



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

Institutionen för kommunikation och medier

Writing your MA dissertation proposal

Media and Communication Studies, Annette Hill

There is one reference book I recommend – *Doing a Literature Review* by Chris Hart, Sage 1998. There are two methods books I recommend – *Mass Communication Research Methods* by Hansen et al, Macmillan Palgrave 1998, and *Researching Society and Culture*, by Clive Seale, Sage 2004.

Chris Hart (1998: 207-8) recommends an MA dissertation proposal in the social sciences to include the following headings:

Working Title

Introduction – a summary of your research, a short description of the theory, issue or problem you will address, and what you hope to achieve by doing this research.

Scope – a brief description of the subject area, timeframe, what you will analyse, in short the research parameters for your dissertation.

Aims and Objectives – statements about what you intend to do and the specific outcomes from your research, in short what you want to do and how you will achieve this.

Justification – a brief rationale for why you want to do this research, with information about what will be your contribution to knowledge, the potential usefulness of your methods and empirical data, how you will enhance understanding of the theory, issue or problem you will address in your dissertation.

Literature Review – the foundation to your dissertation where you identify key studies, approaches, methods, you identify major issues or problems that you intend to address in your research, a definition of key terms you will use, and many more points that Chris Hart explains in his book.

Research Questions – a list of 2-5 research questions you will ask in your dissertation that are clearly linked to your literature review, aims and objectives, and your methods.

Methods – a brief indication of your methods, drawn from mass communication research methods and social sciences quantitative and qualitative methods, and information about what data collection and analysis techniques you might use in the dissertation.

Work schedule – a provisional outline of your schedule that includes your literature review, data collection, data analysis and writing up of the dissertation.

References – an indicative bibliography. Use the Harvard system please.