

Writing in the Social Sciences

Rhetorical Situation Chart

Genre	Purpose	Audience	Role	Rhetorical Situation
Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Proposal	Evaluate existing research, propose an original research project, and convince a faculty committee to fund your project.	SURF Selection Committee (a multidisciplinary faculty committee)	Undergraduate Researcher	You are an undergraduate researcher working in the field of Latina/o Studies who needs to secure funding to continue research over the summer.

YOUR ROLE

You are an undergraduate researcher studying Latina/o Studies at UNC. You have enjoyed your Latina/o Studies classes at UNC, and you'd like to conduct your own research over the summer in the field of sociology. However, you need to secure funding to pay for your research. As a UNC student, you are eligible to apply for a [SURF](#) (Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship). To create a compelling SURF application, your job is to summarize existing, relevant research in your field, propose an interesting contribution to your field, and demonstrate the feasibility of your project.

You should familiarize yourself with the SURF application website, especially the [Rubric for Proposals](#). You should also read the [Tips for SURF Application Writers](#).

FEEDER 1: ANNOTATE SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEWS

Before you can draft a proposal, you first need to understand the state of your field. **Sociological reviews can be particularly useful to researchers**, because they summarize relevant book-length studies that have been conducted in your field, describe the implications of those studies, and identify the gaps in a particular study. As a researcher, reviews are a good starting place when deciding which studies to read. Because Latina/o Studies is a broad field, **your first step is to identify a subcategory for research**. For example, you may choose to research Afro-Latina/o/x political activism in the Southeastern US, impacts of climate change on Latina/o/x populations in the Southwestern US, Latina/o/x cultural production in North Carolina, or impacts of policing on Latina/o/x populations in large cities in the US. Whatever subcategory you choose, it should be narrower than Latina/o Studies, but it should be broad enough to find multiple reviews on books about the subject, which indicates that there is a wealth of existing research on this subject. As you research, you may find you need to broaden or narrow your subcategory in order to find 4-6 relevant sources. Your sources need not (and likely will not) be identical, but rather together they will help you form a complete picture of the issue you hope to study. In addition to using book reviews, you may also choose to incorporate articles from scholarly journals as well.

Whatever reviews you choose to include, they should be from a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal. For this assignment, I recommend using an advanced search on Proquest's [Sociological Abstracts](#). Remember, a review is NOT the same thing as an article or a book. In order to obtain an understanding of your chosen

subfield in a short period of time, I recommend focusing mostly on reviews, while incorporating 1-2 articles that are the most relevant to your preferred area of research.

Once you have chosen an acceptable review article, you will write a brief, 1-2 page annotation of your research (double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font).

A successful annotation will:

- Include an introduction that provides the area of research that you are interested in (for example, impacts of climate change on Latina/o/x populations in the Southwestern US), and the main topics covered by the 4-6 sources you have read.
- Evaluate the quality of the sources you read. Do the authors of the reviews critique the source they're reviewing? What are the credentials of the authors of the books being reviewed, or the articles you have read?
- Summarize the methodology of the sources you have read. What seem to be the main strategies for collecting data among researchers in this subfield? For example, do they conduct interviews or use surveys? Do they use quantitative methods, qualitative methods, or a mixture of both?
- Identify the major findings in your field, the implications of those studies, and a 1-2 sentence summary of the status of your field.
- Identify the possibilities for future research based on the research you have done. Do the authors of these reviews or articles mention areas of research that still need to be conducted? As you conducted your research, did you find gaps in the research that you would like to fill? Mention at least 2-3 possibilities for future research.
- At the end provide relevant information about your 4-6 sources so that someone reading your annotation could find it. You may use the citation style of your choice, although I encourage you to practice using [APA](#) citations, since you will need to use it in your Unit 1 Project. A proper citation will include the following information:
 - Title
 - Author(s)
 - Journal
 - Publication date

FEEDER 2: AIMS FOR RESEARCH

The most important part of a scientific grant proposal is the Aims for Research. Based on the review article you have read, **you will propose an original research project that will contribute new information to your field of research** (double spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font). You should provide two aims for research. These aims should be related to each other, but their success should be independent of one another (in other words, if one of your aims doesn't yield interesting results, it should still be possible for the other aim to produce useful information).

To apply for a SURF, you need the support of a faculty mentor. Although in our class you will not actually request a letter of support, **you will present your aims in a brief, five-minute presentation to me and your classmates as if you have been asked to present to your advisor.** Your presentation will be followed by a two-minute question and answer session, so you should be prepared to answer questions from your assigned group.

A successful Aims for Research will:

- Propose an interesting, relevant contribution to your chosen field
- Include two related, but independent aims for research

- Be feasible for an undergraduate researcher to conduct with the help of a faculty advisor
- Have a narrow enough scope to yield results in nine weeks
- Be cost effective (you do not need to include information about costs in this section, but be aware that SURFs are typically \$3000 awards, which you should keep in mind if your project requires travel, expensive materials, or other research-related expenses)
- Be approximately 150 words

A successful presentation will:

- Be no more than 5 minutes
- Include an introduction that gives a brief overview of the field
- Describe each research aim
- Conclude with an outline of the big picture and defend your research aims

UNIT PROJECT: SURF PROJECT PROPOSAL

Now that you have familiarized yourself with your field of study and written the aims of your SURF proposal, you will use that information to **write a SURF project proposal following the “Format Requirements” included in the [Applying for a SURF](#) webpage**. Since an essential part of grant-writing is being able to read and follow guidelines, I expect you to familiarize yourself with and follow these proposal guidelines. For additional guidance, you should also review relevant [SURF Proposal Resources](#) and the UNC Writing Center’s [Grant Proposals](#) handout. After you have read the information on these websites, I will be happy to answer any questions you may have after class or during office hours.

-I am evaluating you on the quality of your writing and your ability to propose and synthesize ideas. I do not, however, expect your sociological methods to be flawless (learning proper methods requires intensive study). However, your methods should be well thought out, draw ~~ing~~ from the research you conducted in Feeder 1, and avoid the major methodological pitfalls of sociological research that we will review during class. I also do not expect you to have any sociological experience. In your Preliminary Work and Experience section you should make a case for yourself, creating a compelling argument based off of your current experience, or the experience you imagine you would have when applying for this grant. I am not evaluating the prestige of your experience in this section, I am evaluating your ability to market that experience.

A successful SURF Project Proposal will:

- Follow ALL of the “Format Requirements” located in the [Applying for a SURF](#) webpage EXCEPT:
 - You will not include your PID
 - You will not submit your proposal as a PDF to the office of undergraduate research
 - You will not include a letter of recommendation
- Fulfill the requirements for a Level 1 Proposal as outlined in the [SURF Evaluation Rubric](#)* (*You DO NOT need a faculty research support letter)
- Include a bibliography cited in correct [APA style](#)
- Be mostly free of grammatical, stylistic, and mechanical errors