

# Research Proposal Template

**I. Introduction.** A clear, concise statement of the puzzle you are addressing, of your proposed resolution, and of the empirical work you will do.

**II. The dependent variable.** What you are trying to explain and why, as well as some sense of the range of variation in the dependent variable. Remember you are trying to convince others that this is a question worth asking (and answering).

**III. Synthetic literature review.** Develop an analytical summary of the existing attempts to explain your dependent variable or solve your puzzle. Do not catalog a "he said-she said" chronology; synthesize the existing literature.

**IV. Your proposed explanations.** Present a coherent logical case for each proposed explanatory variable, going step by step (formalized, if such is your wont) and leading up to working hypotheses.

**V. Operationalization.** Explain how you will measure your dependent and explanatory variables, and how you will evaluate the relationship among them.

**VI. Methodology.** Describe in some detail the ways in which you will gather data (statistics, interviews, archives, secondary reading, etc.), perform data analysis (econometrics, counterfactuals, historical analysis, focused comparisons, etc.).

**VII. Implications.** Explain what you expect the completed research add to our understanding of some broader set of analytical or empirical issues in impacting public/social policy.

Append a bibliography.

## Remember:

- Be concise, be precise.
- Ask only questions to which there may be answers.
- Provide logical underpinnings to all hypotheses.
- Illustrate your puzzle and proposed resolution with a few choice examples.
- Demonstrate the feasibility of your research design.
- Indicate the broader relevance of your research