

DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

A dissertation prospectus proposes a plan for your dissertation. These papers are not abstracts, summaries, or introductory chapters. Instead, they introduce the topic and area of study, argue why it warrants research, outline chapters, and include a bibliography. They are precise plans, though they may change later.

As you write your dissertation prospectus, avoid using technical jargon unless it is integral to your subject or argument.

Note: All information in this handout is from [Ohio State University \(OSU\)](#) unless stated otherwise.

CONTENT: APPROX. 15 PAGES

1. **Central problem** – Give your thesis.
 - a. Your thesis can be theoretical, critical, or historical.
 - b. Present it as a question or a set of related questions.
 - c. Give your hypothetical answers.
2. **Current Research** – This part is your topic's background.
 - a. Talk about how this topic has been researched and discussed before.
 - b. Explain how your approach to the topic is different.
 - c. Present any new research in the area that has affected the field.
3. **Method and Theory** – [Harvard](#) states you must describe your approach to the subject and relevant theories.
 - a. Outline your approach.
 - b. Critically discuss theoretical aspects.
 - c. Include potentially interesting concepts by scholars in other fields.
4. **Sources** – Harvard asserts that you must discuss your sources.
 - a. Stress primary sources.
 - b. Identify your sources' location, accessibility, and mediums.
5. **Schedule** – Outline your dissertation and your timeframe (Harvard).
 - a. Describe your proposed chapters in order. A chapter is approximately 30-40 pages (OSU).
 - b. Discuss tasks, goals, and travel plans needed to complete your dissertation (Harvard).
6. **Bibliography (Approx. 10 additional pages)** – Include as many proposed sources as possible.

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