

# Thesis vs. Non-Thesis Options

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# Research Process

## Phenomenon

"Big picture" question about a  $\psi$  process or behavior.

## Theory

"How or why" behavior works:  
Abstract statement about how  $\psi$  processes are related.

## Hypothesis

Cast processes as specific variables.  
Specific, testable prediction.

## Methods

Concrete study procedures.  
Operational definitions: turn variables into numbers.

## Data / Results

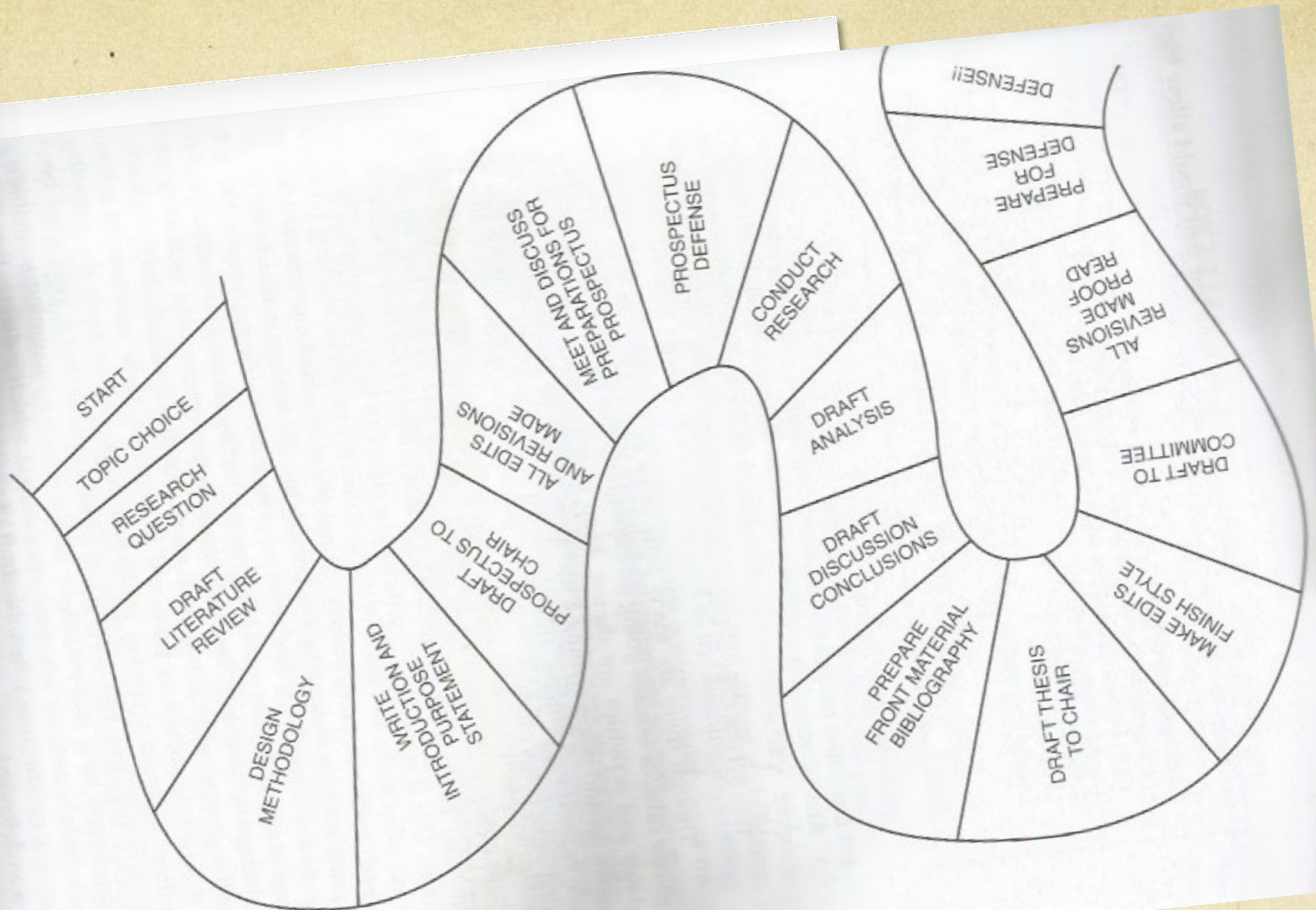
Statistical tests of hypotheses.

## Discussion

Meaning of the results for the theory.  
Study limitations.

## Conclusion

What do we know now about the phenomenon?  
What other research follows from this?



**FIGURE 1-2** The Thesis Process Step by Step

# Thesis Process

# Thesis Option

- If you choose to do a thesis for your final project, you will complete 25 credit hours of coursework and 6 thesis hours.
- You will sign up for thesis hours with the chair of your thesis committee.
  - Option 1–Thesis
    - CRM 689 Thesis Proposal (3 hrs)
    - CRM 692 Thesis (3 hrs)
    - Thesis hours receive a “IP” grade until thesis is successfully completed and signed off on by committee
- There are strict deadlines for completion tied to graduation
  - For Fall Graduation, Deadline is: November 15<sup>th</sup>
  - For Winter Graduation, Deadline is: March 15<sup>th</sup>
  - For Summer Graduation, Deadline is: July 15<sup>th</sup>

# Committee for Thesis

- The committee must be a minimum of 2 tenure-tracked or tenured faculty members in the SAC department.
- One person will serve as the chair and the second will be a committee member.
- You may have more than 2 committee members; additional committee members may be from outside the department, college, or university. *The third member from outside SAC or EMU may serve on the committee with approval of the thesis Chair and second reader. For the Interdisciplinary Schools, Society, and Violence MA Program, the same policy applies except that faculty from the College of Education are treated in the same manner as are SAC faculty*

# First Semester

- *Phase 1: Reflection*

- This process should begin as early as possible. Simply by choosing to enter an M.A. program you are acting upon some specific or general interest in your field of study. As you meet professors, take courses, and get to know other students, you should engage in this process of ongoing reflection about your culminating project. Develop your interest and focus in the field, share it with other students, and make a point to discuss your ideas with professors whom you feel might have the necessary expertise to assist you in formulating your ideas.

# Second Semester

- *Phase 2: Identify Preliminary Topic and Draft Proposal*
  - Develop a very preliminary (sketch) proposal of your research project including the major focus of the work, key research you have identified in this area, and a discussion of the potential methodological approach you will adopt.
- *Phase 3: Selection of Thesis Committee and Development of Thesis Proposal*
  - Approach faculty members whom you wish to invite to serve on your thesis committee, beginning with the chair. Develop the thesis proposal in consultation with the thesis chair. The proposal is typically developed gradually, as a result of the student's preliminary research and discussion with their chair and committee members.

# Second or Third Semester

- Phase 4: Secure Approval of the Thesis Proposal and Register for Thesis Hours
  - The thesis committee (chair and members) must formally sign off on the thesis proposal, granting their approval to proceed with the project under their supervision. This will happen upon successful completion of the prospectus defense, which should be scheduled and held in this phase. Thesis chairs must initiate the process by which students register for thesis hours. Discretion lies with the thesis chair as to when the student can register for thesis hours, as some may deem it appropriate for the student to register earlier in the proposal development process. Students must complete a total of (4) thesis hours, either taking all four hours in one semester, or spreading them out over several semesters.
  
- Phase 5: Secure University Human Subjects Review Committee (UHSRC) Approval
  - Under the guidance of the thesis chair, student will complete CITI Human Subjects Research Training, and also submit a proposal for conducting research involving human subjects to the University's Human Subject Review Committee



# Third or Fourth Semester

- Phase 6: Conduct Research
  - The committee (especially the thesis chair) must be kept informed of the student's progress at frequent intervals and should monitor the student's work and assist in its development. In so far as possible, the committee should attempt to give the student ample and early warning of any reservations concerning the student's progress and, if necessary, should specify the changes required for thesis acceptance.

# Fourth Semester

## ○ Phase 7: Writing of the Thesis

- A first draft of the thesis should be submitted to the thesis chair and/or to any or all members of the committee according to terms agreed upon by the student and by committee members. Often, the student will provide drafts of the chapters of the thesis as they are written; other times the student and chair will determine that it would be best to have a completed draft all at once.

## ○ Phase 8: Revision of the Thesis Draft

- In accordance with committee comments, draft chapters and/or a draft of the entire thesis will be revised until the student is deemed ready for defense. Again, this may take several rounds of revision.

## ○ Phase 9: Defending the Thesis

- Once the committee is satisfied that the thesis is ready to be defended, the chair will give the student permission to set a date for defense. When the student, the thesis committee chair, and the other committee members agree that the thesis is complete and ready for public defense, the SAC department office should be contacted. The defense should be scheduled at least two weeks in advance. A public announcement must be made and the faculty and graduate student body invited to attend.

## ○ Phase 11: Submit Thesis to the Graduate School

- The final draft of the thesis should be prepared in strict accordance with the instructions given by the Graduate School thesis manual.

# Non-Thesis Option

- For the non-thesis option, you must complete 31 credit hours of course work, including 2 extra electives in lieu of thesis hours.
- Option 2—Non-Thesis (6 credit hours)
  - Non-thesis students must complete two additional elective courses that deal with either methodological, substantive, or theoretical issues in criminology and criminal justice. These courses will be selected in consultation with the graduate coordinator.