DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

MA(ENGLISH): SEMESTER III

ENG XV (ELECTIVE): RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Guidelines for Assignment

RESEARCH PROPOSAL (1000 words; word count does not include the bibliography at the end of the proposal)

All research proposals should include the following five components:

I. **TITLE**

II. **ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS**

III. **INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTION**

This introduction should be designed to interest your reader in your topic and proposal and provide some historical/cultural context for your project. The opening paragraph must also delimit the contextual boundaries of the research in terms of texts, time, place, people, etc. At the end of your introduction, include a tentative thesis to indicate to your reader that you are entering your project looking at your topic through a critical, analytic lens -- this thesis should clearly state your intentions using a metadiscursive structure (i.e., "In this project, I will..." or "This research project will investigate ...").

A good formula for an introduction is
context + problem/complication + proposed argument or research question.

Each stage in this formula should be a few sentences long. If you are not ready to construct a hypothesis at this point, be sure to include at least one well-thought-out research question to indicate what line of inquiry you're going to use in your research.

IV. **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature review is the most important part of your research proposal. Identity 3 to 5 critical texts, a mix of books and journal articles, from your working bibliography, that in your view are of seminal significance to your research project and explain why you think these are significant. The purpose here is to place your project within the larger whole of what is currently being explored, while demonstrating to your readers that your work is original and innovative. Think about what questions other researchers have asked, what methods they have used, and what is your understanding of their findings and, when stated, their recommendations. How you structure this section is important for your reader to grasp the main arguments of your study in relation to that of earlier work in the field. Breaking the literature into

thematic or conceptual categories usually works better than systematically or chronologically describing the texts from your bibliography one at a time. Note that conceptual categories usually become visible only after you have read most of the pertinent literature on your topic, so you need to be patient with the process. Finally, connect the literature review to your own area of research and investigation: how does your own work draw upon, depart from, synthesize, or add a new perspective to what has been said in the literature you have reviewed.

V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Your final bibliography of around 20 to 25 entries must list everything you have used or cited in your proposal, with additional citations to any key sources relevant to understanding the research problem. This section needs to demonstrate that you have done enough preparatory work to ensure your project will bring something new to the discussion and not just duplicate the efforts of previous scholars. Cited works should always use the latest MLA format.

This section does not count towards the total word count of your research proposal.

For more information consult https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchproposal