

SEMESTER PROJECT GUIDELINES

During the semester, each student must plan a sociological investigation. This project involves a topic pitch (Please see attached form.) and three phases. Consequently, a pitch form, three written summaries, one corresponding to each phase of the project, are required. The pitch form that students must complete is attached to these guidelines. Descriptions of each phase, including suggestions for writing appropriate summaries, appear below. Further explanation will be given as needed at appropriate times during the semester.

PHASE 1

Literature Review

After determining a topic for the project, you must prepare a literature review. The review should follow one of the structures discussed in class. The following information should appear in the review.

- a. information from at least five sources, three of which must be primary sources and only one of which may exist, in its original form, on the Internet. Be sure to consider the validity of Internet sources. (If you are unsure...ask!)
- b. proper in-text and bibliographic citations of the sources you use. MLA, APA, or Chicago style is acceptable. Just use the one you choose consistently and correctly.
- c. a proper research hypothesis and the corresponding null hypothesis as well as explanations for why you believe these hypotheses are appropriate, based upon the literature review's structure.
- d. identification of the independent variable(s) and dependent variable(s) for the investigation, characterization of each as continuous or categorical, and an operational definition for each
- e. any possible intervening variables....or an explanation of why none exist (If you do identify intervening variables, be sure to explain their relationships to both the independent and the dependent variable.)

Generally literature reviews are about five pages in length. But, there is no formal page requirement for this assignment.

PHASE 2

Research Structure

For this phase of the report, you must consider methods of measurement and sampling. The Phase 2 report should present, explain, and justify your plans for gathering data. Specifically, the following information should be included.

- a. a re-introduction to your topic, including the research hypothesis, null hypothesis, and variables. This portion of the report should be between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ pages long.
- b. identification of the measure you will use for each variable (e.g. specific scales and indices), along with the particular questions you will use and your reasoning for using these types of questions. The length of this portion depends upon the variables that you must measure and the technique(s) required to do so. But, it should constitute the largest portion of your report.
- c. identification of the most appropriate sampling method and ways of obtaining subjects, along with your reasoning for using the chosen method(s). You should be able to write at least one page about these issues.

While preparing this phase report, each student must meet individually with the professor to review plans for measurement and sampling. Class time is devoted to these meetings.

PHASE 3

HSIRB Proposal

This phase requires you to prepare an HSIRB (Human Subjects Internal Review Board) proposal for your project. HSIRB proposal forms are available at <http://home.moravian.edu/public/hsirb/>. The form asks for elaboration of some information included in the Phase 2 report, but also asks for verification that you have considered ethical issues and made attempts to minimize potential threats to subjects. A full HSIRB proposal includes the following.

- a. a completed HSIRB proposal form
- b. a copy of any instruments (e.g. surveys, coding sheets) that you intend to use
- c. the informed consent document or a transcript of an oral informed consent statement
- d. the debriefing document or a transcript of an oral debriefing statement, if necessary for your project

GENERAL INFORMATION

Your phase summaries should be typed using double spacing. Although conventions dictate that papers should only be printed on side of the page, you may print on both sides of the page in the interest of saving paper.

The grade that you receive depends upon a combination of the following qualities.

- evidence that you have performed the duties associated with the assignment
- indications that you have given adequate methodological thought to the conditions, people, and activities analyzed
- the clarity with which you present information
- correct grammar, spelling, and writing style
- punctuality...Papers that are not turned in on time are penalized five points for each day that they are late (including weekends, non-class days, and holidays).

name _____

TOPIC PITCH FORM

Please select three potential topics for your semester project. Then, consider the variables and hypotheses that you believe are appropriate to investigate each topic. Provide appropriate responses below and on the back of this page.

TOPIC 1 - _____

research hypothesis- _____

null hypothesis- _____

independent variable : _____

independent variable nature (circle one): continuous categorical

dependent variable : _____

dependent variable nature (circle one): continuous categorical

TOPIC 2 - _____

research hypothesis- _____

null hypothesis- _____

independent variable : _____

independent variable nature (circle one): continuous categorical

dependent variable : _____

dependent variable nature (circle one): continuous categorical

TOPIC 3 - _____

research hypothesis- _____

null hypothesis- _____

independent variable : _____

independent variable nature (circle one): continuous categorical

dependent variable : _____

dependent variable nature (circle one): continuous categorical