

## Guidelines for Developing a Thesis Project

### 1. Conception of the Project

- a) The first question that you should ask yourself is: what do I want to investigate? Then, you will be able to formulate the title of your dissertation.
  - You may begin your reflection with a question. For example: *“Which type of political regime works best in Africa?”*
  - Alternatively, you could start with a hypothesis, such as exploring how two distinct phenomena are related and analysing their correlation.
  - To clarify this point, it is essential to rigorously define what you intend to study.
- Develop a list of questions that specify the central problem that will form the basis of your thesis.
- b) The second question to ask yourself is: how can I investigate it?
  - At this point, you should assess your access to sources, whether they are available, and if fieldwork is necessary—something that may not be suitable for research that needs to be completed within 6 to 12 months at most.
  - The answer to this question typically leads to the development of a provisional work plan guided by the questions mentioned in point a). This often results in the subtitle of the thesis.
- c) Then, you need to explain the methodology: you should clearly outline in a dedicated part the methodology you will use—whether it will be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed—and explain it thoroughly.
  - Provide a detailed explanation of the research methods and techniques you intend to use.
  - Your decision regarding your approach should have a clear rationale: if you choose to conduct surveys, you should prepare a guide and understand why this method is appropriate; if you opt for a qualitative study involving published texts, you should also be clear about why this is the most suitable approach.

### 2. Literature review or “state of the art”: In a specific part of your project, you will explain the state of the art, covering the following:

- Who has worked on this topic? Briefly summarize the content of these authors' works and their main conclusions, reviewing what has been published on the subject. Present an overview of the different theories related to the topic and outline the intellectual trajectory of these various authors.
- Conduct a thorough review of existing literature related to your research topic and identify the essential works that are foundational to your study.
  - What is novel about the perspective you propose to develop? In other words, how is your study different from existing research, and why is it important to examine the topic from this new angle? For these points and their subsections, you will need between 4 to 6 pages for a comprehensive literature review.

3. **Preliminary Index:** Create a provisional outline that organizes the main sections and chapters of your thesis.
4. **Work Schedule (Timeline):** Develop a detailed timeline outlining the key stages for completing your thesis.
5. **Working Bibliography:**
  - Organize and prioritize your bibliographic sources based on relevance and importance to your research.
  - Adopt a recognized citation style (such as APA, MLA, or Chicago) for your bibliography and maintain this consistency throughout all references and within your project's content.

**Example of structure for the project:**

1. Introduction
  - a. Contextualization
  - b. Research question (and possible secondary questions)
  - c. Hypothesis
2. Personal motivations and objectives of the study
3. Literature Review
4. Methodology
5. Preliminary Index
6. Working Bibliography

The Thesis Project should be +/- 15 pages.