The senior thesis assignment

Senior Thesis – Structure Writing a Literature Review Example 1: Literature Review from an Academic Article Review of the Literature and Statement of the Problem Taking on the Role of Writing as a Professional The Process of Writing a Thesis: Beginnings Selected List of Anthropological Journals at Union *Statement of Professional and Ethical Responsibilities Union College Statement of Plagiarism Thesis Loan Contract Departmental Equipment and Data Points to Consider Before Writing Your Thesis

Steve’s Pet Peeves in Writing (helpful hints) AAA Style Guide **Anthropology Department Sr. Thesis Questionnaire * Sign and turn in by week 2 of the first term of your thesis ** Fill out and return to the Anthropology secretary by the end of the second term of your thesis. 1 1 8 10 12 15 24 26 27 29 30 32 33 34 37 40 50 Introduction to the Senior Thesis The research and writing of a senior thesis is the most important project for completing your major in Anthropology. Since the thesis demands a great deal of independent thought and expression, it is a fitting culmination to your undergraduate education.

More than any other project you have undertaken, the senior thesis will be your work. Most importantly, it is your choice as to how seriously you take the responsibility for research and writing. Your advisor may inspire, guide, cajole, and threaten, but you must ultimately make the commitment to excellence for yourself. You have chosen a major that requires that you will be able to some day say that the thesis was your best work. The pages that follow provide guidance regarding the rules for writing your thesis. I. Choosing a Topic

The selection of a topic need not be a painful experience if you recognize several key facts: 1. Topics Evolve. Virtually no topic springs full-grown or perfectly-formed from the head of the advisee in May of the Junior year. Usually, the basic idea comes first, followed by gradual refinements that may take hours, days, or weeks to develop. The objective should be to have a well-defined topic before you return to campus in September of your senior year. 2. Define Anthropological Topics Broadly. Union students have written on an array of subjects over the years.

In past years anthropology seniors have examined such things as: cultural beliefs among teen mothers in Albany, views of menstruation at Union, models of success among small business owners in Schenectady, attitudes towards gambling casinos on Oneida reservation, homeopathic medicine in Schenectady, and so on. 3. Favor Your Own Interests. One of the best ways to start your search for a thesis topic is to think about your interests and social concerns. If your interests and concerns coincide with a topic relevant to Anthropology then you have a natural starting point.

Something in your own background may provide you with a topic you care enough about to want to investigate in depth. 4. Methods Matter. Another thing to consider when choosing a topic is the kind of research methods you wish to use such as questionnaire surveys, in-depth Interviews, participant observation, case studies, etc. Different topics lend themselves to different kinds of research methods, so it makes sense to think about what methods you’d enjoy using the most, what kinds of data you’d be best at interpreting. 5. Think In Terms of a Place. Often it is easiest to have a specific location or organization that you are studying.

It makes the domain easy to define, and it gives you a place to go regularly for observation. In the past students have studied at women’s shelters, senior citizens’ housing, Indian reservations, etc. We encourage you to choose a topic that can be researched in the Schenectady area, but outside the Union community. Anthropology terms abroad offer ideal opportunities for thesis topics with a strong cultural component. In a few cases, students have done research while on other kinds of terms abroad. If you want to try this, be sure to work out a VERY SPECIFIC plan in advance with your advisor. II. Literature Review An important element of the thesis is a review of the relevant literature. This should be completed by the end of the first term. You should expect to read the equivalent of 6-8 books or 40 articles. In most cases, you should expect to do a review that goes beyond your specific geographical area to cover the theoretical issues involved. For example, one student who studied attitudes toward gambling casinos on the Oneida reservation ended up reviewing literature on formation of ethnic identity since views of gambling were linked to their views about local culture.

Here are some pointers on doing literature review: 1. Maintain a Bibliography. Try to develop the habit of noting down references of potential interest as you are doing your reading or research. If you pay attention to the proper material for full citations then you can save yourself time later when you actually have to put together your References Cited list for your thesis. You can just copy and paste items from the bibliography you have maintained all along. 2. Look for Review Articles. Often a great resource can be an article done by an author that summarizes a lot of the relevant published research on a given topic.

One great place to find these articles is in the Annual Review of Anthropology, published each year as a book. Inside each volume is a series of articles on a range of topics, and these topics change from year to year. The Annual Review also has a cumulative index so that you can find articles from volumes in past years. 3. Schaffer Library Web Site for Anthropology Theses. The Union College library maintains a web site as a resource for anthropology majors. http://www. union. edu/PUBLIC/LIBRARY/guide/anthro/anthrothesis. html 4. Think in Terms of Arguments.

When you are doing a literature review, the aim is to identify what kinds of arguments people have made in the past about themes related to your topic. Every time you read an article or a book, ask yourself what arguments the author is making and what arguments the author is arguing against. Pay attention to the names of anthropologists associated with these arguments. By the end you should have a good sense of the points of view of several different authors who have addressed the subject you’re studying. III. Writing The Department is unanimous in its insistence upon well-written theses.

By this point, you have presumably learned enough about how to write that we should not have to reiterate the basics of grammar, punctuation, paragraph structure, and spelling. And yet each year we see drafts of chapters that are unworthy of a literate Union College graduate. We will require you to rewrite until such time as you have met the standards we expect. Quality of exposition reflects quality of mind and will be a factor in determining the grade assigned to the thesis. Each advisee weighs this factor as he/she sees fit. It is not, however, your advisor's job to proofread your work for the most elementary errors.

You must accept that responsibility. In some cases, if the draft is excessively error-laden, your advisor may return it without reading it. It is a good idea to learn some of the more detailed elements of your word processing software, such as how to format and locate page numbers, how to separate chapters into sections, how to format quotations by changing the margins rather than using tabs for an indent, and so on. Learning these techniques will be of immense help to you in rewriting. Regarding bibliography, you should use the format used in the major anthropological journals, such as American Anthropologist or American Ethnologist.

Get a copy of one of these journals and just copy the formatting used by the articles there. Pay attention to these details 3 early on, when writing drafts, so that you do not get swamped by it later. IV. Library Resources Electronic resources relevant to Anthropology researchers available through Union's library include: Abstracts in Anthropology, Annual Review of Anthropology (online), The Royal Anthropological Institute's Anthropological Index Online, AnthroSource, EBSCOHost Academic Search Elite, ProQuest Research Library, Project Muse, and JSTOR.

More than 150 titles in the field are represented in Academic Search Elite. JSTOR's expanding full-text archive contains about two dozen Anthropology publications. There are about a dozen print anthropology titles in the collection, and many more are available via electronic resources that are linked to the campus network. Schaffer Library is also a subscriber to

AnthroSource, the American Anthropological Association’s online repository for more than thirty peer-reviewed journals and publications in the field. Schaffer library supplements its holdings via interlibrary loan, document elivery, and the Capital Discrict Library’s Direct Access Program, an arrangement that allows Union patrons to borrow directly from many area libraries. Union College is also a member of ConnectNY, a consortium of New York State libraries dedicated to sharing materials among participating institutions. Some course-specific web guides may also be useful, including Urban Anthropology; Sport, Society, and Culture; Tourists and Tourism; and Photographing Culture: Selected Primary Resources. They can be found at http://www. union. edu/Library/research/subject_ant. tm, along with more information about Schaffer Library’s Anthropology Resources. V. Checklist of Requirements for the Senior Thesis in Anthropology 1. Attend a meeting in the spring term of the junior year to inform you of the procedures for writing a senior thesis. Before or at that meeting you will fill out a form with your preferences for an advisor and possible topics and fields in which you plan to write the thesis. When you receive your assigned advisor, in the week or so following the meeting, you should meet with your advisor before the end of the spring term. . Arrange for and attend an initial meeting with your faculty advisor during the first week of classes the first term of your thesis (fall or winter term). Come prepared with 1 or 2 thesis topics. 3. Attend regular—probably weekly– meetings with your advisor throughout the first term of your thesis, handing in materials on a schedule agreed upon between you and your advisor. If you are an I. D. major, it is up to you to check with your secondary advisor regarding meetings and thesis requirements in the other department. 4.

During the last week of class the first term of your thesis, you will be required to make a brief (10-15 minute) oral presentation of your thesis topic and research to the anthropology faculty and other thesis students. 5. Due the last day of class the first term your will submit: a) one chapter typed with references properly cited, b) a chapter outline of the entire thesis, and c) a working bibliography. These will be turned into TWO professors (your advisor 4 and a second faculty member of their choice). You will receive a pass or fail for the first term. 6.

Attend regular meetings with your advisor and submit materials on an agreed upon schedule during the second term of your thesis. 7. Present your thesis at the Steinmetz symposium. 8. Complete a draft of your thesis by the beginning of the ninth week of the second term of your thesis, or at the time designated by your advisor. 9. Submit an abstract and complete an oral defense of your thesis with your advisor and a second faculty member in the tenth week of final term of your thesis. 10. Submit the final printed copy of your thesis to your advisor no later than the last day of the second term's final exams. You may of course submit it earlier.) remember to plan ahead for the final printing; it can be difficult to get time on the laser printer at the end of the winter term. You will also submit an electronic version of your thesis to JYBazar as an email attachment ([email protected]edu) VI. Evaluation Anthropology theses are awarded grades based on the following criteria: 1. We encourage students to show originality and intellectual ambition in framing an anthropological question to study. 2. Anthropology theses should involve original research (e. . , participant observation, interviewing, questionnaire or survey, content analysis). Original research offers you the rewarding and often exciting experience of generating your own data, encountering first-hand evidence, and developing with your own new ideas about what it means. The Department's field schools offer excellent experience and preparation for your thesis as does our required methods course (363) taught on campus. Depending upon when you go on term abroad, you may be able to conduct your thesis research in another culture.

You also will be evaluated on the thoroughness of your research. 3. We encourage thesis-writers to construct sound anthropological arguments that are logically organized and analytically persuasive. You will have to assemble evidence and then reason about what that evidence does (and does not) demonstrate. You should avoid confusion, aim for clarity, and organize your thesis in a way that facilitates your reader's understanding. 4. We care about grammar and style. We expect your writing to be clear and grammatically correct.

In the best theses, a lively intelligent voice seems to speak; It has something interesting to say, and it speaks clearly and gracefully. 5. Fulfilling all requirements outlined earlier (e. g. , oral defense, Steinmetz presentation, regular meetings with advisor). Review checklist. Grading: Thesis grades are based on a combination of these factors. A good, solid thesis based on conscientious effort and hard work will normally fall in the “ B” range. An “ A” thesis requires a truly outstanding performance. To obtain department honors, you must have a 3. 3. GPA overall, a 3. 5.

GPA in all anthropology courses, and receive at least an A- on your thesis. Grading a thesis is somewhat different from what you are used to in courses. Instead of being responsible for a body of material as shown through papers in exams, you are instead building your own work of original research. While the final grade depends significantly upon the quality of the final product, most advisors consider the whole process to a certain extent. It is to your advantage to be responsive to your advisor’s suggestions and to be responsible about attending meetings and completing assigned work.

Also, students will be asked to hand in field notes and summaries of readings at regular intervals. This material will factor into the final grade. Advisors are also free to factor in the behavior of the advisee in terms of responsiveness to suggestion, demonstration of initiative and independence, and ability to meet deadlines. An oral defense of the thesis, after completion of written work, will also be factored into the final grade. There is a tendency to want to avoid dealing with your thesis (or your advisor) if you fall behind.

Please RESIST the temptation to allow your regular contact with your advisor to lapse. Try to think of the situation from the advisor’s point of view. That person is devoting considerable personal time and energy to your project and it is easy to feel slighted by a student who is simply finding a way to avoid dealing with their project. The key is to remember common courtesies, prompt email responses, and consistent attendance at assigned meetings are a part of that. We would ask you to be very clear on one point concerning grading: working hard does not automatically entitle anyone to a high grade.

The thesis should be your major order of academic business during the senior year, and we expect everyone to do a lot of hard work. We expect careful research, clear thinking, insightful analysis, and lucid presentation. In general the final grade reflects three categories: (1) the written document, (2) the effort and overall work experience, and (3) the oral defense. The following is a guideline to criteria used in grading the written work: A or A-Grades. Clear thesis (argument or analysis), organization, and continuity.

Detailed understanding of the problem; sound organization; few or no mechanical mistakes; clear, unambiguous sentences, perhaps with a touch of elegance–in the best A papers, a lively and intelligent voice seems to speak; it has something interesting to say, says it clearly and gracefully to an appropriate audience, and supports the thesis fully. Because of the extent of collaboration and revision, it should be possible for any student to receive either an A or and A- on a thesis, but this requires that they do ALL the components well and that there be significant revisions of work along the way.

B+, B or B- Grades. These grades indicate a competent job but usually mean that there is some component of the thesis that was not as well completed as it could have been. Any of the following things can automatically move a thesis into the B range: limited primary research, limited literature coverage, failure to articulate a clear argument with relevant evidence, lapses in attending meetings or attending to deadlines, awkward writing, significant numbers of mechanical errors. C+, C or C- Grades. These grades are applied to papers with significant and multiple lapses.

Some problems may include: weak, fuzzy thesis (argument) and/ or perhaps 6 even illogical arguments; a certain amount of confusion about what the text at hand actually says; many minor mechanical errors and perhaps some major ones (such as incomplete sentences); examples given for their own sake or just to demonstrate that the writer has read the texts (i. e. , a book report) and not to develop a point; rambling organization, misused words, weak proofreading; unclear intended audience. There are some ideas where, but the writer needs help and work to make them clear to another reader. D Grade.

This grade is assigned when significant work has gone into the thesis but the paper itself is fundamentally incomplete. Thesis (argument and analysis) missing; major mechanical problems; poor organization; serious misreading of texts and articles; stretches in which the writer simply gives a narrative account of a text for no apparent purpose; the paper is much shorter than the assigned length–the writer doesn't really have a point to make and has serious problems in writing and reading at an appropriate level. F Grade. This grade is reserved for those that did not do enough work to have completed the assignment effectively.

The anthropology faculty does not want anyone to do poorly on a thesis. We would consider it an extremely successful year for US if all of our students received either an A or A- on their theses. We do NOT compare students against each other or grade on a curve. Your advisor will work out your grade solely on the basis of the work you yourself have done. VII. Funding IEF Funding. A major source of support for thesis research in recent years has been the Internal Education Fund (IEF), which provides small grants (on the average of a few hundred dollars) to students undertaking projects that cannot be completed without funding.

In recent years, IEF money has been used to fund travel to archives or areas where research is to be done, data acquisition, postage, copying costs for questionnaires, and various other activities. They do NOT fund photocopying of articles for your research. The Office of the Undergraduate Dean has application forms with detailed instructions on what is and is not funded by IEF. The competition for funding (and it is competitive) occurs during the Fall term. Watch for notices in Concordiensis or consult your advisor. The Anthropology Department does not have its own funding for senior thesis research. VIII.

Interdepartmental Work If you are an interdepartmental major, you write an interdepartmental thesis; you will have two advisors–one for each department. Encourage dialogue between your advisors, and make sure early on that your topic satisfies them both. Often it is best to have one advisor as your primary advisor while the other supplements. Because the Anthropology Department requires a thesis of all its majors, it is usually the case that the primary advisor for ID Thesis is in the Anthropology Department–especially when the other department (such as psychology) does not require a thesis of all its majors. THE SENIOR THESIS- Structure 1. Introduction This chapter should include the following: A. Introduction: What is the study about? Include your general objective(s). B. Significance: Why is your study worth doing? C. Previous work: What has been done on this problem or topic by prior investigators? D. Specific objectives: Precisely what research questions will you be addressing? E. Organization: Briefly discuss the organization of your thesis. What do you examine in each chapter? Your research should be informed by the questions that earlier researchers have posed and the answers they have arrived at.

This is why you do a literature review. You will need to discuss what is already known about your topic. What are some of the basic findings? What conflicting evidence, contradictions, or gaps exist in the scholarship on your topic? In order to describe why your study is significant–worth doing–you will need to know what has already been done. II. Methodology This can be a separate chapter, a section in your introductory chapter, or an appendix at the end of your thesis. This is a decision you will make. A lot depends upon how complicated your methodology was and how central it is to your findings.

Is it important for the reader to know how you collected your data before s/he reads your results? Some issues you may discuss in this chapter or section include: A. Research problem and analysis: What lines of analysis or perspectives did you have at the start of the study? What questions were you attempting to answer? When and why did they change? At what point did you arrive at or formulate the design or shape of the study as it now exists. B. Why you chose a particular location or social setting for your research? How did you select " informants? How did you secure permission and cooperation? What problems did you encounter in doing the research? C. Data Gathering: What techniques did you use to gather your data? Why were they the appropriate ones to use? D. Private reactions and biases: How did you feel about the community when you first arrived? What emotional stresses did you experience doing the research? (Your thoughts may give the reader insight into your field work and how your experiences and background may have influenced the perspective you have adopted and possibly, your findings) III. Substantive Chapters

This section forms the heart of your thesis–its real content–and should be subdivided into several topical chapters which correspond to your data and/or to your research objectives. 8 IV. Conclusion In some theses this may be a recap of your major findings, highlighting the most important points you wish to make. In other cases, it is a systematic discussion of the implications of your findings. It may also include ideas for future research. V. Appendices Some material, such as the interview schedule or questionnaire that you used during your research, should be included as an appendix at the end of your thesis. VI.

Bibliography A bibliography lists all the written sources you consulted during the research and writing of your thesis. (Some authors have a References Cited section instead which includes only those works referred to in the text.) You should keep a true bibliography. 9 Writing a Literature Review The purpose of a literature review is to summarize and synthesize the arguments, studies, and ideas of others on a particular topic. The literature review summarizes the sources of information that relate to your research topic. It also synthesizes these sources of information, organizing them in a manner that is meaningful.

You may also evaluate the sources, identifying ideas that are particularly pertinent to your topic, and even ways that sources may differ from your topic or be lacking. Surveying the literature, selecting the most relevant studies, and composing a coherent literature review helps you, the thesis writer, understand better what is already known about your research topic and how researchers have investigated questions similar to your own. The literature review also is useful for readers, enabling them to see the relevant background to your study and the context out of which your research question has significance.

Additionally, a solid literature review gives the writer credibility with readers as someone who is knowledgeable about the topic of the study. Planning to write the literature review: 1. Clarify the requirements of your search: • How many sources should you include? • What types of sources are needed? What journals are recommended? • How current should the sources be? 2. Check out literature reviews in senior theses from previous years in Anthropology in Schaffer Library. This will help you get a sense of what the review should look and sound like and of ways to organize it and integrate it within your thesis.

From the Schaffer Library homepage, select Catalogs and then Thesis. 3. Refine your literature search. If the search yields too many sources, you may need to narrow it. If your search yields too few sources, consider alternative search terms. Reading titles of articles in your search may give you ideas of the types of questions being studied-a possible way to organize your literature review. You want sufficient sources but also a manageable range of sources to read and select from in order to survey the literature on a topic. Remember, one good source will often lead to others, so check the bibliographies of your key sources.

Writing the literature review: In some ways the literature review is like a mini-paper within your larger thesis. Think about the way you will focus and structure this mini-paper. Once you have selected your sources, consider the ideas that the sources represent. Find a focus that ties them all together, and look at ways in which they might be organized to present a coherent survey that relates to your topic or research question. Here are some questions to ask yourself: • Do the sources all represent the same theme or issue or different ones? • Do they all use the same methodology or different ones? Do they present one solution or different ones? • Are they based on the same theoretical perspective or different ones? • Do they reveal a single trend or more than one trend? Seeing these patterns will help you choose an appropriate organization for your literature review. 10 • • Write your focus: Write a thesis-like statement that encompasses all of your sources. What perspective do the sources you have chosen represent? Decide on an organizational pattern for presenting the sources: What approach is the most effective way to present your sources? What are the main topics? What order should you use?

The following are some of the options to consider. • Thematic: Order your sources by topic or issue. Within a theme or topic, sources may or may not be organized chronologically. • Methodological: Order your sources by the methods used by the researcher rather than by the content. • Trend: Order your sources by date of publication (chronologically) if that order demonstrates an important trend. Other sections you might include in your literature review: • Current Situation: Sometimes information on this may be needed to help readers understand the topic or focus of the literature review.

History: Chronological trends of the field or the literature that may be necessary to understand the literature review. • Methods and/or Standards: The criteria used to select or limit the sources in your literature review (e. g. , only peer-reviewed articles, only articles after a certain date, only articles looking at adults, etc.). Begin writing: Here’s how one section of your literature review might be introduced: However, other studies have shown that even gender-neutral job classifications are more likely to attract men than women (Owenst1997). Roberts (2000) analyzed data from …. • •

Use sources as evidence to make your point-just as in any other academic paper. Be selective. Highlight only key points in each source, selecting information related to the review’s focus. • Summarize and synthesize the sources. Highlight important features of a study, but also synthesize by relating the significance of the study to your own topic. • Write in your own voice. Although you are presenting the ideas of others, your voice should dominate. Use your own words to summarize and evaluate sources. • Paraphrase with caution. Make sure you are accurately representing the information from sources when summarizing.

Identify the authors’ ideas clearly so that readers can distinguish their ideas from your own comments on the studies. • Use quotes sparingly. Many reviews use no quotes at all. Use quotes only to emphasize a point that the author states in a particularly powerful way. Revise and edit Put your literature review aside for a day or two. Then re-read it, preferably aloud, to hear whether the ideas and the language you use reflect your intentions. If proofreading and editing are difficult for you, visit the Writing Center in

Schaffer Library, Room 227, where a tutor will work with you to proofread your paper.

Writing Center 11/05 11 Example 1: Literature Review from an academic article Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch Box as Ideological State Apparatus Anne Allison Japanese nursery school children, going off to school for the first time, carry with them a boxed lunch (obento) prepared by their mothers at home. Customarily these obento are highly crafted elaborations: a multitude of miniportions artistically designed and precisely arranged in a container that is sturdy and cute. Mothers tend to expend inordinate time and ttention on these obento in efforts both to please their children and to affirm that they are good mothers. Children at nursery school are taught they must consume their entire meal according to school rituals. Packing food in an obento is an everyday practice of Japanese. Obento are sold at train stations, catered for special meals, carried to work, and sold as fast food. Adoption of the obento at the nursery school level may seem only natural to Japanese and unremarkable to outsiders, but I argue in this chapter that the obento is invested with a gendered state ideology.

Overseen by the authorities of the nursery school institution, which is linked to, if not directly monitored by, the state, the practice of the obento situates the producer as a woman and mother and the consumer as a child of a mother and a student of a school. Food in this context is neither casual nor arbitrary. Eaten quickly in its entirety by the student, the obento must be fashioned by the mother so as to expedite this chore for the child. Both mother and child are being watched, judged, and constructed; and it is only through their joint effort that the goal can be accomplished.

I use Louis Althusser’s concept of the ideological state apparatuses (1971) to frame my argument, briefly describing how food is coded as a cultural and aesthetic apparatus in Japan and what authority the state holds over schools in Japanese society. Thus situating the parameters within which the obento is regulated and structured in the nursery school setting, I will examine the practice both of making and eating obento within the context of one nursery school in Tokyo. As an anthropologist and mother of a child who attended this school for fifteen months, I base my analysis. n my observations; discussions with other mothers; daily conversations and an interview with my son’s teacher; examination of obento magazines and cookbooks; participation in school rituals, outings, and Mother’s Association meetings; and the multifarious experiences of my son and myself as we faced the obento process every day. Although obentos as a routine, task, and art form of nursery school culture are embedded with ideological and gendered meanings that the state indirectly manipulates, the manipulation is neither total nor totally oercive. Pleasure and creativity for both mother and child are also products of the obento process. 12 Cultural Ritual and State Ideology As anthropologists have long understood, not only are the worlds we inhabit symbolically constructed, but also our cultural symbols are endowed with, or have the potential for, power. How we see reality, in other words, is how we live it. So the conventions by which we recognize our universe are also those by which all of us assume our place and behavior within that universe.

Culture is, in this sense, doubly constructive: constructing both the world for people and people for specific worlds. The fact that culture is not necessarily innocent and power, not necessarily transparent has been revealed by much theoretical work conducted both inside and outside the discipline of anthropology. The scholarship of the neo-Marxist Louis Althusser (1971), for example, has encouraged the conceptualization of power as a force that operates in ways that are subtle, disguised, and accepted as everyday social practice.

Althusser differentiated between two major structures of power in modern capitalist societies. The first he called (repressive) state apparatuses (SAs), institutions, such as the law and police, that are sanctioned by a repressive state to wield and manage power through the threat of force (1971: 143145). Contrasted with this is a second structure of power-the ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). These are institutions that have some overt function other than political or administrative: mass media, education, health and welfare, for example.

More numerous, disparate, and functionally polymorphous than the SAs, the ISAs exert power not primarily through repression but through ideology. Designed and accepted as having another purpose-to educate (the school system), entertain (film industry), or inform (news media)-the ISA serve not only their stated objective but also an unstated one, that of indoctrinating people into seeing the world a certain way and accepting certain identities as their own within that world (Althusser 1971: 143-147). Although both structures of power operate simultaneously and in omplementarily, the ISAs, according to Althusser, are the more influential of the two in capitalist societies. Disguised and screened by another operation, the power of ideology in an ISA can be both more far reaching and insidious than an SAs power of coercion. Hidden in the movies we watch, the music we hear, the liquor we drink, the textbooks we read, the ISA is overlooked because it is protected, and its protection-or its alibi (Barthes 1972: 109-111)-allows the terms and relations of ideology to spill into and infiltrate our everyday lives .

A world of commodities, gender inequalities, and power differentials is seen, therefore, as the natural environment, one that makes sense because it has become our experience to live it and accept it. This common sense acceptance of a particular world is the work of ideology, and it works by concealing the coercive and repressive elements of our everyday routines but also by making those routines of the everyday familiar, desirable, and simply our own.

This is the critical element of Althusser’s notion of ideological power: Ideology is so potent because it becomes not only ours but us-the terms and machinery by which we structure ourselves and identify who we are. Japanese Food as Cultural Myth The author in one obento magazine, the type of medium-sized publication that, filled with glossy pictures of obento and ideas and recipes for successfully recreating them, sells in 13 the bookstores across Japan, declares: “ The making of the obento is the one most worrisome concern facing the mother of a child going off to school for the first time” (Shufunotomo 1980: inside cover).

Another obento journal, this one heftier and packaged in the encyclopedic series of the prolific women’s publishing firm Shufunotomo, articulates the same social fact: “ First-time obentos are a strain on both parent and child” (“ Hajimete no obento wa, oya mo ko mo kinchoshimasu”) (Shufunotomo 1981: 55). Any outside observer might ask, What is the real source of worry over obento? Is it the food itself or the entrance of the young child into school for the first time?

Yet as one looks at a typical child’s obento-a small box packaged with a five- or six-course miniaturized meal whose pieces and parts are artistically and neatly arranged and perfectly cut (see Figures 4. 1, 4. 2)-would immediately reveal, no food is “ just” food in Japan. That is not so immediately apparent, however, is why a small child with limited appetite and perhaps scant interest in food is the recipient of a meal as elaborate and as elaborately prepared as any made for an entire family or invited guests? Certainly in Japan, much attention is focused on the obento.

It is invested with a significance far beyond that of the merely pragmatic, functional one of sustaining a child with nutritional foodstuffs. Since this investment beyond the pragmatic is FIG U R E 4. 1 Example of obentos, signs of maternal love and labor. SOURCE: 365 nichi no obento hyakka (Encyclopedia of lunch box for 365 days), 1981 (Tokyo; Shufunotomosha), p. 83 true of any food prepared in Japan, it is helpful to examine culinary codes for food preparation that operate generally in the society before focusing on children’s obento. As has been remarked often about Japanese food, the key element is appearance.

Food must be organized and reorganized, arranged and rearranged, stylized and restylized, to appear in a design that is visually attractive. Presentation is critical not to the extent that taste and nutrition are displaced, as has been sometimes argued, but to the degree that’ how food looks is at least as important as how it tastes and how good and sustaining it is for one’s body.

As Donald Richie points out in his eloquent and informative book A Taste of Japan (1985), presentational style is the guiding principle by which food is prepared in Japan, and the style is conditioned by a number of codes.

One code is for smallness, separation, and fragmentation. Nothing large is allowed, so all portions are cut to be bite sized and served in tiny individual dishes. 1 There is no one big dinner plate with three large portions of vegetable, starch, and meat, as in American cuisine. Consequently, the eye is pulled not toward one totalizing center but away to a multiplicity of decentered parts. 2 Visually, food is presented according to a structural principle not only of segmentation but also of opposition. Foods are broken up or cut up to make contrasts of color, texture, and shape. Foods are meant to oppose one another and… 14

Review of the Literature and Statement of the Problem K. E. Rudestan and R. R. Newton THE INTRODUCTION The Review of the Literature is generally preceded by a brief introductory chapter. The Introduction consists of an overview of the research problem and some indication of why the problem is worth exploring or what contribution the proposed study is apt to make to theory and/or practice. The Introduction is usually a few pages in length. While it may begin. by offering a broad context for the study, it quickly comes to the point with a narrowly focused definition of the problem.

The form of the Introduction is the same for both the research proposal and the dissertation itself, although there are likely to be some changes made to the understanding of the research problem after the study has been completed. Ironically, it is usually impossible to write a final Introduction chapter prior to completing the literature review and method, since those chapters will inform the problem and its operationalization. The wording of the research problem should be sufficiently explicit to orient the most inattentive reader.

There is nothing wrong with beginning the chapter with a sentence such as, “ In this study I attempted to evaluate the impact of environmental protection legislation on atmospheric pollutants in the chemical industry. ” The chapter would proceed to stipulate the assumptions and hypotheses of the study, identify the key variables, and explain the procedures used to explore the questions. It should include a synopsis of the arguments that explain the rationale for the research question and the study. It is perfectly acceptable to cite one or more tudies that are directly relevant to the proposed investigation and may have inspired it or lent it empirical or theoretical justification. But this is not the place to conduct a literature review. Avoid technical details and keep the Introduction short. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE Often the lengthiest section of the research proposal, the Review of the Literature is placed just after the introductory overview of the study. This chapter of the dissertation provides a context for the proposed study and demonstrates why it is important and timely.

Thus this chapter needs to clarify the relationship between the proposed study and previous work conducted on the topic. The reader will need to be convinced that not only is the proposed study distinctive and different from previous research, but that it is worthwhile doing. This is also the place where the student’s critical abilities as a scholar are tested and evident. Many students erroneously believe that the purpose of the literature review is to convince the reader that the writer is knowledgeable about the work of others.

Based on this misunderstanding, the literature review may read like a laundry list of previous studies, with sentences or paragraphs beginning with the words, “ Smith found … ,” “ Jones concluded … ,” “ Anderson stated … ,” and so on. This is 15 not only poor writing but misses the whole point of an effective review of the literature. A colleague of ours, Jeremy Shapiro, has noted that much of the labor that goes into writing is often wasted effort because it is not based on a clear understanding of the purpose of an essay or thesis (Shapiro & Nicholsen, 1986).

As a general rule, if you have difficulties in your basic writing skills, that is, in constructing grammatical sentences, using appropriate transitions, and staying focused and concise, a research dissertation will glaringly reveal these weaknesses and the logic and persuasiveness of your arguments will be diminished. One basic suggestion is to obtain remedial help in strengthening basic writing skills. Furthermore, the style of writing that is appropriate with literary prose. Scientific writing tends to be more direct and to the point and less flowery and evocative.

Effective writing is an acquired skill that is taken up as a separate topic in Chapter 9. A good way to formulate a question that is appropriate to a research study is to determine what bothers you (Shapiro & Nicholsen, 1986). As you consider one or more possible questions and draw upon the observations and ideas of others who are interested in the same and related questions, you are in fact formulating the argument. The forum for the argument is the literature review, which is played out in the form of a dialogue between you and the reader.

In order to dialogue effectively, the writer must anticipate the kinds of questions and apprehensions that the reader might have in critically examining your argument. It is common for critical evaluations of academic papers to be peppered with comments such as, “ What is your point here? ” “ What makes you think so? ” “ What is your evidence? ” “ So what? ” The more you can anticipate a reader’s questions the easier it will be to formulate your arguments in a way that produces mutual understanding.

Dissertations go through many drafts and the revision process consists of asking and responding to these questions from the point of view of a circumspect and knowledgeable reader. The literature review is not a compilation of facts and feelings, but a coherent argument that leads to the description of a proposed study. There should be no mystery about the direction in which you are going (“ Where are you going with this? ” is a good question to ask yourself repeatedly in a review of the literature). You always need to state explicitly at the outset the goal of the paper and the structure of the evolving argument.

By the end of the literature review, the reader should be able to conclude that, “ Yes, of course, this is the exact study that needs to be done at this time to move knowledge in this field a little further along. ” The review attempts to convince the reader of the legitimacy of your assertions by providing sufficient logical and empirical support along the way. You will continually need to decide what assertions it is reasonable to assume the reader accepts as common understanding and what assertions require data as a support.

For instance, if you were to assert that survivors of suicide need professional help, a peer reader would probably want to know on what basis you are making that assertion, and request some evidence about the needs of survivors of suicide and why professionals (as opposed to nonprofessionals, for instance) are necessary. On the other hand, the claim that, “ Freud was the father of psychoanalysis” is likely to be well established as a fact within the professional psychological community and thus not require further backing.

Becker (1986) reminds us that there is no need to reinvent the wheel and that it is perfectly permissible to draw upon the thoughtful arguments of others 16 and incorporate them into your own research project. This is very much in keeping with our understanding of the incremental, cumulative process that characterizes the development of normal science (Kuhn, 1962). On the other hand, a skillful researcher draws upon original source material rather than relying upon review articles and secondary sources.

Becker uses the image of a jigsaw puzzle, in which some of the pieces have been designed by you while others are borrowed in their prefabricated form from the contributions of other scholars. On the other hand, it is worth noting that becoming overly preoccupied with the literature can deform your argument so that you lose your privileged place at the center of the study. In any case, do not neglect to give proper credit to the source of ideas by citing complete references in your writing. COMMON PROBLEMS

A principal failing of novice researchers at every stage of a project, and especially evident in the review of the literature, is giving away their own power and authority. As a researcher, you need to accept that you are in charge of this study and that, in the case of dissertations, it is likely that you will ultimately be the world’s leading expert on the narrow topic you have selected to address. One way of giving away authority is to defer to the authority of others in the review, assuming, for instance, that because Emile Durkheim or John Dewey said something, it is necessarily valid.

You need to adopt a critical perspective in reading and relaying the work of others. The main reason why sentences beginning with “ Jones found … ” are best kept to a minimum is that it shifts the focus of the review from your own argument to the work of others. A preferable strategy is to develop a theme and then cite the work of relevant authors to buttress the argument you are making or to provide noteworthy examples of your point or counterexamples that need to be considered. Another way of limiting your own authority is by using quotations in excess.

The overuse of quotes tends to deflect the argument away from the control of the author. Restrict the use of quotations to those that are particularly impactful or that are stated in a unique way that is difficult to recapture. Besides, using your own words to present difficult concepts will help convince you (and others) that you really understand the material. Once you have read the literature in an area, it may be tempting to report everything you now know. Avoid this temptation!

A good literature review needs to be selective and it is taken for granted that the majority of source material you have read will not make it directly into the literature review. That does not mean that it wasn’t necessary to read all of those books and articles; they provide the expertise required to make your contribution. But remember, in the dissertation itself your task is to build an argument, not a library. One of our colleagues likens the process to a courtroom trial, where all admissible testimony by the witnesses must be relevant to the case and question at hand.

Consistently ask yourself, “ Why am I including this study or reference? ” Similarly, each sentence in the dissertation needs to be there for a purpose, sometimes to provide relevant content and sometimes to facilitate communication to the reader, but never as filler. The relevant studies need to be critiqued rather than reported. The critique serves to inform the reader about the status of reliable knowledge in the field and to identify errors to avoid in future research. Although the primary task is to build an argument, and you are expected to present your own point of view, it is not fair to 17 xclude references that contradict or question your case. You must be objective enough to present both sides of an argument and acknowledge where the weight of the evidence falls. Throughout the review, leave enough signposts along the way to help orient the reader. One way is to inform the reader of what you have done and what conclusions you have drawn on the basis of the available evidence. You also need to convince the reader that your knowledge of the existing literature is extensive and intensive enough to justify your proposed study.

CRITIQUING A RESEARCH ARTICLE As you read the available research in an area, you need to maintain a critical perspective, evaluating the study on its own merits and in comparison to other studies on the same or a similar problem. A critique does not imply that you must discover and identify a major flaw or weakness in every study you read. You are evaluating the content for its application to your research. The following outline consists of a rather comprehensive set of recommendations for critiquing a research article.

Not all of these items will be included in any given citation within the literature review. The amount of attention a study receives will depend upon its direct relevance to the proposed research question and should not detract from the flow of the argument. Nonetheless, this list can act as a reminder for how to read and evaluate critically a research article's contribution to a proposed study: 1. Conceptualization a. What is the major problem or issue being investigated? b. How clearly are the major concepts defined/ explained? 2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses . Is there a clearly stated research question? b. Are there hypotheses? Are they clearly stated? c. Are the relationships among the main variables explicit and reasonable? d. Are the hypotheses stated in a way that makes them testable and the results, no matter what, interpretable? 3. Research Design a. What is the type of research design? b. Does the research design adequately control for extraneous variables? c. Could the design be improved? How? d. Are the variables clearly and reasonably operationalized? Is the choice of categories or cutting points defensible? e.

Are the reliability and validity of the measures discussed? Is the choice of measures appropriate? f. Is the population appropriate for the research question being studied? Is the sample specified and appropriate? Can the results be reasonably generalized on the basis of this sample? 4. Results and Discussion a. Are the data appropriate for the study? b. Are the statistical techniques appropriate and adequately described? c. Are the control variables adequately handled in the data analysis? Are there other control variables that were not considered but should have been? . Are the conclusions of the study consistent with the results of the statistical analyses? e. Are alternative conclusions that are consistent with the data discussed and accounted for? f. Are the theoretical and practical implications of the results adequately discussed? g. Are the limitations of the study noted? 5. Summary a. What is your overall assessment of the adequacy of the study for exploring the research problem? 18 b. What is your overall assessment of the contribution of the study to this area of research? LONG SHOTS AND SHORT SHOTS

Our colleague Joseph Handlon has drawn an analogy between doing a literature review and making a movie. In film-making there are “ long shots,” “ medium shots,” and “ close-ups,” which refer to the relative distance between the camera and the subject matter. As a metaphor, a long shot suggests that the material is background for a particular topic. Background material needs to be acknowledged but not treated with the same detail as foreground; it is not figural. A study on the stressful impact of relocation, for instance, might begin with the following observation:

There have been three basic ways of approaching the topic of stress empirically. One is by regarding stress as an independent variable and focusing on the nature and strength of the stressor, exemplified in the empirical contributions of Holmes and Rahe (1967). A second approach is to view stress as a dependent variable, focusing on the physiological and psychological impact of stressful events, illustrated by the seminal work of Hans Selye (1956). An alternative approach is to view stress as a transaction between a stimulus and a response, which is moderated by a set of cognitive variables.

This approach, elaborated in the work of Lazarus and his colleagues (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), forms the conceptual foundation for this study. In this way, considerable literature can be referenced without attending to details or critical evaluations of each study. The medium shot is somewhere between the long and the short focus and requires a bit more descriptive material. As an example, let us assume that a researcher wishes to explore the effect of social protest and threats of violence on the well-being of workers in abortion clinics.

It would be appropriate to obtain a good overview of the impact of potentially violent social protest in other contexts, as well as a good understanding of the emotional demands of working in a clinic serving women with unwanted pregnancies. Studies that bear on these relevant issues may not need to be presented in critical detail, but certainly need to be summarized sufficiently to give the reader a clear indication of the status of the research as it pertains to the orientation of the proposed study.

Finally, the close-up requires a careful examination of the research and is reserved for those studies that have the most direct relevance to the proposed research question. In some cases, this might refer to one or two studies that are being modified or amended in some critical way to form the basis for the current study. More frequently, it refers to a collection of work on a relatively narrow topic that is clearly central to the proposal.

These studies are not merely referenced but critically examined, so that the reader obtains a clear sense of what is already known about the phenomenon, how reliable and valid the conclusions based on that work are apt to be, and how the proposed study will deal with previous limitations and move the field ahead. The researcher who is interested in exploring the impact of infertility treatments on communication between husbands and wives might present the following close-up statement after having carefully described the samples, measures, and procedures of the two most relevant (fictitious) studies in that literature.

Of the two studies that bear directly on the proposed question, Sterile (1986) found that couples reported improved communication after experiencing prolonged infertility treatment, while Ripe and Fertile (1987) concluded that behavioral exchanges between infertile couples more frequently escalated into arguments the longer that medical interventions continued. Of particular concern in Sterile’s study is the fact 19 that because men and women were interviewed together, the couples may not have been totally honest and their responses may have been prejudiced by one another.

Beyond this threat to validity, the conflicting findings of the two studies suggests the need for a more definitive investigation of the impact of infertility treatment on communication patterns within couples. A good strategy for reviewing the literature can be found by referring to a Venn diagram (see Figure 4. 1) of three intersecting circles, which is derived from the previously discussed exercise on formulating research questions. The long shots, or wide angle lenses, are represented by the portions of the three primary variables that are independent of the other two variables.

The medium shot is illustrated by the intersections of any two variables. The close-up, or narrow-angle lens, refers to the joint intersection of all three variables. As a general rule, any studies in the existing literature that incorporate all of the major variables or constructs that are present in the proposed study will require very careful scrutiny because they are particularly relevant. Studies that relate some of the variables (e. g. , two) also deserve a short description.

Studies that deal with only one of the selected variables, perhaps in conjunction with other, less relevant variables, are merely background. They are generally too numerous to examine in detail and include a great deal of content that does not pertain to the current study. Certainly, one need not review all studies dealing with sexual dysfunctions, for instance, in order to focus Oh male impotence in mid-life. Nor will one need to consider all previous work on men or mid-life. Yet gender issues and mid-life development issues may provide important background material and a theoretical foundation for the proposed study.

Moreover, the researcher will not have to introduce every study on impotence but will probably need to be familiar with a broad range of previous work in the area. 20 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM At the conclusion of the literature review, the reader should have obtained a fairly clear idea of the study. By this time you will have carefully crafted your argument and moved the reader along as you build your case. You will have convinced your reader of your mastery of the subject matter by having reviewed and critiqued the existent literature that pertains to your study and gives it a suitable context.

The next immediate challenge is to form a transition between the literature review and the next section of the dissertation, the Statement of the Problem. One way to build this transition, so that the literature review chapter appears connected to the proposed study, is to write a summary of the review you have conducted. This summary would highlight your main conclusions, including reference to the most relevant literature (which you have previously reviewed), and leave the reader anticipating the next steps.

The Statement of the Problem is sometimes written as a separate chapter and sometimes located at the very end of the Review of the Literature. Although you have probably offered a general statement of the problem early in the introductory chapter of the dissertation, this is the place for a more specific statement. The specificity of the problem statement is very important. A research problem consists of much more (and less) than a misunderstood collection of unidentified relationships. The statement is usually framed in the form of one or more research questions and research hypotheses.

Although we recommend the inclusion of formal hypotheses as a general standard, whether or not to include them may depend on the type of study, what is known about the question, and the conventions of your discipline and department. Similarly, the statement of the problem may contain conceptual definitions of major concepts. This is particularly true when competing definitions of the concepts exist within the field of inquiry (e. g. , it might be important to point out that the study will focus on trait anxiety as opposed to state anxiety or other conceptualizations of the construct of anxiety).

It is critical that a research question have an explanatory basis. This means that the statement of the problem contains a brief summary of the conceptual underpinnings for the proposed research. Dust bowl empiricism is the derogatory term used to refer to a shotgun approach to research, in which the investigator levels his or her Sights to see what is out there without developing a convincing chain of presuppositions and arguments that lead to a prediction. There is no research problem in “ wondering” how the variables of gender, voice quality, and persuasion intercorrelate, so this will not pass for a suitable problem statement.

Hypotheses have the virtue of being explanatory expressions of research questions because they imply a commitment to a particular understanding of how variables relate. An example of a research question without a specific hypothesis is, “ What is the role of male significant others on the criminal activities of female criminals? ” This research question implies a study that obtains information from or about women who have been convicted of crimes regarding the influence of boyfriends and male acquaintances in their criminal activities.

A study that poses this question without predictive hypotheses (perhaps because of a lack of available information about this topic) might be termed “ exploratory. ” In most instances it is possible to project hypotheses, even in those 21 instances where there is a relative lack of research in an area. This is because there are apt to be studies and theories on related topics that can inform the proposed study. In the above example, the investigator may have developed some reasonable hunches about the research question from her knowledge of women’s developmental theory and the role of the peer group in criminal behavior.

These hunches would be reflected in one or more hypotheses. An example of a research hypothesis is: “ There is a negative relationship between positive body image and motivation for” augmentation mammoplasty. ” A second example is: “ Couples in stable, unhappy marriages use more conflict avoidance methods than couples in stable, happy marriages. ” The first hypothesis suggests a study in which the variables of body image and motivation for breast augmentation will be statistically correlated, while the second hypothesis suggests a study using two groups of couples who will be compared on how they manage conflict.

In either case, the variables specified in the hypotheses will need to be operationalized, that is, clarified with regard to how they are to be measured. Such specification usually takes place in the Method chapter. In the first example, the researcher might predict, as did one of our students, a negative relationship between scores on the Jourard-Secord Body Cathexis Scale and a l0-item Likert-type scale of motivation to seek augmentation mammoplasty (Ewing, 1992). It is obviously important to specify each and every variable.

In the second example, the terms stable/unstable marriage, and conflict avoidance methods would need to be articulated, and the two groups of couples would need to be identified. It usually takes several rewritings in order to come up with research questions and hypotheses that are optimally clear, concise, and meaningful. Note that hypotheses are typically written in the present tense and they are written as positive assertions. They are not written as “ null” hypotheses.

The reader may be aware that inferential statistics work on the assumption of rejecting null hypotheses, that is, hypotheses that assume there are no significant differences between or among groups or no significant relationships among variables. Research hypotheses, on the other hand, should not be stated as null hypotheses, but as directional hypotheses (or hypotheses that specify relationship between v