

Research proposal
Assignment due Thursday December 2, in class

This is a short (5-6 pages, absolutely not more than 8 pages) research proposal, in four sections.

1. Introduction: You need to present a well-defined, researchable idea. In this proposal, you should clearly motivate the research and briefly justify why the results that you expect to find are important (for some specific policy design, because it remains a crucial problem not well understood, because there are controversial results on this, etc.). Be clear on the specific contributions that you intend to make. Remember that in a proposal you have to convince a reader, usually to fund your research.

2. Literature review. For this proposal, you should specifically consider three papers of your choice. This section is a synthesis of these 3 papers that serves as the basis for the development of your proposal. This synthesis should be a sharp description/assessment of the papers that you have chosen, with emphasis on what you find most interesting in and want to retain from them, and their limits/errors that justify your own research. Be very specific on the lessons you extract from these papers as they bear upon your research proposal.

3. Then comes your proposal per se. It will usually include

- A theoretical framework, or at least some building blocks. Always in words, and sometimes, or at least partially, in equations. The theoretical framework should be based on at least one of your three selected articles. Extensions are often developed by incorporating in the model an idea taken from another paper or applying the idea to a problem that is posed differently. Conclude with some working hypotheses.
- The context for an empirical study
- Needed data, discussing availability or feasibility of collection (disregard costs and time for now, but focus on whether this is a type of data that exists, that could be elucidated from a survey, or that could be built from existing data)
- Sketch of empirical strategy. Usually not the econometric model yet, unless your proposal is specifically about an econometric technique, but at least discussion of issues of identification of the result that you propose to find.

4. Expected conclusion