

## Research Proposal Outline

Introduce your Research Topic/Question

What are you interested in studying?

Why are you interested in studying it?

Why is the issue or question important?

What sort of theory are you working with?

State initial Hypothesis

Drawn from or informed by the theory you are working with.

Explicit statement of the relationship between your two primary variables (IV and DV).

Indicates the directionality of the relationship.

E.g.) Exposure to negative campaign ads causes a decrease in voter turnout.

We know that negative campaign ads are the IV – it affects/influences the DV.

We know the directionality (decrease) – here we have a negative relationship (as one variable increases, the other decreases).

We know the unit of analysis: voters.

Discuss your research design

Define/Operationalize your terms/concepts

Explicitly define your concepts.

Justify your definitions.

How do you propose to attempt to test your hypothesis?

Experimental Design? What type?

Non-Experimental? What type?

Explain why you decided on a specific type of research design.

What types of measurements/observations will be needed?

How will you acquire the measurements/observations or other information you need?

Will you need to collect this information?

Does it already exist (e.g. data sets)?

Strengths/weaknesses of your measurements and information.

Discuss the overall strengths and weaknesses of your research design.

What sort of gaps or holes would your research study fill in the political science discipline?

If you are studying terrorism, will your study offer any new insights?  
How/Why? Aspect of terrorism that hasn't been studied empirically?

Replication study?

Contradicting previous research?

Discuss your initial thoughts on the expected outcome of your research study.

What do you expect the data/results to say about your hypothesis?

How will finding support for (or against) your hypothesis impact the theory you are working with?