

	1 - Unacceptable	2 - Acceptable	3 - Very Good	4 - Outstanding	N/A
Introduction: Statement of Research Question and Hypothesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raises a trivial, unimportant, or nonexistent problem in the field and/or misapplies data. Defines the problem and its context in an incoherent or confused manner. Does not make a case for importance. States no valid research question. Offers no more than a vestigial hypothesis or solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raises a lesser or minor problem in the field and/or reworks existing data. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be derivative. Defines the problem and its context. Makes an adequate case for importance. Extracts a derivative or limited research question from the problem. Offers an acceptable hypothesis or solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raises a worthwhile problem in the field and/or presents useful new data. Makes a good case for its importance. Extracts a valid research question from the problem. Offers a satisfactory hypothesis or solution. Defines the problem and its context well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raises a significant, original, and interesting problem in the field and/or presents important new data. Defines the problem and its context clearly and compellingly. Persuasively makes a strong case for its importance. Concisely extracts an important research question from the problem. Offers an innovative, striking hypothesis or solution to the problem/question. 	
Literature Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an incomplete, inadequate survey of secondary literature. Misunderstands or misinterprets secondary sources. Does not engage state of scholarship on the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an acceptable survey of secondary literature, but with some notable gaps. Understands most of the sources. Generally places the dissertation into the context of secondary sources. Repeats the extant scholarship. Knowledge does not extend beyond named secondary sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a comprehensive survey of secondary literature, but may miss a few key works. Places the research question in the context of secondary sources. Understands secondary sources and integrates them into the discussion. Engages the extant scholarship. Does not move beyond the extant secondary sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a comprehensive survey of all critical and relevant secondary sources and materials appropriate to the research question. Clearly shapes the research question in the context of secondary sources. Has mastered secondary sources and approaches them analytically, skillfully. Intellectually engages the work of the best scholars. Shows how the dissertation will move beyond the extant secondary sources. 	
Methodology, Theoretical Structure, or Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has no identifiable approach or has an inappropriate approach. Cannot define either the approach or the structure precisely. Is not persuasive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selects an approach, but may not sustain it through the dissertation. Takes the theoretical paradigm/method for granted and applies it mechanically. Generally explains the approach. Persuades the reader that the approach has some merit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses an approach that is suitable to the material. Accepts the theoretical paradigm/method and applies it. Explains the application of the theoretical/methodological structure. Persuades the reader that the approach is suitable and productive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a well-conceived, well-designed, coherent, best approach to the material. Challenges, questions, and adapts the theoretical paradigm/ method to fit own research project. Clearly presents and defends the selected theoretical/methodological structure. Persuades the reader that the approach is innovative and compelling. 	
Exposition, Analysis, Presentation of evidence in support of hypothesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No summary or incompetent summary. Does not understand results. Makes claims that have not been demonstrated. Draws no conclusions. Does not address directions for future research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis is pedestrian, but adequate. Uses documentation and evidence adequately. Demonstrates adequate control of bibliographic, documentary, and research skills. Writes pedestrian prose. Produces some results. Answers the research question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis is competent, solid, and convincing. Uses documentation and evidence effectively and competently. Demonstrates competent control of bibliographic, documentary, and research skills. Writes well. Produces usable results. Answers the research question competently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis is comprehensive, sophisticated, and convincing. Uses documentation and evidence expertly and adroitly. Demonstrates superior control of bibliographic, documentary, and research skills. Writes with style, flair, and facility. Produces meaningful results. Answers the research question persuasively and compellingly. 	
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No summary or incompetent summary. Does not understand results. Makes claims that have not been demonstrated. Draws no conclusions. Does not address directions for future research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarizes what has been accomplished (touches on the "so what" question). Repeats major points. Does not address significance or implications of research for field. Does not address significance or implications of work for field. Weak discussion of directions for future research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a good summary or work (answers the "so what" question). States contributions. Points at possible implications of research for field. Speculates about place of work in broader context of field. Identifies some future directions for research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a clear, concise, insightful conclusion (answers the "so what" question elegantly). Ties all the pieces together. Clearly states major findings, their significance, and their implications. Discusses strengths and weaknesses of investigation. Clearly places work in broader context of the field. Anticipates and responds to possible criticism. Lays out future directions for research. 	

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Style & Overall Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorly written and unorganized. • Has not understood and mastered the material or method. • Unaware of basic conventions of the field. • Not persuasive. • Is derivative, redundant, does not advance the field. • Is not part of the scholarly conversation. • Demonstrates weak, incoherent, or confused thinking. • Descriptors: Flawed, inarticulate, insignificant, problematical, trivial, unconvincing, undigested, unoriginal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequately written and organized. • Shows adequate understanding and some mastery of the material and method. • Is linear, mechanical, pedestrian. • Is workmanlike and competent as far as it goes, but does not go far. • Shows potential to engage in the scholarly conversation. • Demonstrates an adequate degree of critical and coherent thinking. • Descriptors: Adequate, derivative, limited, predictable, unsophisticated, workmanlike. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-written and organized. • Shows strong understanding and mastery of the material and method. • Aware of conventions in the field. • Provides food for thought. • Is a solid contribution that advances the field. • Engages in the larger scholarly conversation. • Demonstrates capacity for critical, coherent, mature, and independent thinking. • Descriptors: Capable, competent, effective, engaging, knowledgeable, significant, solid, strong, substantive, well-done. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptionally well-written and organized. • Shows superior understanding and deep mastery of both material and method. • Thoroughly researched. Is thoughtful, concise, persuasive. • Is an original, significant contribution that promises to innovate in the field. • Engages in scholarly conversation with leading scholars. • Sustains consistently high level of critical, coherent, mature, and independent thinking. • Descriptors: Ambitious, breakthrough, consequential, game-changing, illuminating, innovative, original, outstanding, remarkable, significant. 	