Additional information for research proposals in class

**Cover page** (in APA style)

**Abstract**—problem statement, what your study adds, who will do what in your study, what you expect to find, what it all means

**Introduction**

7-8 pages

General intro leading us into the topic (why is it important?) and setting up your study briefly

Then a review of the literature with headings (and topic sentences and all that),

Ending with a “current study” (or something similar) section that tells what’s new and different about your study and has your hypotheses. It should summarize past research briefly, tell what your study adds, describe your study in general terms, and give the hypotheses. The logic of your hypotheses should be clear.

Use the information in the readings on writing!

Use topic sentences

Focus on results of previous research and important details (not every detail)

Typical paragraph should have: a) topic sentence (what is this paragraph about and what does it add to what you’ve already said?); b) important method details with focus on results; c) include more than one study in most cases: d) use present tense for general results—past if you explicitly mention the study in the text; e) then summarize with what it all means or suggests

**Method**

*Design* section that tells what type of study it is (be specific, e.g., randomized control group experiment), what type of design it is (e.g., 2 x 2), and what the independent, dependent, and control variables. Also list any mediators, moderators, and covariates. Justify your choice of design here or in the current study section in the intro.

*Participants* section explaining who the participants will be and how you will recruit them. Include a power analysis and describe how you came up with the effect size (and what type it is), what parameters you used, what program or source you used, etc.

*Procedure* section detailing what will happen in time order from consent through debriefing. All measures/stimuli (or at least descriptions) should be in Appendices that are referenced. You should provide enough detail that I could repeat exactly what you have in mind just by reading this.

You can optionally have sections such as measures (describing measures if there are very many) and apparatus if they are appropriate. All sections for things that aren’t done yet (e.g., procedure) should be in future tense.

For each *measure*, you should provide the name of it (or make it clear that it’s author generated) and citation as well as a sample item, the number of items, how they are answered (e.g., 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much), and information on its reliability and validity (as well as subscales if relevant).

**Expected Results**

*Initial analyses* section—include information on any transformations, and scale creations. Tell what procedures you’ll use to look for careless responders and what you’ll do with their data. Tell what your procedures will be for missing data. Talk about your manipulation check (if you have a manipulation, 95% of the time you should have a manipulation check so you know if it worked) and how you’ll test it.

For each *hypothesis*—tell what statistical tests will you do and what will you expect to find (include things like what effect will be significant, whether it’s a main effect or an interaction, etc.—put in stat terms and normal language). Mention what effect sizes you will report, what other things you’ll report (e.g., confidence intervals), how you will calculate all of those, and justify your choices (e.g., your choice of ANOVA over regression, your choice of d over r). Don’t forget to describe any follow up tests you may need

Add a section on any additional or exploratory analyses you will do.

**Discussion**—

First summarize your expected findings

What would these findings mean (e.g., for theory, practice)?

What would it mean if you didn’t get the expected findings?

What are the major limitations of the study and how could those be addressed in future research (and/or other ideas for future research). Don’t just mention the obvious, and if there is a reason they might not be as much of a problem in your study explain why (e.g., looking at college students but examining dating relationships). Address how future research could deal with these limitations (need at least 2 ideas for future research)

Nice strong ending

**References**

In APA style, matching up exactly to those used in the text

**Appendices**

All measures, including demographics, using information we’ve talked about in class in terms of how to ask good questions

*Reliability/Validity* appendix: In this section, you should address reliability and construct validity for each measure (what they are, whether there are any concerns), as well as internal validity—what threats are there, why are they a problem, and how will you try to minimize them; external validity—what is the external validity, is that a problem, why (address sampling and whether you have a WEIRD population or topic); construct validity—what will you do to ensure the validity of your measures and your manipulations, are there issues of method bias and how can you decrease them?; and conclusion validity for the study. Also address the construct validity for any manipulations or quasi-experimental variables.

*Ethics* section—Discuss any ethical issues in your study (don’t just say there aren’t any—they’re there) and how you will deal with them. Address ethics in terms of participants, scientific integrity, and dissemination.

The points breakdown for the paper is as follows:

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| Section | Points total | Notes |
| APA style/references | 10 | -.25 for each APA style error in the paper or references, -.5 for any references that don’t match to text or vice versa |
| Abstract | 10 | -1-2 for any section that is inadequate—problem statement, method, expected results, implications |
| Introduction | 15 |  |
| Method | 35 |  |
| Expected results | 10 |  |
| Discussion | 10 |  |
| Organization/Composition | 10 | Grammar and organization. Scoring lower here will also affect your grade on the other sections, especially the introduction |

The two appendices are worth 10 points each and are part of your proposal assignments grade.

See this [scaled rubric](http://www.uni.edu/harton/RDproposalrubric.docx) for more information on what constitutes an excellent paper. I will provide feedback to you using these categories, which will be correlated with final grades, but because different items are weighted differently, there is not a one-to-one correspondence.