The Proposal & The Thesis

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What’s the point?

- Independent
- Researcher
- Major Professor
- Committee
What is a proposal?

• A statement of the research you plan to do
• Portrays...
  – What you know about the topic
  – What question(s) you plan to ask
  – How you plan to conduct the research
• Presents...
  – Any preliminary work you have done
The proposal defense

• A presentation of the proposal
• Followed by...
  – Feedback period with committee
• Preceded by...
  – Completion of a written proposal
    • A partnership with your advisor
    • Integrated into your coursework
    • Circulated with adequate time to your committee
    • Inclusion of required edits
    • Practice
Barriers to completion

• No topic, no question... no ideas
  – Symptoms of a problem
    • Waiting to be told
    • Focusing only on TAing
    • Focusing only on classes
    • Graduate school as a lifestyle...

• Where does this barrier come from...?
Background research

• Proposal and Thesis Literature Reviews
  – The *context* of research
  – Where topics and then questions come from
  – The *shift* from general interest to research

• Literature is...
  – Duckling lit searches
  – Search engines

• For the Thesis...?
Thesis

• Data collection
  – During and following proposal process
  – During coursework preparation
  – Requires planning

• Analysis and writing
  – Methods and Lit Review should occur during and post proposal
  – Analysis, discussion, conclusion should flow out of data collection
Thesis Defense

• A presentation of the thesis
• Preceded by...
  – Completion of a written thesis
    • Integrated into your coursework
    • A partnership with your advisor
    • Circulated with adequate time to your committee
    • Inclusion of required edits
    • Practice
• Followed by...
  – Feedback period with committee
Scheduling (an ideal)

- Degree Plan, by end of first semester
- Committee formation, end of first semester
  - Don’t be so literal!
- Proposal, during second semester
- Proposal defense, second semester
- Data collection, by beginning of third semester
- Analysis, third semester
- Thesis writing, third & fourth semester
- Defense, end of fourth semester