

APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE THEORETICAL DISSERTATION PROPOSAL OUTLINE

(Revised 2005)

ABSTRACT (1 page)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND / OVERVIEW (2-6 pages)

State your topic and the perspective from which you wish to approach it. Describe the field in which it is located, the background of the topic, its outer limits (things that the dissertation will not cover that might be expected).

THESIS STATEMENT / RESEARCH OBJECTIVES (1-2 pages)

State the thesis that the dissertation will develop and what the work will attempt to accomplish. Depending on the nature of the dissertation, include a thesis statement (a statement that can be true or false), one or more research objectives (themes or issues that the dissertation will explore; no truth-value statements), or both.

LITERATURE REVIEW (6-8 pages)

Include a preliminary literature review on the topic of the dissertation. Write the review in a way that paves the way for your original contribution. If appropriate, organize it chronologically or thematically.

SIGNIFICANCE (2-3 pages)

Clarify the original contribution of the dissertation to the existing scholarship. What significance do you see this work having within your discipline and related disciplines, as well as for yourself? This section is usually divided into subsections: a) academic significance; b) personal significance; c) social significance (optional); and d) spiritual significance (optional).

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE(S) (2-6 pages)

Name the standpoint or standpoints to the body of existing knowledge that you will apply to your research topic. Describe your perspective (e.g., Jungian, transpersonal, psychoanalytic, Buddhist, shamanic, etc.) Name and discuss any specific methodological tools (e.g., hermeneutical, critical theory, historical, feminist, etc.) that you will use for your research.

CHAPTER BREAKDOWN (2-3 pages)

Describe what each chapter of the dissertation will discuss.

RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY (2-4 pages)

Include the most significant works/materials that will be used in your research, preferably arranged according to some kind of topical headings, noting if appropriate, primary and secondary texts.

REFERENCES

Include a list of all the works (books, articles, etc.) quoted in the dissertation proposal, according to a standard system of citation (APA, Chicago, MLA, etc.).