

THE SHAPE OF AN ANTHROPOLOGY SENIOR THESIS PROPOSAL

The precise content or contour of your proposal is in your hands, but Anthropology proposals, as of 2009, **MUST** include the following discrete, labeled sub-sections:

1. A descriptive working **TITLE**.
2. A clear, succinct, **SUMMARY STATEMENT OF INQUIRY** covering not only the **topic** but also the **question** to be investigated. This may be presented in the form of a thesis statement.
3. A subsequent more detailed **DISCUSSION** of the issue should set the scene for your investigation by explaining the institution to investigate, the cultural belief structure to explicate. Be sure to let the department know why you find this topic of particular interest.
4. A **LITERATURE REVIEW** section in which you explain to us the nature of the intellectual conversation you will be entering during your thesis year. Here you should review what others have already thought or written about your question, presenting the outlines of a specific theoretical paradigm or philosophical debate. We will look for a demonstrated familiarity with the contours of the relevant ethnographic and theoretical literatures.
5. A **METHODOLOGY** section follows. How, precisely, will you generate your data? This section is extremely important and needs serious attention at the proposal stage. We expect details.
6. A **WORK PLAN** or timeline will outline your process over the coming weeks and months. Again, we expect details. Be specific!
7. A statement of responsibility for addressing research ethics and approaching the Bates' **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**; in addition, this is your opportunity to address any ethical dilemmas you foresee. No proposal will be accepted without a statement of research ethics. See the IRB website at <http://abacus.bates.edu/acad/depts/psychology/irb/>
8. An **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY** for the entire project should be appended. Your comments should indicate the anticipated utility of the various primary and secondary sources you have already found. What other types of sources might you need to complete your task? What sleuthing may be necessary?

An annotated bibliography is a list of works in alphabetical order that provides comments about the text. The appended comments may summarize, critique, or provide general information about the text. You may want to specify key concepts or theories and provide pertinent direct quotes in the annotated entry. An annotated bibliography is *extremely helpful* when writing a literature review chapter for a thesis. An example follows.

Example of an Annotated Bibliographic Entry:

Gregor, Thomas.

1985. *Anxious Pleasures: The Sexual Lives of an Amazonian People*. Chicago, IL:
The University of Chicago Press.

Gregor examines the sexual lives of the Mehinaku, a tribe of Indians living in the Amazonian river basin of northeastern Brazil. Using a psychoanalytic perspective, Gregor analyzes Mehinaku myths and men's dreams in order to suggest that the source of male anxiety and ambivalence, which seems inherent to the male personality, is due to the socialization of a feminine core (see pp. 184 - 199). This feminine core creates ambivalence in male-female relations, especially sexual relationships. I find his book devoid of the female perspective, however, I will still be able to use Gregor in my thesis chapter on gender relations.

Deadlines

These project proposals are due **October 1st** for full year and **November 1st** for winter term theses (for December graduates, these dates are February 1st and March 1st respectively). We hope that with our new structural directives, the need for students to revise the proposals at the busiest time of the semester will be reduced, but we reserve the right to ask for revisions if necessary.

Remember, the quality of your prospectus will figure in both ANTH441 grading and the final evaluation of the thesis itself. One of the benefits of being at a small college is the availability of faculty and reference librarians for consultation – please take advantage of these opportunities!