

Thesis Tasks Memo 1

1. Review materials on class website (www.popepi.org – see Soc793 under **Students**) particularly the memo on writing a thesis and the 5 examples of excellent MA theses.
2. *Data and research question:* A one-page double-spaced draft of the introduction and background to your thesis in which you:
 - a. state the research question,
 - b. briefly describe the specific data or dataset you will be using and the outcome of interest, and
 - c. briefly describe how you will do the research.

Finding a dataset suitable for your research question, and getting it into a format that you can use is the first and most important thing you can accomplish in the next two weeks. Feel free to consult with instructor about discovery and extraction of a suitable dataset.

3. *A template:* Find and bring published article or two that could serve as a model for your study. It must be using the same methods and kind of data as your study. It need not be on the same outcome or topic that you are studying; the idea is to have a model or form for your thesis. But something on your topic would be ideal, and if you can find something using the dataset you plan to use, that would be fantastic.

4. *Starting a literature review:* An annotated bibliography of 10 scholarly publications on the outcome, process or relationship you are addressing in your thesis. These should be empirical studies, and you should start with anything and everything published using the dataset with which you are thinking of working. The bibliography is a citation followed by 1-2 sentences describing the core finding of the study about the outcome of interest. (Citation may be in any widely accepted style, e.g., AJS, APA, Chicago Manual of Style, ICMJE, but the style must be used consistently.)

5. *Methods and first pass at your data:* A descriptive analysis of your dependent variable, if you are working with and have up and running a quantitative dataset. A paragraph or two description of your research site, access, and some suggestions for interview protocols if you are planning a field study. ***You must consult with your faculty advisor about IRB and related matters before proposing a field study.***