SCHC SENIOR THESIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

The thesis proposal should make a convincing scholarly case that details, contextualizes, and supports your proposed thesis topic. It should be written in an academic and professional tone, in either first or third person. Sources from the bibliography **must be incorporated and cited throughout** the main body of the proposal.

As an overview, a good proposal will do the following: a.) describe your research question (establish and contextualize a need for your research); b.) propose a way of intervening, complicating, mitigating, or exploring that research question (your case/argument/thesis statement); c.) describe in sufficient detail how you will conduct your research (your methodology); d.) explain the stakes of your research; and e.) provide a timeline for the completion of the project.

Proposals should be **8-12 pages in length**, saved as a PDF or Word document, and are required to be written in the format below **with the following section headings included:**

THESIS TITLE

YOUR NAME

INTRODUCTION & THESIS STATEMENT

Introductions, broadly speaking, set the context for your project and capture the reader's interest. Introductions will vary in style; however, there are four necessary things that a successful introduction will include for your proposal:

1. It should describe your research question: you should establish and contextualize a need or exigence for your project.
2. It should propose a way of intervening, complicating, mitigating, or exploring that research question: in other words, it should include a thesis statement, which is your case or argument.
3. It should define the scope of your research: that is, it should mention any boundaries you are putting around your research question broadly-writ.
4. It should situate itself in existing, timely, and appropriate research. Not only should your introduction cite research from your Annotated Bibliography (which is a later section of the proposal), it should be saturated with conversations in the field within which you are working.

IF you are posing a project-based thesis, your introduction should detail both the project itself and the required written, research/analysis portion of the thesis. Additionally, *IF* your project is connected to research done with support from a university or SCHC grant (Magellan, SURF, Exploration, etc.) please explain in this section (3-5 sentences) how your thesis project will expand upon that supported project. Your honors thesis should be an extension of this research, whether through a more comprehensive write up of the project, an analysis of a separate facet of your data, a

proposal about how to expand upon your previous research, a way of re-doing a project that did not pan out the way you expected, etc.

APPROACH/METHODOLOGY
A methodology describes the broad philosophical underpinning for your chosen research methods, including whether you are using qualitative or quantitative methods, or a mixture of both, and why. You should provide a specific, detailed plan for ***how*** you will go about assessing your key questions and/or analyzing your proposed subject, and ***why*** the proposed methodology constitutes the best way to pursue these objectives. You may want to re-watch the Quantitative and Qualitative Methods Workshops that were conducted earlier this semester to refresh your memory.

The Approach/Methodology section should be ***highly detailed:*** In fact, many students who are asked to resubmit are asked to do so because their methodology is not nearly detailed enough. A successful methodology section will thoroughly answer the following questions in detail:

• What methods will be used to answer your proposed question or analyze your proposed topic?
• Why did you select this method? What makes it the best way of completing your research?
• Are you following a particular type or style of methodological model? (i.e., are you modeling your methodology off of another researcher's way of researching your topic?) If so, why?
• How will you locate, analyze, and utilize secondary research? What types of questions will you ask? What themes will you explore when reading your sources? What databases might you need to explore? Who are the primary authors/titles/researchers you know so far and will begin with?
• Do you plan to collect primary data and if so how will it be collected and analyzed? If you plan to administer a survey, conduct interviews or a focus group, identify the intended target population (i.e., college students from SC) and the number of respondents/participants you hope to include. You should also include a draft of the questions you intend to ask.
• How do you plan to analyze your research? For example, if you are doing secondary research in library archives, how do you plan to work through what you read? What criteria do you have for sources that will be included vs. sources that will not? How do you plan to compare/contrast, work through, and analyze what you find? (e.g., Charts? Spreadsheets? An extended annotated bibliography or literature review?)

EXPECTED OUTCOME AND POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE
What do you expect to produce, learn, create through this thesis? How will it contribute to the conversations circulating in your field or discipline? While we do not necessarily expect your findings/analysis to be groundbreaking, we want you to consider how your proposed research has the potential to yield information or analysis that is unique/meaningful. How will it be significant for you, personally or professionally (e.g., will you try to publish or present your findings? Will you use it as a jumping-off point

for graduate or future research?) In short, what do you hope will result from completing this thesis, and what meaningful issues/questions/themes will you attempt to address?

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (approximately 200 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, which is the annotation. The purpose is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited and how they will be used in your proposed research. You have already completed this as another assignment for the class; however, based on the feedback you received, **you should revise your annotated bibliography accordingly**. These sources, which should be scholarly/academic, MUST **also be cited throughout your entire proposal. If research from this section is not incorporated in the main body of your proposal, then you will be asked to resubmit.**

TIMELINE
The timeline can be written in any format which best helps you to organize the necessary steps to complete your thesis from now until graduation. Items to include are milestones and regular check-ins, such as: meetings with your thesis director and/or second reader; research/data collection; outlining; multiple draft submissions; revision goals; tentative defense date; and other pertinent milestones to your project. This timeline is tentative (therefore subject to change) but should be highly detailed and provide a template for establishing deadlines with your thesis director/second reader in your senior year.