

ANG 6091 (section 8071) is a grad seminar is designed for doctoral students, as well as grad students beginning a dissertation research while finishing a master's degree.

***Are you and your PhD supervisor satisfied with your answers to these questions?
If not, ANG 6091 will benefit you and your nascent dissertation.***

➤ What is your plan to operationalize a year (or years) of doctoral research into a dissertation? ➤ How many doctoral theses written for how many departments at the University of Florida, as well as other US and non-US graduate schools have you scrutinized? ➤ What are the differences between research proposals and dissertations that jump-start internationally renowned careers and those that molder unfunded and/or forgotten? ➤ When do doctoral students know to stop research and dedicate themselves to writing dissertation chapters? ➤ Are you primed to devise, package and submit research proposals and grants, which are funded, propelling you to a successful academic career and fiscal security? ➤ Does your research proposal prefigure the content and structure of your thesis, as well as identify the major research questions, hypotheses and testable predictions? ➤ Is your research protocol nimble, innovative and compelling? ➤ Do your term papers make faculty swoon with delight? ➤ Has your 'dream' PhD thesis topic meandered since your acceptance to graduate school? ➤ Are you now entangled in unanticipated social, marital, parental and financial obligations that impede execution of your 'dream' PhD research? ➤ Do your advisors recognize the name 'Foucault'? ➤ Do you aim for your dissertation to be applied, i.e., make the world a better place, especially for the disenfranchised; generate new theory of immense interdisciplinary relevance; and incorporate cutting-edge qualitative and/or quantitative methods? ➤ Are you and your supervisor(s) permanently in synchrony concerning the objectives, theory, methodology, locale, rationale and fundability of your thesis-to-be? ➤ In the coming years, could a discrepancy arise between you and your committee's visions of your dissertation? ➤ What happens if your committee changes after your proposal is approved, but before you defend?

Welcoming Doctoral Students from all UF Departments and Colleges

ANG 6091 Research Strategies (aka *Dissertations Decoded*), section 8071

Mondays, periods 9-11, 4-7pm in B304 Turlington Hall Basement (Biological Anthropology Teaching Lab)

Instructor: Sue Boinski, boinski@ufl.edu, office B364 Turlington, Anthropology

NO REQUIRED TEXT.

Objectives

This seminar is designed to demystify the dissertation and to assist graduate students in preparing an effective dissertation proposal. Diligent and engaged participants also acquire an informed, confident and critical opinion useful in the multiple phases of producing a proposal and a dissertation and, importantly, transubstantiating into a PhD scholar. The premise for this course is that a successful PhD proposal presents the intellectual and pragmatic rationale for a compelling dissertation, i.e., a dissertation that expands knowledge and lays the essential groundwork for a rewarding career that contributes substantially to society. Importantly, this course validates both qualitative and quantitative research methods; students are encouraged to embrace both approaches, as well as innovation in many other domains.

When **ANG 6091 Research Strategies** was originally established a decade ago, the goal of the course was much narrower: coaching graduate students to write grant proposals to the National Science Foundation (NSF) to fund dissertation research. Guiding numerous seminar cohorts through this major funding endeavor, however, revealed that a far more fundamental need of doctoral students remained unmet. That is, too often an individual invests years and a minor fortune into doctoral program, only to comprehend a dissertation's potential functions, mechanisms and latent power long past the receipt of a PhD degree. The current incarnation of **ANG 6091**, therefore, is more accurately described as *Dissertations Decoded* than Research Strategies, the bland official seminar title.

Core Content

The single most valuable component of this course arises from individual and group critiques of proposals, grants and related documents, including those written by seminar participants. Each student benefits to the extent she or he contributes to group discussion and the progress of other seminar participants. The semester starts with seminar participants becoming adept in communicating information framed as aims, objectives, quantitative and qualitative research questions, hypotheses, testable predictions, evaluated outcomes, societal implications and transformational and educational impacts. We then move through various issues, emphasizing to how to work with (exploit) your thesis committee, ethical considerations, format and style, preparation of proposals, summary oral presentations, cover letters and CVs. Besides acquiring basic templates, skills and an arsenal of proven tactics, successful students build and test personal templates as to what makes a compelling argument for research, both written and oral

presentation; these templates are expected to evolve in step with each student's professional experience. By the end of the semester, each student (a) submits a draft dissertation proposal; and (b) presents his or her proposal in a 20-minute long seminar, followed by critical discussion.

Previous ANG 6091 semesters indicate that **academic diversity among participants** promotes broader perspectives and enhanced communication skills at the individual level. Graduate students from departments and colleges throughout UF are strongly encouraged to participate. Ideally, participants will be in the early phase of a doctoral program (but better late than never). Also welcome are students developing a dissertation project with UF faculty while in the final phases of fulfilling a master's degree. The seminar track record also suggests that participants produce a commendable proposal; obtain a superior grade; and impress faculty mentors *if* she or he brings a research concept to the seminar that (a) stirs the student's soul with excitement and (b) enjoys the general approval of her or his faculty mentors. Students should also confer frequently with their official mentors during the course of the semester.

Note that the instructor cannot be held responsible for the merit of the specialized disciplinary content of student proposals. Her assistance is best described as encouraging, nurturing and packaging research and intellectual discovery ideas conceived by students in consultation their mentors. On the other hand, if the instructor expresses reservations about some aspect of a proposal, the student may wish to reconsider that portion of the proposal design.

Class Protocols

Spring 2011 is the first semester ANT 6091 embeds itself into the Sakai software system; expect a few bumps. Sakai will soon serve as a repository for the class library of grant and proposals (pdf format) and other essential course material. Access to all media is limited to seminar participants.

Seminar participants immediately come to appreciate the many benefits of trolling the electronic thesis collections of the UF Library. As the semester proceeds, the instructor and students select grant proposals and other documents for class and individual critique. All participants are expected to procure proposals, web sites, guidelines and other germane media for class use. All recent (Post 2000) research or grant proposal, whether submitted or not to a funding agency, both funded and unfunded, are vital resources for the seminar.

Timely and thorough preparation of assigned class work is expected. Adequate preparation of assigned readings means carefully reading and annotation, prerequisites to discussions of a document's themes, questions, comments and implications, and position within the larger context of class material.

Note that seminar participants will edit and comment on each other's work. Class participation credits include the effort and care a student invests in the commentaries on other students' drafts. Most of the formal assignments and presentations are skewed toward during the first half of the semester. During the second half, participants are expected to invest significant effort in proposal preparation. Students will maintain a portfolio of his or her course materials, which will be assessed in an exit interview with each participant, i.e., visit to instructor's office hours). The final course content, including number and variety of assignments (e.g., written and oral grant reviews, conferences with each student's respective chair and committee members) will be determined once the seminar composition is determined and as the seminar and individual students progress through the semester

Grading & Assignments

STUDENTS DO NOT COMPETE FOR GRADES. All students exhibiting consistent diligence, effort and support for other seminar participants will do well. The more each student contributes to the seminar, the greater the benefits she or he and other seminar participants accrue. Your grade will be based on class participation, quality and timely submission of assignments, including written documents and oral presentations and, of course, your draft proposal. The draft proposal will likely encompass 10-15 pages of text, in addition to figures, tables, a CV and extra's such as web links.

Week & Date (Monday)	Seminar Topic Readings are usually assigned and/or selected based on seminar participants and their respective interests and needs. Email will suffice for distribution of small efiles and large files can be downloaded from the class Sakai website.
1 10Jan2011	Introduction: Why are you want a PhD?
2 17Jan2011	No class- MLK Birthday
3 24Jan2011	<i>Qualitative and Quantitative research Methods</i> Critical discussion of proposals & texts
4 25Jan2011	Salsa Dancing text Critical discussion of proposals & texts
5 31Jan2011	Critical discussion of proposals & texts; individual presentation of research schemes
6 7Feb11	Critical discussion of proposals & texts; individual presentation of research schemes
7 14Feb11	To be determined
8 21Feb11	To be determined
9 28Feb11	10-minute long individual presentations of research proposals
10 7March11	Spring Vacation -No Class Monday 7 March thru Friday 11 March
11 14March11	CVs & letters of intent
12 21Mar11	Procuring and writing letters of recommendation
13 28Mar 11	Prose Polishing
14 4Apr11	To be determined
15 11April11	To be determined
16 18 April 11	Approximate Date for (a) Submission of proposal draft and (b) presentation of 20 minute long précis of research proposal. The latter should approximate a presentation to a student's dissertation committee (e.g., at qualification exam). Traditionally, the final seminar presentations take place at the instructor's house; pizza, snacks & beverages are available in abundance. For multiple reasons, non seminar members are also invited; most importantly to expand the number of audience members naïve to individual proposals.