

Guidelines for Dissertation Proposal

- 1) Begin with a short (1-2 paragraph) introduction to your topic, culminating with your thesis.
- 2) Move to a short explanation of where your idea fits into the larger critical perspective of the work (This is where your specific contribution to the field becomes clear: explain how your approach is different, what it will add, to what is already known and thought).
- 3) Reveal your methodology/critical approach. This includes elements such as the types of critical works you will read, the critical ideas that inform your research (from a “field” of critical theory like deconstruction to a more general theoretical approach, like a concentration on the concept of “the Other”).
- 4) Expand on the trajectory of your argument—give your readers a sense of the overall structure. This may be an outline of the chapters and what they will contain, or an overview of your interpretation of the work(s) on which you will focus.
- 5) Bibliography. It may be helpful to divide the bibliography into sub-categories like Primary Sources, Historical Context, Theoretical Sources, and Critical Works on Topic. Doing this first may help you map out precisely what your methodology is, because it will require you to consider the texts you’re using and to what end.
- 6) Suggested length: 10-15 pages, plus bibliography.