

## Shifting from Proposal-Writing Mode to SRP-Writing Mode

USP 187 Assignments/ Presentations	% of Grade	Due Dates
A1: <a href="#">Update with feedback from three experts</a>	5	Jan. 9
A2: <a href="#">Presentation of evidence</a>	5	Jan. 16
A3: <a href="#">First draft of SRP</a>	25	Feb. 13
A4: <a href="#">Final copy of SRP/ Oral presentations</a>	50	Mar. 6, + as scheduled
A5: <a href="#">Urban Expo presentation</a>	10	Mar. 15
A6: <a href="#">Update Web Research Profile</a>	5	Mar. 22
<b>TOTAL</b>	100 (plus up to 10pts extra credit*)	

**\*\*Extra Credit:** You can earn extra credit from your TA by keeping a journal and/or simply working extra hard throughout the quarter --as evidenced by class participation and office hour visits. Although we do not require that you keep a research journal, we strongly recommend it. At the end of USP 187 you will have the option to give us your journal for extra credit consideration.

Assignment #1: Update with feedback from three experts, Due: Jan. 9, 2007 (5%)

### Objective (what you need to turn in)

1. A revised list of your milestones (*revise and resubmit your timeline from USP 186*)
2. A first draft of your SRP abstract (hard copy and on-line)
3. Updates and new entries into your on-line research profile
4. Feedback from three experts (one page each)

### Detailed Instructions

Provide an update including: (1) a revised list of your milestones, and (2) a first draft of your SRP abstract delivered in hard copy and posted into your on-line research profile. The SRP abstract is different than the abstract you wrote for the proposal ---it is an abstract of your finished SRP. Obviously you won't be done with the SRP by Jan. 12th (when this first assignment is due). We realize that. Nonetheless we want you to draft an SRP abstract as if you had completed it. Your first complete draft of the SRP will be due during week 6; that deadline will be here before you know it ---so you need to get into the thesis-writing mode right away.

Share your draft SRP abstract (with a note of explanation on aspects you might be finding most difficult or challenging) with three experts. Get feedback from these experts like you did in USP 186. Record the feedback in the form of a three page report that includes (a) the name and affiliation of the expert or specialist, (b) the time and place of your contact/communication with said expert, and (c) the highlights of what they shared with you in the form of suggestions, contacts, academic sources, insights, etc.). For this last part, summarize what each expert said, and what you learned from the interaction. Dedicate one page to each expert.

To update your research profile, go to this link: <http://regionalworkbench.org/sprofiles/>, login with your username and password and select 'edit my profile'.

- Research Project Title (enter your current title --how you will label your SRP)
- Main thrust (select your Area of Concentration/ AOC)
- Key Terms (revise your list of key terms from last quarter, list up to five concepts you consider key to your study)
- Significance/Broader Impacts

- Fall Proposal (update the fall proposal abstract, this will be the last time you touch this section)
- References (update your list of references to better reflect where you are at now with your SRP)
- Links (update the links)
- Winter Senior Thesis Project (SRP) (enter here an abstract of your SRP ---of course we realize it is early in the process to ask for this, but we want you to give us a "placeholder" draft. You will be swapping this out with a more accurate version at two points: when you submit your first full draft, and when you submit your final complete draft).

**OPTIONAL TASK** (*Possible entry for your Journal*)

Write a synopsis --- about two pages long--- spelling out what you have accomplished up until this point in the Senior Sequence. Focus on what have been the main issues and obstacles in the research. Possible topics you could deal with include --- but are not limited to --- troubles setting up interviews, methods you've developed to organize an overabundance of data, gaps between your proposal and what you're finding in the field, changes in your research project (e.g., making it more focused or broader and why), the extent to which you have been able to follow your timeline (from assignment one), shifts in what you are finding interesting, etc.

**Assignment #2 Presentation of Evidence, Due January 16, 2007 (5% of course grade)**

This assignment asks you to describe and critically discuss your sources of data (i.e., the evidence you are mobilizing in support of your argument or position). See Part III of Robson (2002) for types of data. To see a table outlining the the strengths and weaknesses of various types of data, [click here](#)

The objective of this assignment is to get you thinking about the empirical content of your SRP (i.e., what data will you actually analyze in your SRP). There are two written parts to this assignment:

- (1) Create a table (like the one shown below) that includes your sources of evidence (data), the strengths and weaknesses of your sources of data, info on what the data adds to your story (anticipated findings), and
- (2) Provide a brief one-page narrative summary (~350 words) of your table telling us what sources of evidence you think are the most important for your study and why.

Source of Evidence	Strength/Weakness	How does this evidence fit into your project (what value does this evidence add to your argument or position)?	Timeline (when will you be finished collecting this evidence)?
1. Archival Records (be specific)			
2.			
3.			
4.			

**Assignment #3. First Complete Draft of your SRP, Due Feb. 13, 2007 (25% of course grade)**

For this assignment we want a complete first draft of your SRP. The components of an SRP are spelled out below. Limit your thesis to a maximum of 25 pages (including the first page with the title, abstract and start of the introduction). Examples of completed SRPs are in your reader and on this web site at: [click here](#)

See web site for [general formating requirements](#).

## **Components of the SRP**

### **Cover Page (1 page)**

The first page should include your SRP title, your name, university affiliation, abstract, four or five keywords, and the start of your introduction. [Click here to see an example](#) Please follow the formatting shown on this example. Be sure to include four or five keywords at the base of your abstract.

The abstract should succinctly state (in 150 words or less) the issue addressed by your thesis and summarize its key findings. In contrast to the introduction, the abstract is a self-contained summary of the key highlights. An abstract should tell us what are we going to learn from your SRP that we do not know now and why is it worth knowing. The abstract should be written in clear, non-technical language so that the following questions could be answered by a member of the general public who reads it: (1) What was the specific purpose of the study, (2) What information/research strategy did you use to arrive at these findings (i.e., what conceptual and methodological approach did you use)?, and (3) What are the main findings?

### **Introduction (3 pages maximum)**

Introduce the SRP topic and your question. Why is this an important or interesting issue? While the original research component of the paper may be quite narrow in scope (e.g., a case study of a particular program), the introduction should frame the case in a broader context. The introduction also should give the reader an overview of the organization of the paper. Many briefly mention their research strategy in the introduction, but this is not necessary. Subdivide your intro (and your whole thesis) into sections with meaning full subtitles (i.e., headers that serve as clear signposts telling the reader what to expect).

Use the introduction to explain to the reader what is it about poverty, community economic development, inequality, industrial ecology, regional planning, class conflict, racism, social movements, NGO networking, or whatever, that your SRP tries to understand or prove. What are we going to learn from you study? What kind of questions do you raise about your object of study (i.e., what really happened? how can we change this? why did it happen? what's going to happen next? how can we make people understand?). There is a balance to be struck between what you include in the intro and the lit reveiw. These sections should be mutually reinforcing without being redundant.

Make sure your introduction is an introduction to the SRP, not to the topic in general. Make sure you don't provide such a broad background to the topic that it takes pages to get to your argument (this explains our limit of 3 pages). You should give a thumbnail sketch of where you're going to go before you delve too deeply into background. Sometimes students do not give this thumbnail sketch because they expect the abstract to be doing that. Don't consider the abstract as part of the paper, but rather a separate summary. (This can create a sense of deja vu when you read an abstract and then read the opening paragraphs of an article, but that's ok.)

The MIT Online Writing and Communication Center has some suggestions on how to go about writing an introduction. You might find it useful:

[http://web.mit.edu/writing/Writing\\_Types/introstrategies.html](http://web.mit.edu/writing/Writing_Types/introstrategies.html)

### **Literature Review (5 pages maximum)**

Synthesizes existing answers to the same or similar questions. The literature review should not include every work under the sun that is related to your topic. The literature review is not the same as an annotated bibliography (an annotated bibliography simply lists a series of summaries of relevant books and articles). Your literature review should be integrated. It should be organized around some theme or argument. Think of the literature

review as the place to orient your reader to the intellectual terrain of your topic (i.e., the fields of pertinent scholarly discourse on your subject matter). Drawing on the work of others, your literature review should make clear the assumptions, reasoning, and arguments that inform your study. In examining a specific setting or set of individuals, the writer should show how she is studying a case of a larger phenomenon. By linking the specific research questions to larger theoretical constructs or to national policy issues, the writer shows that the particulars of the study serve to illuminate larger issues and, therefore, are of significance. Here you show that you know the important work that has been done in the field and what is currently being undertaken. If you know of other people doing research which sounds very similar to your own, explain the crucial differences, and the additional advantages of being able to compare the findings of the studies. When making reference to literature, use Chicago Style parenthetical citations--for example: (Smith, 1985: 24), or "Smith (1985: 24) found that..." All referenced items must have a complete citation in the bibliography.

### **Research Strategy (3 pages maximum)**

Here you explain your research design and your logic for choosing particular methods (why, for instance, did you choose to do interviews, content analysis, and/or archival research). Your research design is your "action plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions" (Yin 1994: 19). Describe your research strategy (methodology) so the reader understands what you did. Identify any shortcomings of your strategy. Define necessary terms. This is not the place to go on and on about the ordinary trials and tribulations of doing the research (i.e., how difficult it was getting a hold of a key informant, the fact that your topic was a moving target and changed over time). Here you have to convince the reader that your approach was rigorous and based in social science methods--be they qualitative or quantitative. The length of this section can vary depending on the kind of research you conducted. Someone doing an inductive qualitative research project will have less to say about research design than someone doing quantitative hypothesis testing (the former will need more room to discuss their findings while the latter needs less).

### **Findings and Analysis (10 pages maximum)**

Describe your research findings. The descriptive component should report what you found. Use diagrams, maps, graphs, tables, charts or other illustrations where appropriate. Depending on the size of your maps, tables, and/or illustrations you may want to include them in an appendix. Anything that takes up more than one-half a page should probably go in an appendix. Don't go overboard. If you do decide to include attachments, limit yourself to one or two pages. All small diagrams, or tables should be folded into the text. The analysis component should interpret your findings and consider the implications for the research question you addressed.

### **Conclusion (3 pages maximum)**

The main task here is to reiterate the main points of your study, and to suggest why you think it matters. What are the implications of your research? What questions remain unanswered? Based on your findings, you may want to suggest an agenda for further study, or point to gaps in policy that need to be addressed.

### **Appendices (Optional, 2 pages maximum)**

Appendices can include supporting documentation such as charts, diagrams, maps, etc., that don't easily fit into the body of the text. Tables and charts presenting the research findings should be placed in the text, not in an appendix.

**Bibliography** (include at least ten peer reviewed sources in addition to your other non-academic and primary sources)

# **Assignment #4: Final copy of SRP!**

Due March 6, 2007 (50% of course grade)

This assignment is a repeat of Assignment #3 with one important exception. In addition to turning in a completed final copy of your SRP, you must also turn in a one-page discussion outlining how your revised SRP addresses the comments you got on the first draft.