

RESEARCH PROSPECTUS

WRITING #3

SYNOPSIS OF WRITING #3.0

Since the final three major writing tasks of the term are all connected, this third piece is actually the starting point for your fourth piece. (See "A Preview of Writing #4 below.) Rather than being a "paper," Writing #3.0 is a research "prospectus" (or "proposal") that will preview for me such issues as what your documented study (Writing #4.0) will be about, how you will go about it, and what other theorists have already said about the topic you are working on.

The prospectus should be at least three pages long, and it will include a "Works Cited" page (which will use MLA documentation).

A PREVIEW OF WRITING #4

Writing #4.0 will be a documented study. It needs to be of interest to the entire *Popken Writer* audience, and the goal of the paper is possible publication in the 2007-2008 *PW*. That paper will be at least six pages long (not counting the works cited page, abstract, or appendices) and will use research methods appropriate to its central research question. It will also utilize a documentation system appropriate to its subject matter. After the projects are all turned in, each student will also present to the rest of the class the findings of his or her study.

There are a good many options for a discourse such as the one you will produce for Writing #4.0, possibilities we will explore by looking at the articles in the current edition of the *PW*. Above all, your study will do the following:

1. Be appropriate for readers of the *TW*
2. Be unified around a research question rather than simply reporting on several different aspects of a topic
3. Be "original" in that it attempts to wrestle with a topic that has not already been rehashed again and again in print
4. Be "research"--which may mean textual study, library sources, historical sources, survey methods, interviews, or other appropriate techniques.

COMPONENTS OF THE PROSPECTUS (WRITING #3.0)

Since this is a different sort of writing than most of you have ever written, we will spend some time talking about what a prospectus needs to be like. (For this, we will build on the sample prospectus in the *Popken Writer*.)

The following will serve as the essential components of your prospectus:

1. What is the central research question in the study?
2. What is so important about the question? (I.e., why/how is it of worth to the *PW* audience?)
3. What have other theorists/researchers had to say about the central research question you are investigating? (This is also often known as the "Review of the Literature" section of a prospectus.) **(Must include at least 5 sources.)**

4. What do you plan as your methodology for the study?
5. What are your qualifications for carrying out this study?
6. What is your tentative schedule for completing this study?

AUDIENCE FOR THE PROSPECTUS

Assume for the prospectus that you are writing directly to me (your "research director"), convincing me of your capabilities to carry out the project. What this means, of course, is that I probably know very little about the area you are investigating. Therefore, you will have to be quite specific so I am clear about what you are planning to do in the study.

EVALUATION OF THE PROSPECTUS

The following will be my criteria for evaluating Writing #3:

1. How convincing is it?
2. How thorough has the writer been in investigating what he/she wants to study?
3. How specific are details, especially in the review of the literature section?
4. How clear is the style?
5. How well-arranged are the sections: overall? within paragraphs?
6. How well-controlled are grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation?

GRADES FOR WRITINGS #3 AND #4

Since these two writings are so closely connected, I won't be putting a formal grade on your prospectus (Writing #3). Your entire performance on Writing #4--which includes Writing #3, an annotated bibliography (due Thursday, April, 2), a preliminary abstract, and an oral presentation--will be what will receive a grade. And, of course, other bits and pieces (source lists, notes, partial drafts) will be due along the way, just as has been the case in your other writings this semester.

However, on Writing #3 you will get comments (based on the criteria in the evaluation list above), and I will genuinely use the prospectus to determine how well you seem to be doing on the project. Also, much like has been the case throughout the rest of the semester, failure to turn in this assignment will result in failure of the course. Although you do not get a formal grade for this prospectus, because it is one of the major writing tasks of the term, you must turn it in by the due date to receive credit for the course.

DUE DATE: Thursday, March 26