Research Proposal

Suggestions and guidelines
Topic

• A problem of theoretical interest to field of personality
• Of interest to you!
• Can be straight correlational, prefer if experimental with an individual difference parameter
Requirements

• Systematic review of the literature
  – What is the current understanding of the problem?
  – What has been done before
  – What problems have been detected

• Proposed research technique
  – Method and procedure

• Expected results (how to analyze them)
  – What are they expected to be if your hypothesis is right
  – What are some of the alternatives
Proposal Requirements (detail)

- Abstract
- Introduction
  - Literature review
  - Hypothesis
- Methods and Procedure
  - What is to be done
  - What instruments will be used
  - Who are the subjects
Proposal Requirements (continued)

• **Expected Results**
  – How will the data be analyzed
  – What do you expect to find if your hypothesis is correct
    • (Include a graph of expected results)
  – What are alternative possible results

• **Discussion**
  – What would the results mean if they turn out the way you expect
Searching the Literature

• Science does not occur in a vacuum
  – Current research reflects the contributions of previous studies
  – “I can see so far only because I stand on the shoulders of giants” (Newton)

• Published results have been reviewed by peers and judged to make significant contributions
Searching the Literature

• Read current articles in reputable journals
• Search for articles based upon keywords in their abstracts (PsychInfo)
• Search for articles based upon the previous work they cite (Social Science Citation Index as found in Web of Science)
Journals

• Not all journals are equal
  – Quality of peer review
  – Breadth of distribution

• General APA, APS journals
  – Psychological Review
  – Psychological Bulletin
  – Psychological Science

• Field specific
  – Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
  – Journal of Experimental Psychology
Personality Journals

• General
  – Annual Review of Psychology
  – Psychological Review
  – Psychological Bulletin
  – Psychological Science

• Personality Specific
  – Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
  – Journal of Personality
  – Journal of Research in Personality
  – Personality and Individual Differences
  – European Journal of Personality
Searching the Abstracts

• Examples from Psych Info  (http://gateway.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&MODE=ovid&PAGE=main&D=psyh) (need to be logged in at NU)

• Boolean logic allows for complex searches

• A and (B or C)

• Example search for terms

• See the very helpful handout from the reference library at
  –http://www.library.northwestern.edu/reference/instructional_services/class_pages/psych398.html
Example of Psych Info

Find references to personality, arousal, and cognitive performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Search Term</th>
<th>Number of Hits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Physiological Arousal</td>
<td>12928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>131460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 and 2</td>
<td>1261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cognition</td>
<td>4807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>22443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1 and 8</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9 and 2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Literature searching by articles

A&R, 1996

Time

YD
Literature searching by citations

A&R, 1996

Time

YD