

## **RES: 885: THESIS PROPOSAL (2 credits)**

### **PART I Proposal Writing Package - Syllabus**

Final Revision: 19 March 2013, Dr. Douglass Capogrossi

Peer Reviewed: 30 March 2013, Dr. Elliot Benjamin

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this course is to guide the student in preparing an excellent and approved master's thesis proposal in the standard format containing the specifications required for master's level research, under Akamai University policies, and equivalent with other institutions of higher education worldwide. The research proposal will be at least 20 pages in length with the first half devoted to the Background and Literature review and the second half devoted to the Design of the Research Study. The standard, master's thesis format is set out in the accompanying Part II Document, "Parts of a Thesis Proposal," which includes the required format. Note also that the Manuscript Guidelines and other vital resources are published online at the University website.

The steps include

- Selecting a topic of interest that can achieve approval by the advisors
- Clearly define the problem statement and the research hypotheses/questions
- Write a comprehensive review of the literature, including a review of other research related to the student's study, with inclusion of studies in opposition to the student's thesis
- Develop a design of the study with a discussion of the methodology to be used including:

Selection of a sample

Instrumentation and its testing

Sources of data

The data collection process

- Describe how the data will be treated and analyzed
- Describe the significance and limitations of the study

### **PREREQUISITES**

Completion of an equivalency of 30 required academic credits above the Bachelor's level of coursework in the major, the concentration, and research preparation.

### **COURSE TOPICS**

- Standard Requirements of a Proposal
- The Topic and Researchable areas for study
- Definition of the Problem Statement and its importance as the foundation of the thesis
- Hypotheses or Questions
- Review of the Literature for the Study
- The Theoretical Model Used

- Terms and Definition
- Design of Study
- Sources of Data
- Sampling and Population and/or relevant qualitative research aspects of the study
- Instrumentation and Testing
- Analysis of Data and Treatment of Data
- Significance of the Study
- Limitations of the Study
- Conclusions of the Findings
- Importance of making Recommendations for Further Research

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this course, students will have demonstrated competencies in writing an approved master's thesis proposal. The student will be able to:

1. Describe a clearly defined problem statement, hypotheses/questions for their thesis research project.
2. Describe a review of the literature, in the area of their study, which builds a case for their research.
3. Select an appropriate research design for their Master's research.
4. Identify the sources from which to collect the data.
5. Describe the procedures for collecting their data for the study.
6. Choose a sample from a population or a relevant qualitative research sample
7. Identify a tested and appropriate instrument for his/her research.
8. Describe the method of appropriate techniques to be used for analyzing data of the study.
9. Describe statement of the limitations and significance of their study

## **REQUIRED STUDY MATERIALS**

### **Akamai Thesis Proposal Guidelines**

Students are instructed to make use of the following document to structure their thesis proposal:

<http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/DissertationProposalGuidelines.html#20>

Akamai Parts of a Thesis Proposal

<http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/PartsofDissertationProposal.pdf>

### **Akamai Sample Thesis Research Proposals**

Sample Qualitative Proposal - Akamai University

[http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/DissertationProposal\\_SampleQualitative\\_Robert\\_Maldonado.pdf](http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/DissertationProposal_SampleQualitative_Robert_Maldonado.pdf)

Sample Quantitative thesis Proposal - Akamai University

[http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/DissertationProposal\\_SampleQuantitative\\_Christina\\_Ross.pdf](http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/DissertationProposal_SampleQuantitative_Christina_Ross.pdf)

## **Procedures for Approval of Research with Human Subjects**

Institutional Review Board Procedures for Approval of Research

[http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/IRB\\_ProceduresforReviewofResearchProposals.pdf](http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/IRB_ProceduresforReviewofResearchProposals.pdf)

## **Application Form for Students**

[http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/ResearchwithHumanSubjects\\_ApplicationForm.doc](http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/ResearchwithHumanSubjects_ApplicationForm.doc)

## **Required Online Videos and WebPages**

Thesis Proposals [Video], Candace Schaefer, University Writing Center, Texas A&M

<http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/2010/types-communication/dissertations-theses/the-dissertation-proposal/>

Dr. Susan Carroll. Types of Research Design

<http://www.dissertation-statistics.com/research-designs.html>

This website covers in a straight forward manner stating the hypothesis or research question, clarifying the samples and sample size, variables, research design, and statistical tests.

## **Help with Thesis Research Design and Methodology**

<http://www.researchconsultation.com/dissertation-research-methodology-assistance-01.asp>

<http://www.researchconsultation.com/dissertation-research-methodology-assistance-02.asp>

Research and Documentation Online, List of Style Manuals by Academic Field

<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/list-of-style-manuals.htm>

## **Required Textbooks**

### **Proposal Guidebook: How to Prepare a Research Proposal and How to Get It Accepted.**

Gardner, David C. <http://www.amazon.com/thesis-Proposal-GuidebookResearch-Accepted/dp/0398040877>

This text holds a number of excellent sample sections for theses and dissertation proposals. This is an indispensable guide to building excellence into the proposal manuscript. Table of Contents is located at:

<http://www.amazon.com/thesisProposal-Guidebook-Research-Accepted/dp/0398040877>

### **Writing the Successful Thesis and Dissertation: Entering the Conversation.** Clark, Irene.

<http://www.amazon.com/Writing-Successful-Thesis-thesisConversation/dp/0131735330>

Chapter 6 is an excellent discussion on preparing and outstanding literature review for the thesis or thesis proposal. Table of Contents is located at:

<http://my.safaribooksonline.com/book/communications/writing/0131735330>

**How To Prepare A Thesis Proposal: Suggestions For Students In Education and The Social and Behavioral Sciences.** Krathwohl, David R. and Smith, Nick L.

<http://www.amazon.com/How-Prepare-thesis-Proposal-Suggestions/dp/0815681410>

**An excellent discussion of the functions of the thesis proposal**

Table of Contents is located at

<http://my.safaribooksonline.com/book/communications/writing/0131735330>

**RECOMMENDED STUDY MATERIALS**

Work with your advisor for selection of optional research texts specific for your field of study.

Extensive Bibliography of Textbooks on Conducting Research, Akamai University  
<http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/BibliographyofTextbooksonConductingResearch.pdf>

Slade, Carole. Form and Style, Research Papers, Reports, Theses, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. (2009). <http://www.amazon.com/Form-Style-Research-Papers-Reports/dp/0618411313>

Wood, Marilyn. Basic Steps in Planning Nursing Research: From Question to Proposal 7th Edition, Jones & Bartlett Publications, (2010).  
<http://www.amazon.com/Basic-Steps-Planning-Nursing-Research/dp/0763771791>

Oschman, James. Energy Medicine: The Scientific Basis. NY: NY, Churchill Livingstone. (2000) <http://www.amazon.com/Energy-Medicine-Scientific-James-Oschman/dp/0443062617>

Whitley, Bernard E. Jr. and Kite, Mary. Principles of Research in Behavioral Science – Third Edition (2012) Routledge Academic; 3 Edition 2012.  
<http://www.amazon.com/PrinciplesResearch-Behavioral-Science-Edition/dp/0415879280> n

List of Style Manuals by Academic Field, Research and Documentation Online.  
<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/list-of-style-manuals.htm>

Mastering APA Style: Student's Workbook and Training Guide, Fifth Edition. Harold Gelfand. American Psychological Society  
<http://www.amazon.com/Mastering-APA-StyleStudents-Workbook/dp/1557988919>

Witt, Claudia MD and Linde, Klaus MD. Clinical Research: A Practical Training Book, 2012  
<http://www.amazon.com/Clinical-Research-Practical-Training-Book/dp/0702034762>

**ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED STUDY MATERIALS**

Cresswell, John. Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches, Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, 2002.  
<http://www.amazon.com/Research-DesignQualitative-Quantitative-Approaches/dp/1412965578>

Davis, Gordon B., and Clyde A. Parker. *Writing the Doctoral thesis: A Systematic Approach*, Barrons Educational Series, New York: Woodbury, Second Edition, 1997.

<http://www.amazon.com/Writing-Doctoral-thesis-Gordon-Davis/dp/0812098005>

Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1998.

<http://www.powells.com/biblio/65-9780787910099-2>

Multicultural Approaches to Research Design Simmons, T. M., Novins , D., & Allen, J. R. (2004). Words have power: (Re)–defining serious emotional disturbance for American Indian and Alaska Native children and their families. *Journal of American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research* (Special Issue).

<http://www.uchsc.edu/ai/ncaianmhr/journal/index.htm>

Bess, G. & Allen, J. (2004). The evaluation lifecycle: A retrospective assessment of stages and phases of the Circles of Care program. *Journal of American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research* (Special Issue).

<http://www.uchsc.edu/ai/ncaianmhr/journal/index.htm>

Thurman, P. J., Allen, J., & Deters, P. (2004). The Circles of Care evaluation: Doing participatory evaluation with American Indian and Alaska Native communities. *Journal of American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research* (Special Issue).

<http://www.uchsc.edu/ai/ncaianmhr/journal/index.htm>

Mohatt, G. V., Rasmus, S. M., Thomas, L. Allen, J., Hazel, K., & Hensel , C. (2004). Tied Together Like a Woven Hat: Protective Pathways to Alaska Native Sobriety, Harm Reduction,

<http://www.harmreductionjournal.com/content/1/1/10>

Allen, J., Mohatt, G.W., Hazel, K., Rasmus, M., Thomas, L. & Lindley, S. (2006). The tools to understand: Community as co-researcher on culture specific protective factors for Alaska Natives. *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community*, 32, 41-59.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17000601>

### **Additional Research Resources**

Source: [www.textbooks.com](http://www.textbooks.com)

*Caring for the Vulnerable : Perspectives in Nursing Theory, Practice, and Research – 3rd edition.* de Chesnay, Mary, and Anderson, Barbara A. Jones; Bartlett Publishers, 2011

<http://www.amazon.com/Caring-For-The-Vulnerable-Chasnay/dp/144963592X>

Wood, Marilyn J. *Basic Steps in Planning Nursing Research: From Question to Proposal –*

7th Edition. Jones & Bartlett Publishers, 2010.

<http://www.amazon.com/Basic-Steps-PlanningNursing-Research/dp/>

Clinical Research for the Doctor of Nursing Practice - 12 Edition. Jones & Bartlett Publishers 2011.

<http://www.amazon.com/Clinical-Research-Doctor-Nursing-Practice/dp/0763791229>

Polit, Denise F. Essentials of Nursing Research - Study Guide - 6th Edition Lippincott-Raven Publishers, 2005.

<http://src.textbooks.com/Essentials-of-Nursing-Research---Study-Guide-6thEdition/9780781776790/Denise-Polit.php?CSID=AQ3MABSASQWDJODADMM2CQCCB&i=9780781776790>

Micozzi, Marc Fundamentals of Complementary and Integrative Medicine - 3rd Edition W.B. Saunders Co., 2005.

<http://www.amazon.com/Fundamentals-Complementary-IntegrativeMedicine-3e/dp/1416025839>

Weil, Andrew T. Health and Healing : The Philosophy of Integrative Medicine and Optimum Health - Revised and Updated Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2004.

<http://www.amazon.com/Health-Healing-Philosophy-Integrative-ebook/dp/B009SS0CMQ>

## **ONLINE BOOKSTORES**

Online book stores include the following located in the USA – check online bookstores or at your local college for texts in your field of study:

- Akamai Bibliography of Textbooks Sellers <http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/textbooksonline.html>
- Textbooks.com Columbia, MO. <http://www.textbooks.com/>
- Barnes & Noble.com, Various Shipping Locations, USA. <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/>
- thriftbooks.com Auburn, WY. <http://www.thriftbooks.com>
- Yankee Clipper Books, Windsor, CT. <http://yankeeclipperbooks.com/>
- Wonder Book, Frederick, MD. <http://www.wonderbk.com/>
- Aeden Stclair Marietta, OH. <http://www.aedenstclair.com/>
- Goodwill Discount Books North Las Vegas, NV. <http://www.goodwillbooks.com/>
- Avenue Book & Co. Fort Wayne, IN. <http://www.avenuebookandco.com/>
- Nettetextstore Lincoln, NE. <http://www.nebook.com/>
- bookemporium Bloomington, IN. <http://www.bookemporium.com/>

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Assignment #1: Initial Contact with Committee Chair and Brainstorming**

Contact your Committee Chair and discuss your ideas for your master's thesis.

View the YouTube video by Dr. Candace Schaefer about Thesis and Dissertation Proposals

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5ESD58XUGk>

Review the sample proposals provided on the Akamai website and cited above in Required Study Materials. Select a style manual for your thesis and gain approval from your Chair.

Research and Documentation Online, List of Style Manuals by Academic Field

<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/list-of-style-manuals.htm>

Begin your review of the literature on your topic. Subscribe to Questia Media Library and also use any local libraries to do a search of books and the Reader's Guide and Education Indexes for appropriate articles on your topic.

Do a search of thesis abstracts in your area of study in Google.

Work with your committee members for feedback.

### **Assignment #2: Starting to Clarify Your Research Questions**

View the video discussion by Dr. Candace Schaefer about thesis and dissertation proposals

<http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/2010/types-communication/dissertations-theses/the-dissertation-proposal/>

Working on the comments and suggestions from your thesis director and work with your topic to more clearly define the problem statement, hypothesis and questions. Continue to review the literature for research articles, books, reports that have been published on the topic and their findings, conclusions and recommendations for further research. Write out your ideas for a problem statement and the need for the research in the area with any ideas about your study design and send to your committee members for comments.

### **Assignment #3: Finalizing Your Problem Statement and Research Questions**

Review Chapter 5 about Structuring the Statement of the Problem and Research Questions from the text by David C. Gardner. Continue working on clearly defining your problem statement and reviewing the literature to present the case for research on the problem you wish to investigate.

Develop your background or orientation to the problem. Discuss your problem statement and hypothesis or questions with your Committee. Prepare a draft, which includes the sections, Introduction, Problem Statement, Hypothesis/Questions and Review of the Literature. Sketch out your ideas for the design of your study. Send a draft to your committee members. Your committee will comment and provide further suggestions.

#### **Assignment #4: Preparing your Research Design**

Review the website by Dr. Susan Carroll at <http://www.dissertation-statistics.com/research-designs.html>

Examine the statement by the university about the needed content in your Design of the study located online at <http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/DissertationProposalGuidelines.html#232>

Using the comments from your Committee Chair, develop a research design for your thesis. Refer to the readings for information about designing a research study. Write a draft of your research design. Include the sample from a population, or a case. Include a copy of your draft questionnaire, and describe how you will collect the data. Review sample proposals, including the sample listed in the Required Study Materials, above. Send a copy of your research design and arrange an online communication or a time for telephone discussion with your Committee Chairperson.

#### **Assignment #5: Data Collection Section**

Working from the suggestions your Committee made on your draft outline, refine your research design. If you are using an instrument, test it. Write your data collection section. Discuss how you will collect your data giving the data sources. Examine the online discussion titled, thesis Research Methodology Help: Part 1 and part 2 located as follows:

<http://www.researchconsultation.com/dissertation-research-methodology-assistance-01.asp>

<http://www.researchconsultation.com/dissertation-research-methodology-assistance-02.asp>

Write any cover letters to respondents and to any persons who must give you permission to access any materials for your study. Send your research design to your committee members for review and feedback.

#### **Assignment #6 Completing Draft Proposal**

Complete your draft proposal, and send it to your Committee members for comment. Use the instructions provided in the following University dissertation proposal materials to guide the final draft:

<http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/DissertationProposalGuidelines.html>

<http://www.akamaiuniversity.us/PartofDissertationProposal.pdf>

Working from those instructions, prepare your final proposal.

### **FACULTY –STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **Telephone, Email, and Alternative Contacts**

Students will contact their Committee within one week of the enrollment of the course. This initial contact will help familiarize the student and Committee members with each other, and



permit the transmission of clear expectations for completion of course requirements. Periodic telephone or email interaction, required course materials, mailings, and postage at student's expense is expected to take place throughout the duration of the course. For alternative communications, students may initiate and send communications or materials via postal service as appropriate or use Skype.

## **CLASS GRADING**

For this class, grading will be Pass-Fail based on the following assessments:

- Assignment #1: -Developing a master's level research project
- Assignment #2: -Clearly defining the problem , hypothesis and questions
- Assignment #3: -Review of literature in building a case for the research.
- Assignment #4: -Review of literature and development of methodology
- Assignment #5: -Study Design
- Assignment #6: -Final Proposal

Faculty should use the following scores for each assignment and for the course grade report:

- Pass...equivalent to B or above
- Pass with Distinction...equivalent to grade of A
- Not Pass with instructions for alternative pass option...indicated the student must recomplete the assignment or the class and satisfy the written expectations of the faculty-in-charge

## **SUGGESTED TIMELINE**

This is a 16 week class. Students should schedule completion of Assignment #1 during the first two weeks. Each assignment should be completed on a timely basis with completion of Assignment # 6, during or before the 14th week. Normally the first two weeks are for students to orient themselves to the expectations, finish obtaining study materials (which normally are acquired during the month preceding the class start date), and make contact with their committee members. The entire two credit hour course should be completed by the end of 16 weeks, including the presentation of the application to the Institutional Review Board. For those needing extra time please confer with your faculty advisor.

The following timeline is strongly suggested for completion of the Assignments

- Assignment 1 -Complete by end of 2nd week of course
- Assignment 2 -Complete by end of 5th week of course
- Assignment 3 -Complete by end of 7th week of course
- Assignment 4 -Complete by end of 10th week of course
- Assignment 5 -Complete by end of 12th week of course
- Assignment 6 -Complete by end of 14th week of course

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

The email addresses and telephone number for the Committee Chair are provided by the University administrative staff. Please contact the Hawaii office by telephone for assistance.  
1 (808) 934-8793 Hawaii Time