Research Statements and Proposals
An Introduction for Humanists and Social Scientists

grad.uchicago.edu
Agenda

- Statements vs. Proposals
- Writing the Research Statement
- Writing the Research Proposal
- What the Committees Seek
- Samples and Discussion
Agenda

- Statements vs. Proposals
- Writing the Research Statement
- Writing the Research Proposal
- What the Committees Seek
- Samples and Discussion
The Ask

- “a **statement** of research/scholarship interests”
- “a **proposal** not to exceed 1,500 words, double-spaced, describing the general scope of the project and the specific work proposed during the fellowship term”
- “a **statement** of current and future research plans”
- “a brief **summary** of your research interests”
- “a **statement** of plans for work and their relation to the community’s theme”
- “research **statement** of the project to be undertaken during the fellowship period”
- “a **description** of research activities”
- “a research **plan** of no more than 2000 words”
What kind of position are you seeking?

Who is your audience?
# Statements vs. Proposals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Research Statement</th>
<th>Research Proposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>To apply for tenure-track professorships and VAPs</td>
<td>To apply for predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope</strong></td>
<td>Describes past, present, and future scholarship</td>
<td>Proposes project(s) to be completed during a set time period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics</strong></td>
<td>Research overview; Past research; Current research; Future research</td>
<td>Research Questions; Argument; Methodology; Timeline; Outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>1.5 to 2 pages (HUM &amp; SS) 2 to 3 pages (PSYCH)</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agenda

- Statements vs. Proposals
- Writing the Research Statement
- Writing the Research Proposal
- What the Committees Seek
- Samples and Discussion
Research Statements

- Usually 2 pages in length
- **Research Statement** and your name centered at the top
- Single spaced, with double spacing between paragraphs
- 1” margins and 11-12 pt. font
- Use **subheadings** for at-a-glance organization
- First-person point of view, with your research as the main character
- **Frame** your work appropriately, but do not make the statement position-specific
Once Upon a Time
Research Statements

Provide an **overview** of themes, topics, and disciplinary identity

(Optional) Describe **past research** and publications, if applicable

Describe **current research** (dissertation): questions, argument, sources, theory, methodology, findings

Describe **current research** (dissertation): contributions, significance, publication trajectory

Describe **future research**, likely a distinct second project

Conclude with the **significance** and **wider impacts** of your work
But won’t I be repeating my cover letter?
Statement vs. Cover Letter

- A research statement **expands** on the cover letter
- It provides more **detail** on arguments, methods, and contributions
- Can include **brief** (one- to two-sentence) dissertation chapter summaries*
- Greater focus on the **future**
- Repeat ideas but **do not recycle** full sentences

* Check disciplinary norms.
Agenda

- Statements vs. Proposals
- Writing the Research Statement
- Writing the Research Proposal
- What the Committees Seek
- Samples and Discussion
Research Proposals

- **Formats vary**, so refer to the call for proposals
- Draw upon the same mindset and skills that you used for past grant/fellowship proposals
- Assume a broad, **multidisciplinary audience**
- **Tailor** the proposal to each opportunity, speaking to postdoc themes when necessary
- Show why you want to be on a given campus and how you will **contribute**
- Provide an ambitious yet feasible **plan of work**, with concrete deliverables
The Center for East Asian Studies at Stanford University is pleased to offer a postdoctoral fellowship in **Chinese Studies** for the **2018-19** academic year. This award is open to scholars in the **humanities and social sciences** studying any historical period. The fellowship will begin September 1, 2018 and end August 31, 2019, with a 12-month stipend of approximately $60,000. Fellows are required to be **in residence** in the Stanford area during the appointment period; to **teach one course** during the academic year; and to **participate in all regular Center activities**. Stanford University Press will have first right of refusal for **manuscripts** produced during the postdoctoral appointment.
Research Proposals

**Step 1:** Catch the readers’ attention by beginning with a **PROBLEM**
- Widely recognized and unresolved
- Practical or conceptual
- Related to the fellowship’s theme

**Step 2:** Demonstrate that your research provides a **SOLUTION**
- Outline core arguments, methodologies, and findings
- Emphasize scholarly contributions and interventions
- Show that the $$ allows you to do important work

**Step 3:** Discuss the **OUTCOMES** of your time at an institution
- Feasible month-by-month plan*
- Publications and presentations are key
- Contributions to campus, especially teaching

*grad.uchicago.edu
Agenda

- Statements vs. Proposals
- Writing the Research Statement
- Writing the Research Proposal
- What the Committees Seek
- Samples and Discussion
What will search committees want to see?
Focus

grad.uchicago.edu
Impact
Fit

grad.uchicago.edu
A Clear Plan
Agenda

- Statements vs. Proposals
- Writing the Research Statement
- Writing the Research Proposal
- What the Committees Seek
- Samples and Discussion
Questions?

Courtney Wiersema

 cwiersema@uchicago.edu