methodologies

- Case study
- Narrative inquiry
- Participatory action research
- Mixed methods

Looking at interview/data protocols - what's the recipe for your research?

Comment [KG2]: Data analysis workshop and Software

Comment [KG3]: Plan to meet and write

Comment [KG4]: Revisit later this semester

	<p>PRESENTATIONS - Proposal Defense - what does it look like? Peer review time for chapter 3</p> <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full rough draft of Chapter 3 (due November 17 to KAG)
<p>Week 13: 11/21/17</p>	<p>Thanksgiving Week - No Class Meeting Writing!</p> <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Editing drafts of sections - Finishing incomplete sections
<p>Week 14: 11/28/17</p>	<p>Writing workshop in class (???) TBD) Editing, feedback, and writing time</p> <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Editing drafts of sections - Finishing incomplete sections
<p>Week 15: 12/5/17</p>	<p>Final presentations</p> <p>Tasks completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full rough draft of proposal (due December 8 to KAG)

Course Assignments

Peer Reviews and Feedback

Throughout the course, you will be paired with a peer reviewer, who will give you feedback on each section of your proposal as it evolves. You and your peer reviewer will work as a team, looking at drafts, engaging around ideas, and learning about each other's projects and ideas. You will also be accountability partners - checking in on each other's writing goals and encouraging each other to engage with your work for at least 30 minutes every day.

I will invite each of you to a Google Drive folder for our class; in the folder, there is a subfolder for you to keep your works in progress, ideas, notes to yourself, etc. Consider whether and how you want to ask your peer reviewer to engage with and offer you feedback on your work and ideas. I recommend notes and the "suggestions" function in Google docs. Also, be mindful of giving your peer reviewer guidance - where do you need help? What are you struggling with? What are you still trying to sort out or do you need another set of eyes on?

At the end of each section of the course and as we transition between chapters, you will be asked to give your peer reviewer a "grade," (due the same day as chapter drafts) and feedback on their feedback 😊.

Chapter 1

Amilcar and Kristen
Mary Kate and Jeanette
Cinthya and Taylor

Chapter 2

Amilcar and Taylor
Mary Kate and Kristen
Cinthya and Jeanette

Chapter 3

Amilcar and Jeanette
Mary Kate and Cinthya
Kristen and Taylor

Completion of Drafts and Developmental Tasks

In this class, we get gold stars for turning things in and checking things off our lists! Progress counts! Many weeks we have tasks to complete and things to think about that will move our work forward. Other weeks, we have larger tasks and goals to reach, turning in research

questions, images, and drafts of sections. The goal with these tasks is to really engage, think hard, and move our dissertation proposals forward.

In addition to working closely with me and with your peer reviewer, I encourage each of you to work closely with your advisor as you complete these tasks and drafts of your chapters.

Ultimately, your advisor's feedback is going to matter the most, and we want to be sure that they have signed on with your thinking and the direction your work is taking. I highly recommend you schedule meetings with your advisors at least monthly during this process, sharing your work with them and getting feedback on your ideas (perhaps after you've gotten feedback from the class and done a round of revisions).

Also, I would love to see us all commit to working on our dissertations for at least 30 minutes each day. That can mean a lot of things - reading an article, spending time with a librarian, talking through feedback with your peer reviewer, workshopping your research questions with Dr. G - this all counts. You automatically get your 30 minutes on Tuesdays ☺, but let's work on putting in time each day during the rest of the week.

Presentation of Proposal

We will do mock run-throughs of dissertation proposal defenses, using the same format many students' use to present their work. Students will be given 15-20 minutes to present the research they are proposing, framing the problem and the purpose, research questions, grounding theory and literature, and methods. Methods are often the area that dissertation committees are most interested in and curious about; therefore, think about spending roughly half of your presentation time focused on research design. One note: please be sure to ask your advisor about their expectations for your proposal defense before preparing the real thing!

Draft of Dissertation Proposal

The goal of this assignment is not to have a draft of your proposal that is "defense ready;" rather, it is to develop a document that has been well thought out, on which you've made substantive progress in articulating your ideas and framing for your dissertation research. An "A" assignment includes 3 (or 4 if you are having a separate theory section) chapters that are logically organized, clear, and well-argued and reasoned. An evaluation of these proposals will demonstrate that students have truly engaged and incorporated feedback from their peer reviewer, advisor, and myself.

Suggested Elements of a Quantitative Research Proposal

Note: The above are *suggested* formats for quantitative and qualitative research proposals. However, all proposals are unique, and thus can vary from these formats.

(Compliments of Karen Inkelas)

- I. Introduction to and statement of the problem your research addresses
 - A. Background and context of the problem
 - B. Statement of the problem (including the research question)
 - C. Definitions of key terms in the statement
 - D. Rationale: why is this study important, significant?
 - Expectations/anticipations about results and their usefulness

- II. Review of related literature and research
 - A. Brief roadmap of literature review
 - Overview of why specific literature was chosen and how it will be organized
 - B. What is known about this topic?
 - C. What is not well understood about this topic? (i.e., what are the gaps in the literature?)
 - D. Critique and methodological limitations of prior work
 - E. If appropriate, incorporation of conceptual framework
 - Summary of literature review as it relates to your problem statement and hypotheses
 - Conceptualization of study, either in words or illustrated as a model

- III. Description of study methods/procedures
 - A. Restate study purpose (i.e., research question) and state hypotheses
 - Note: hypotheses can be null or alternative
 - Note: hypotheses should be stated in a way that is testable
 - B. Design of study
 - State design choice (e.g., experimental, correlational, comparative, ex post facto) and why this choice
 - Identify potential threats to internal validity (esp. for experimental designs)
 - C. Sample or population to be studied
 - Describe sampling strategy chosen and rationale for choosing this strategy
 - Describe population sample is generalizing to and how researcher plans to test for representativeness of sample to population

- State sample size chosen, and give rationale for this choice (acceptable sample error, statistical power considerations, etc.)
 - Describe how sample will be obtained (will it require assistance?)
- D. Instrumentation
- Rationale for using instrument
 - Reliability and validity of instrument (as well as how you plan to re-establish reliability for your study)
 - How are variables scored?
 - Plans for pilot-test?
- E. Plan for data collection
- How, when, and for how long will you collect your data?
 - How will you solicit participation?
 - How will you handle non-response?
 - Will you use incentives?
 - If applicable, how and when will you follow-up with participants?
- F. Plan for analysis of data
- Describe initial “treatment” of data (e.g., data entry, clean up, scale construction, etc.)
 - Describe statistical analytical method chosen to address research question(s)/hypothes(es)
 - Rationale for analytical choice and how it addresses your research question(s)/hypothes(es)
- G. Limitations of study
- Describe possible limitations of the study as conceived thus far
-

Suggested Elements of a Qualitative Research Proposal

Note: The above are *suggested* formats for quantitative and qualitative research proposals. However, all proposals are unique, and thus can vary from these formats.

I. Introduction to and statement of the problem your research addresses

- A. General introduction and background of topic
- B. Statement of the problem (including the research question(s))
- C. Initial (but malleable) definitions of key terms
- D. Rationale: why is this study important, significant?
- E. Disclose paradigmatic worldview, philosophical assumptions that make this paradigm choice appropriate for your study, and how it shapes your thinking on this topic

II. *Review of related literature and research*¹

- A. *Brief roadmap of literature review*
Include overview of why specific literature was chosen and how it will be organized
- B. *What is known about this topic?*
- C. *What is not well understood about this topic? (i.e., what are the gaps in the literature?)*
- D. *Critique and methodological limitations of prior work*
- E. *If appropriate, acknowledgement the study may uncover other areas of literature as research progresses*

III. Description of study methods/procedures

- A. Present initial questions and objectives for study
 - Initial questions should frame initial procedures for collecting & analyzing data
- B. Design of study

¹ Breadth and depth of literature review in qualitative research proposals may vary.

- Describe design choice and rationale for choice in light of initial research question identified
- C. Sample
- Discuss criteria for selection of participants and setting
 - Articulate rationale for initial choice of sampling
- D. Instrumentation
- Since researcher is the instrument, describe researcher's background, closeness to topic, values, etc.
- E. Plan for data collection
- Discuss access to site and participants (including roles of gatekeepers, informants)
 - Describe degree of participation in which researcher will engage
 - Describe types of data researcher will collect (e.g., observations, interviews, documents, etc.) and HOW (provide detail on data collection will take place, e.g. give examples of interview questions or interview guide, the nature of participant observation, use of incentives, recruitment strategies, etc. don't skimp on detail! If you are plan to use interviews, you should include an interview guide/protocol as an Appendix, its nature will depend on the type of interviews you plan to use)
 - Describe how researcher will record information (fieldnotes, memos, tape recordings, transcriptions, etc.)
 - Frame initial speculation on time frame for data collection
 - Reflect on possible changes in data collected, samples selected, strategies used based on initial speculations
 - Describe pilot study, if appropriate, and how pilot informed initial questions and methodological choices
- F. Plan for analysis of data
- Describe data analysis procedure you plan to utilize (e.g., constant comparative method)
 - Discuss credibility, trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, confirmability, or other methods used to ensure quality of data collected and analyzed
 - Make provisions for audit trail (for reader and/or peer debriefer)
- G. Limitations of study
- Describe possible limitations of the study as conceived thus far