

FORMAT FOR M.A. THESIS PROPOSALS
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

The following is a suggested format for organizing your thesis proposal. This outline names the important parts of a thesis proposal and briefly describes the purpose of each. Please consult with your advisor for specific formatting instructions and additional expectations for your proposal.

- I. Title Page. Please include the title of your thesis, your name, and a list of your Committee Members and their Signatures.
Your Committee must consist of your major advisor and at least two other committee members. One of the other committee members may be from outside the department if this is appropriate to your research. Your committee's signature approval on the title page is required before you can enroll for thesis (ANTH 699) credit hours.
- II. Abstract. This section is a brief 500 word statement summarizing your research proposal. It should include: (1) a clearly defined research question; (2) a declaration why this research is relevant; (3) a statement on how you will examine this research question; and (4) a summary of your expected findings and/or broader impacts
- III. Introduction. This section introduces your proposed research.
 - A. What are your major research goals and why are they important?
 - B. What specific aspects of the general problem will you address?
 - C. What is the rationale or justification for pursuing this line of inquiry?
 - D. Briefly state your expected conclusions and findings and/or your contributions to the discipline.
- IV. Background. This section outlines the theoretical framework in which you undertake your research.
 - A. What information or data will you bring to bear on your research problem?
 - B. Briefly review the literature in terms of your line of inquiry.
 - C. Discuss this previous research and its impact on your research.
- V. Methods. This section describes your methodology for data collection and analysis.
 - A. In terms of your goals and the previous research undertaken, define your specific research questions or hypotheses. How are these questions relevant to your research problem?
 - B. What sort of data or observations will you use to answer these questions?
 - C. Outline your general research methodology for data collection.
 - D. If your thesis will involve any work with human subjects, you must submit a **HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH FORM** to the Graduate School. This form is available in the Department of Anthropology Office. If your thesis involves live animals you must fill out an application to the **INSITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE**. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact the chair.
- VI. Expected Findings AND/OR Broader Impacts. Please consult with your advisor to determine which you should include.

Expected Findings: This brief section outlines your specific steps of research.

What do you expect to find as a result of your research?

What are some other possible findings that you do not expect?

Present any preliminary results or pilot studies that you have conducted.

Broader Impacts: This brief section outlines how your research will impact the field of Anthropology and create social impacts.

What is the theoretical significance of your work?

How will the research project benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes? These may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that

are directly related to specific research projects (e.g., helping to train other students), or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project (e.g., running an educational workshop for high school students on your research topic)

VII. Schedule.

This section tells what you have accomplished so far and gives a tentative schedule of the things you have yet to do.

- A. Discuss your schedule for field work/data collection. When will this happen?
- B. Discuss your schedule for data analysis. When will this happen?
- C. When will you write your thesis?
- D. When do you plan to defend your thesis?
- E. Include a brief budget if you feel it is appropriate.

Revised 1/17/2022