

Master's Project Proposal Worksheet

1. **Choosing a Subject and Supervisor: *Where have your studies led you?***

- What expertise could you bring to bear on a project? What kind of project would be possible given your existing knowledge, skills, experiences and faculty connections?
- Of the courses you have taken and the papers you have written, which have been most meaningful or enjoyable for you?
- Which teachers have you most enjoyed or benefited from working with, and where do their fields of interest coincide with yours?

2. **Exploring Methods: *What sort of master's project would you like to do?***

- A traditional thesis (extended research paper) in which you analyze something in light of the current scholarly critical conversation?
- A policy paper in which you analyze something in order to make policy recommendations?
- A primary research project in which you contribute original data (e.g. interviews, archival research) to the established understanding of a subject?
- An applied research (practical) project in which you create a new thing or model (e.g., curriculum, website, organization, app) based on your analysis of existing research?
- An extended personal essay in which you make connections between your own experiences and larger social, cultural or philosophical issues or theories?
- A creative project (e.g., mount a photographic exhibit, write a series of short stories)? [requires a separate analytical essay]
- Some combination of the above?

3. **Focusing on a Central Question or Issue: *What do you want to explore?***

- What urgent issues or concerns does your subject raise for you? Are there any particular questions or problems within these issues that you would like to focus on? Which of these are most intriguing, interesting and academically worthy of exploration – and why should I care?
 - Can you focus your concerns on one central question or problem, as it relates to particular situations and circumstances?
- or*
- How can these issues or concerns be explored either practically or creatively?

Checklist: Proposal Expectations

- **Central Question/Goal**

- **Concept.** Does this question/goal articulate the central, essential concept of the proposed project?
- **Focus.** Is this question/goal clear, readable and focused (e.g., no more than three sentences)? Does it contain extraneous material that might be more appropriate in the Context or Method sections?

- **Context**

- **Information.** Does this section provide all the information and context we need in order to understand the Central Question/Goal?
- **Issues.** Does this section make clear the issues central to the critical conversation pertaining to the Central Question/Goal? Does it help us understand why this project matters, why we should care, what is at stake in our understanding?

- **Method**

- **Answering the Question/Achieving the Goal.** Does this section make clear how you will go about answering your Central Question?
 - Will you be relying on scientific, social science or humanities methods?
 - To what extent will this project involve primary research, secondary research, practical application of research, creative activity or personal writing?
 - If you are conducting historical research, does this section describe your main archive, your access to it and your use of it?
 - If you are conducting social science research, does this section describe your methods of research and data evaluation?
 - Is the written analytical component of your project, and its relationship to the project, clear?
- **Fields & Theories.** Does this section make clear the particular fields or theories that will be important in your analysis?
- **Plan of Attack.** Does this section make clear the component parts of your project and the order in which you plan to stage or address them?

- **Preparation**

- **Preparation.** Does this section make you look like an appropriate candidate for successfully carrying out and completing this particular project?