

ANT 261: Science, Policy, and Society
Spring 2019: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:30 - 12:20 am, Studio D

Prof. Eriberto P. Lozada Jr.
Office: Little 1005
Telephone: 704-894-2035

Office Hours: M,W,F 9:30-10:30 am or by appointment
Email: erlozada@davidson.edu
Web: <http://lozada.davidson.edu>

Case Study Proposal Writing Handout

The group policy case study proposal (no more than three pages of text, not counting tentative bibliography – one or two pages of prose is fine) is due on **18 February 2019** (before class, sent to me as an email attachment). Below is a description of the five elements that I feel are necessary for a research proposal.

The research proposal is an opportunity for the group to tell me not only what you plan to research paper but also how you will conduct the research. In the end, writing a proposal helps you stay organized and focused. It consists of at least 5 elements:

1. **Title**
Thinking about a title helps you make more concrete the parameters of your research project, and helps to convey your project to the reader.
2. **Statement of the Problem** (hypothesis or research question, literature review)
This is one of the main features of the proposal, especially the hypothesis or research question. The subject of your research should be phrased in the form of a strong statement that specifies to the reader what you will examine. For example: “Title IX has shaped conceptions of gender in American society” is OK, but put into a form of a testable hypothesis would be even stronger: “The implementation of Title IX to collegiate sports has redefined American conceptions of femininity.” The difference is in the specificity – college sports narrows the field down, gender has been focused to something that can possibly be measured (conceptions of femininity), etc. For the literature review in the statement of the problem, it is also understood that you have not finished your research – but you should be able to situate your research project in the wider discourse of sports and society issues. You will need to have read/skimmed some of the sources that you plan to use, but not exhaustively.
3. **Methods** (how you will answer your research question and support your argument) Even if your research is based on library research, every research project has a methodology – the way that the researcher plans to answer the research question. In this section, then, you will spell out that plan – and yes, it is understood that you have not finished the research yet and that things may change. But you should have a sense of how you can measure “conceptions of femininity,” using the example above, in that your data may include pictures of women in magazines, women’s roles in movies, increased availability and variety of exercising equipment or clothing for women, etc.
4. **Workplan** (timeline) – this is more of a formality, but should serve as a reminder to you for staying on track, especially if your data gathering includes methods other than library research.
5. **Bibliography** This is another key part of the proposal. This will help you keep track of your different sources, and also shows what work you’ve done so far. Use **Zotero** to manage your bibliography, which will export it in the proper citation format. This will help you save time when you submit the actual paper since Zotero will have your references cited for easy export.

The proposal is **not something set in stone**; think about it as a draft, a work in progress, a thought exercise. The goal of writing the proposal is to give you more focus in the research; it is **not to set the focus of your research**. Most research plans change for a variety of reasons – not enough data, problems in coordinating fieldwork, the data is telling you something else is more relevant – so don’t worry about it as you write the proposal. **Just be specific** in both your thesis and your methods, and do a good job compiling a bibliography.