

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
Department of Geography
GEOG 5800
Research Design and Geographic Applications
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A Basic Roadmap: Your Research Plan

The purpose of this course is to give you the opportunity to prepare yourself to create a research plan. The most immediate use for this capability for most people in this class will for you to create a proposal for your thesis research. However, if you pursue a career in applied geography, you will go on and use this planning capability many times throughout your career. Thus, research plan creation skills are both useful here in your formal education, and in your career to come.

We will spend much time throughout this course unpacking and discussing various elements of the research plan, and the process you will go through to create this plan. However, to start with, I want to give you a basic “roadmap” to show the key elements of the plan you will be working on throughout the semester.

Key Elements of Any Formal Research Plan

1. *Introduction*
 - a. Definition of the research field
 - b. Discussion of the key challenge(s) faced in the field
 - c. Brief survey of the major research questions to be addressed in the plan
2. *Background (often called a “Literature Review”)*
 - a. Summary of the previous research and publications that relate to the topic at hand
 - b. Discussion that demonstrates what has been done, and what is left to do
3. *Project Overview (sometimes called the “Case Study”)*
 - a. Full definition of the research questions to be addressed, given the material covered in the preceding background section
 - b. Full definition of the details of how you will address the research questions above, including details on study area, methods, budget, and timeline

All of this will come together in a tightly-written document that, in the case of the thesis proposals written in our department, ought to come to approximately 20 pages. Your challenge this semester is to come to a full understanding of what you need to do in order to write this well.