

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
Department of Geography
GEOG 5800
Research Design and Geographic Applications
Dr. Murray Rice

Basic Principles for Thesis Research

Writing

- Start writing sooner rather than later – it is good to hammer out a first draft, even if it is ugly, long, and even wrong in some places. Some sections, such as the introduction and literature review, can be largely completed even before the research has begun. It is too easy to put off the actual writing, and keep on putting it off for “some other time”. Get started now!
- Work on making your writing style clear, direct, and interesting. Your supervisor or another faculty member should be able to help you with this.
- Be prepared to go back and re-work your early writing, because your understanding of your topic and your writing ability should grow and improve as you work through your project.

Organizing

- You may find it useful to have a series of folders (or directories on your hard drive) for various sections of your work – just add articles or ideas whenever you find more information as you work.

Structuring

- Be selective about the information you include – do not include everything you have because it is all so important! Quality work means you need to realistically assess what you have done: what is strong and needs to stay, and what is weak and needs to go.
- Have a clear outline of your thesis right from the start, and make sure that as you write you create clear links between sections and chapters. Don't mystify your readers when they get to a new section – they should know exactly where you are going in your work and why you include each chapter as they work their way through your thesis.