

Anthropology 380k (31430)

Research and Grant Proposal Writing

Monday SAC 5.124 (4-7 PM)

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Office Hours: Mondays 11:30-3:30 and by appointment

Course Description

This graduate seminar is designed to teach research proposal writing skills that are needed to secure external funding. The overall course objective is to complete a fundable research proposal by the end of the semester. Students will draft a grant that follows an expanded National Science Foundation Model. Therefore, the course is best suited for graduate students in anthropology who have a clear research project in mind and are approximately a year away from applying for external funding. Advanced graduate students in other disciplines can enroll in the course, but only with special permission from the instructor. Over the course of the semester, students will identify and approach funding sources, and produce a proposal with all necessary components: problem statement, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, bibliography and budget. They will learn to critique their own proposals and those of others, work with partners, and present their proposals and research to the class.

Karla Steffen has put together several books and resources in the Anthro office for us to use as reference material, and we hope to collect copies of successful grant proposals from our students to add to this as we go along. I have also gotten from NSF copies of 10 successful NSF dissertation proposals from archaeology students last year. It took about 3 months to get them through the Freedom of Information Act, but if you look through their lists of grants and see ones you think might be relevant to your field please let me know and we can probably request others.

Requirements

Because the course is organized around weekly writing assignments, preparation and time management are essential. Writing assignments must be done on time and brought to each class meeting. Expect to constantly write and revise. As a general rule, late assignments will not be accepted. Assignments will be due at the beginning of class and there will be no incompletes or time extensions, except in the case of documented emergencies.

You are required to submit a one-page bibliography during the first class session this semester. This bibliography will consist of a list of books, articles and chapters that are relevant to your research topic. The bibliography may include readings that you have already completed, or ones you plan to read this semester. The bibliography will become your required reading for the class, and must be regularly updated and revised as the semester progresses. Students should also arrive with four tentative research questions/ideas/topics you think your research will investigate. Be prepared to discuss

the pros and cons of these questions and the methodologies they might involve. During class sessions you will present and discuss components of your research proposals. I will set up individual meetings with each of you, and will expect you to come with previously prepared questions.

You are required to complete two proposals: one that is an in-class version, another that is a formal funding agency version. The final “class” version will be no longer than 10 pages, single-spaced with 2 inch margins. The “agency” version will be based on the class version but will be put together according the requirements of the specific funding agency you have identified. You will need to obtain application forms from the funding agency early in the semester, though many if not most of these are now available online. Writing assignments are due on the date indicated in the course schedule below. Make a copy of the assignment for yourself and the instructor. If you are doing an in-class presentation, then also bring additional copies for each of the seminar participants.

You will be evaluated on the basis of your weekly writing assignments (40%); the final two research proposals (40%); and active participation in classroom presentations and discussions (20%). Since this is a seminar, students must be prepared to exchange ideas and to engage one another in the classroom setting, in addition to having writing assignments completed on time.

Changes to Course Syllabus

The course syllabus is flexible and subject to change as the seminar develops.

Course Schedule

- Jan. 24 **Introduction and Aims of the Course**
DUE: a 1 page bibliography relevant to your research topic and 3 to 4 tentative research questions (you will refine these and narrow them down over the course of the semester).
- Copies of 10 successful proposals will be passed out as your reading assignment for the week. Each student will be assigned ONE of the proposals to prepare a short two page written report on, focusing on the overall structure of the proposal, how the research questions were posed, how the relevant literature was summarized, and how the methodology was related to the research questions and proposed schedule of field research. While your topics will of course be different, these proposals will give you an idea of how questions were proposed and research methodologies were linked to them.
- Jan. 31 **What makes a good proposal?**
DUE: two page summary of the proposal assigned. You will have 5-10 minutes to present short report to the class on this proposal, discussing its pros and cons. You will also have 3-4 minutes to present any insights or ideas you might have gained in terms of writing your own proposal.
- Feb. 7 **Funding Sources**
DUE: a written list of funding sources you have put together using the web, advice from friends, University resources, etc. Examples include

NSF, Wenner-Gren, Fulbright-Hays, Leakey Foundation, Ford Foundation, and others (such as the American Association of University Women). In a spreadsheet list their contact information, website url, and try to find out as much as you can realistically expect to get from each source. List their deadlines and proposal requirements? Can one build two grants together, or if funding will be reduced if two grants are received? Are there offices or personnel on campus that will be of use to you if you have questions? List them.

- Feb. 14 **Modeling Hypotheses**
DUE: 1 p. statement of your research question(s), 1 page bibliography of relevant literature
- Feb. 21 **Designing Research Methods**
DUE: 1 page statement of the hypothetical answer(s) to your research question(s). Include a separate list of variables and terms.
- Feb. 28 **Reviewing the Scholarly Literature**
DUE: 3 pp. statement of research methods, including data gathering instruments, procedures, tests, population selection, interview techniques, methods for evaluations of findings, and previous research experience.
- Mar. 7 **Making the Case for Project Need and Significance**
DUE: 3 pp. literature review
- Mar. 14 **Spring Break**
- Mar. 21 **Theoretical Innovations: Arguing Your Own Take**
DUE: 1-3 pp. statement of need and significance. 1-2 paragraph statement about why your research is needed, and a 1-2 paragraph statement about the significance of your project.
- Mar. 28 **Abstracts: Economy and Impact**
DUE: 3 pp. statement of theory. Explain relationships among variables and plausibility of answers to research questions. Connect theory to gaps in previous research that you identified in the literature review.
- April 4 **Creating a Professional Curriculum Vitae (CV)**
DUE: 1/2 page abstract, 1 page budget and justification, 1 page time-table.
- April 11 **Presenting Your Research, Public Speaking**
DUE: 1 page CV and full length CV. You will have 20 minutes to present your research question/hypothesis and proposal to the class. Find out how you approach the funding agency – through Liberal Arts grant specialist, UT Office of Special Projects, directly through web or mail?
- April 18 **Presentations of Proposals**

April 25? **Presentations of Proposals**

May 2 **Presentations of Proposals**
DUE: Final Funding Agency proposal