

**Methods paper**  
**Due Aug. 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**Summer 2008**  
**Research Methods**

The purpose of this assignment is to revise the problem statement paper, literature review and refine your research design. This means you need to explain how you will go about answering your research questions(s)

The assignment should consist of two interrelated parts, the literature review and the research design. Your literature review should be a revised version of your literature review. Remember that your literature review should conclude with a statement of your research questions and how they relate to the literature reviewed.

Your paper will look like this

#### Introduction

During the 1960's, many groups were working for freedom, equality, and the right to their political voice. During this time, women were involved in many different forms of social action. Some were fighting for civil rights, for peace and some were fighting for better access to education, fair wages, and legal protections for women. While some women fought their battles on the streets and in their homes, others were fighting for a new academic discipline.

#### Literature review

I will first explore how the social constructed category woman lead to a theoretical concept of sisterhood or universal sisterhood. I will explain how the historical concept of women as a coherent group lead to the concept of all women sharing a similar oppression; a sisterhood of oppression. I believe that the concept of sisterhood is an important tool for women's studies and the women's movement, but it also has its problems. I will then explain how the concept of sisterhood has hurt, as it has helped both women's studies and the women's movement.

#### Methods

In order to understand how the movement to pass the ERA socially constructed woman I will need to conduct a case study of the movement. While the amendment was first

written in 1848, it was in 1920 that the first push for the ERA began. The first attempt to pass the ERA was short lived and did not succeed in getting the Legislator to vote on the amendment. In 1966, the National Organization for Women was founded and one of its first goals was to pass the ERA. While it would be useful to understand how the construction of woman has changed from 1840 to 2002 I will concentrate on 1970-1982. However, that does not mean that the way woman was socially constructed in 1840 has no effect on the social construction of woman in 1980. Cases have “fuzzy boundaries” which means that while all “properties are taken to have case specific meanings” these meanings are constrained and assisted by the meanings that preceded them (Abbott: 142). Ect.

The Methods section should cover these three sections:

1. The first section, which should total 1-2 pages, includes your unit of analysis, the population you want your research to speak to, and how you are going to sample units from your population.

- Specifically, you need to specify your unit of analysis, i.e. who you are going to study, e.g. persons, cities, families, households, nations, etc; the population you want your results to speak to, e.g. the U.S. population, students at the U of M, developing nations, etc; and how you are going to sample units from your population, i.e. simple random sampling, purposive sampling etc.

- You also need to specify any sample restrictions, i.e., sampling just the working age population, sampling women.

2. 3-4 page section detailing the mode of observation you are going to use to collect your data.

- Specifically, you need to state the mode of observation you are going to use i.e. surveys, experiments, participant observation, etc. and why you chose that design.

- You also need to detail the specifics of your design, i.e. what variables, specifically, are you going to use and how they are measured if you are using surveys. If you are going to conduct interviews, what questions are you going to ask and why? How are those questions related to your research questions and literature, etc? Issues of validity and reliability must be directly addressed.

- This section should take the most space of any in your research design. Provide as much detail as possible in this section.

3. 2-3 page section detailing the type of data that is going to be produced, i.e. transcripts of interviews, a dataset like the GSS, fieldnotes, etc; how that data is

- going to be analyzed, how potential results are related to your research questions, and what further research should be conducted on your topic.
- Specifically, you need to specify the analytic strategy you will use to address your research question, i.e. statistical analysis using crosstabs and odds ratios, content analysis of interviews, etc. and how this strategy deals with the problem of internal validity.
  - You also need to specify how your results will be presented and how potential results are related to your research questions and/or hypotheses.
  - You should conclude with a paragraph or two about what further research should be conducted on your topic.

\*Throughout, you need to justify and discuss the strengths and weaknesses in every stage of your research design i.e. why did you chose the sample the way you did? Why did you choose the mode of observation that you did? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this unit of observation? Etc. You also need to constantly relate your research design back to the literature as well as detailing how the decisions you make along the way may influence your results.

**Do not forget a bibliography.**

**Do not forget to include a conclusion statement.**