

## **M.A. Thesis Proposal**

The M.A. thesis proposal states your research problem and how you plan to investigate it. In this document, you need to convince a set of people who have not seen your work (the Educational Policy Committee) that you have a sense as to how your problem is situated within a field (your area of concentration), that you have a research methodology that fits the problem, and that you have an argument that can be supported by your research. You also need to demonstrate that the resources that you need are available (advisor, course work, and bibliographic), and that you are projecting a reasonable time frame in which to do the research, writing, and editing. To do that, the following sections for the proposal are usually the most helpful:

**Tentative Title**

**Thesis Topic or Problem**

**Research Methodology**

**Structure of Thesis**

**Resources**

**Area of Concentration**

**Timetable**

**Preliminary Bibliography**

Suggestions for tightening a proposal:

- Go through your initial draft and make certain that each sentence is necessary to the logical progression of your proposal. Ruthlessly cut sentences that are taking up space.
- Until you can quickly summarize your topic by writing a single paragraph for the opening, you are not done tightening up the other parts of the proposal. Go back and forth between your opening paragraph and the rest of the sections and make sure that they state clearly what you want to do and how you are going to do it.
- Ask several people to read and mark your proposal drafts. Change what two or more suggest changing. Consider what one suggests changing. Remember that your intent is to make your topic clear to people who have not studied the problem itself and to make a sensible argument to those who do know the field. Communicating clearly is more important than saving those one or two phrases that you just plain like.
- Above all, make sure that it speaks well to what you want to do.