

SPS Thesis Prospectus Workshop

8 October 2021
9:30- 15:30

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This workshop aims to prepare first year researchers for their prospectus, by clarifying the parts and purposes of the thesis prospectus. We gratefully acknowledge the work of Caitlin Procter who conceptualized and taught the first edition of this workshop in November 2020. With her permission, we have adapted exercises 1 and 3 to our version of the course.

In order to prepare for the workshop, participants are asked to complete the Thesis Prospectus questionnaire.

9:30-10:00

Session 1: Introduction

The purpose of the prospectus introduction will be explained, and common pitfalls discussed.

Exercise 1: Elevator Talk (15 minutes)

Please tell your fellow group members what your central research question is.

10:00-10:45

Session 2: The Literature Review

The concept and benefit of a strategic outline will be explained.

Exercise 2: Strategic Outline (30 minutes)

Please work with a partner on a strategic outline of the literature relevant for your research question. This entails identifying the distinct positions in the literature and saying in a nutshell what they contribute but why they fail to address your problem adequately.

10:45-11:00: Break

11:00-11:45

Session 3: Methods

A brief overview of the role of methods in a research design will be provided, as well as a brief discussion of mixing methods and levels of analysis.

Exercise 3: Plurality of Methods (30 minutes)

Pick three research methods that can help you answer your question. One should be unfamiliar to you.

11:45-12:30

Session 4: Feasibility and Practicality of Data and Methods

We will discuss the process of moving back and forth between data and theory, as well as the practicalities of gathering data and applying methods.

Exercise 4: Pilot Project (30 minutes)

Where could you get the empirical materials and how could you get some practice in using these methods?

12:30-14:00: Lunch

14:00-14:45

Session 5: Research Ethics

Exercise 5: Research Ethics (20 Minutes)

Breakout into groups of 4-5. Draw up a list of contacts, people & places relevant for your research. List 3 pro's and 3 con's about the ethics of your research.

14:45-15:15

Session 6: Data Protection and Time Lines

Exercise 6: Drafting a Time Line (15 Minutes)

Based on the previous discussions of data, methods and ethics, draw up your individual time line for your project

15:15-15:30

Session 7: Wrap Up