

Session one: Getting Started and Staying Motivated

How to choose a topic:

- Something passionate
 - o Balance passion with practicality
- Start broad
- Personal experience (Tie professional and academic work)
- Form a question and look for an answer

When and where to start:

- As soon as possible for a general idea work to fine tune
- Create an outline and work backwards
- Begin before your last class: Halfway through program
 - o Try an independent study with advisor
- You are doing your own research NOT research of professor
- No need to start at beginning: Take an idea and run with it.

How to stay motivated:

- Break work into small manageable pieces
- Formulate goals: Milestones and rewards
- Formulate a support group
- Rely on friends: integrated groups different topics
- Connect with other people different stages of process

Writing Tips:

- Introductions and conclusions for each section
- Transitions between sections
- Organize Quotations
- Write for the uninformed **not** idiots.
- JUST WRITE! It is easier to edit than create.

Literature Review:

- Choose a representative selection of literature.
- Shoot for about 30 pages.
- Categorize sources, quotations and notes
- Focus on synthesis and analysis over summary

What to expect:

- Will not be a perfect masterpiece or life's work
- Sounding board: work out a few drafts before submission to advisor
- Don't burn out advisor with very rough stuff/ let advisor focus on content
- Many revisions: changing deleting adding and re-adding

MISC Tips:

- Don't inflate the pressure
- Non experts for proofreading (friends, parents, spouse, etc)
- Keep files in multiple locations
- Find thesis that are already written in the department
 - o Ideas for writing style, structure, faculty, previous work, etc
 - o Check department for guidelines
 - o <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/graduatestudies/current/project.asp>