Dissertation Pre-Proposal

This milestone is intended to assess your process in moving from a knowledge consumer to a knowledge producer. In order to write a dissertation proposal you will need to do all the steps in this process. We will evaluate this pre-proposal by the end of the third year in order for you to advance to candidacy. It should be passed and signed off by your committee the week spring instruction ends. This pre-proposal should help you draft the dissertation proposal, which you will need to begin the dissertation research. We recommend you defend the proposal by the end of fourth year Fall semester (by the week the fall instruction ends).

The Preproposal should:

1. Identify subfield and bodies of literature that you are engaging with. Some examples are prisoner re-entry, higher education access, racial inequality in student debt.

2. Research Question Development
State the research question or questions you might explore. This should be developed along with advisor's input.

3. Draft a statement of problem (based on the literature, or policy reports, or news sources). We also recommend that you start using a reference manager (eg. Zotero).

4. Compile readings as an annotated bibliography. For each source be sure to answer following questions:
    a) What does the author want to know (the author's central question)?
    b) Why, or So what (what is the author's rationale or the originating question)?
    c) What is the author's answer? (or the author's thesis).
    d) How do they probe or check the correctness or adequacy of the answer (what is the author's logic of inquiry)
    e) What theoretical concepts or framework(s)--if any–does the author engage with to make sense of their findings? (If they don't explicitly engage with any theory, you should note that as well.)
    f) How do you think this study informs your thinking of a study or question you might pose?

Your reading list should be extensive (approximately 25 sources minimum)

5. Data Investigation and Organization
    a. Identify your unit of analysis
    b. Propose data methods and data sources to investigate this area. If secondary, engage in data exploration. If qualitative, consider field sites, who you will recruit and how.
    c. Draft Chapter Outline (subject to change)

6. Identify three committee members. Decide which two will read and evaluate the pre-proposal (with their consent).

This document should be between 15-20 pages.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Sociology PhD Pre-Proposal Rubric
Were expectations met?   yes/no</th></tr>
<tr><th>Criteria</th><th>Score by Criteria</th><th>Comments/ Feedback</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Command of literature: The proposal is well situated in the literature and addresses a unique question. Proposal makes a clear link between the relevant research and the thesis, as well as engaging with relevant theoretical concepts or frameworks. Annotated bibliography is thorough and includes relevant literature.</td>
<td>Outstanding
Very Good
Acceptable
Unacceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Independent reasoning: The proposal demonstrates original, creative thinking about the extant theoretical and empirical literature. The proposal illustrates potential to make independent contributions to the literature.</td>
<td>Outstanding
Very Good
Acceptable
Unacceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Methods: The research method proposed is appropriate to answering the research question(s). Proposal demonstrates a solid understanding of the proposed research method. Research design is thorough. Project is feasible.</td>
<td>Outstanding
Very Good
Acceptable
Unacceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Quality of writing: The proposal thoughtfully advances a thesis, is clear and concise. The essay uses conventional grammar and syntax. Citations and figures are appropriately used.</td>
<td>Outstanding
Very Good
Acceptable
Unacceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</table>