

GUIDELINES FOR THE PROPOSAL OF STUDY

Goals: Hum Bio puts you in control of formulating your own course of study. That means that it's up to you to define the vision that makes your course of study coherent and relevant to your educational and life goals. The proposal requirement, an integral component of the major, is designed to create an occasion and a format for you to formulate that vision. The process of drafting and revising the proposal will help you to focus your interests so that you can create a cohesive, academically rigorous Area of Concentration. Additionally, the proposal itself allows the Student Advisors and your Faculty Advisor to better understand your primary educational intentions and to get better acquainted with you, and it can become an important point of reference for you and your advisors as you move through the course of study you have defined.

❖The final version should be around 1000 words long, double-spaced, using a 12-point font❖

Introduction

First paragraph: The overall goal of the introduction is to explain your motivations for majoring in Hum Bio. Drawing on elements of your experience and/or background, first provide a general picture of your academic interests. Then *briefly* explain how Hum Bio fits into your educational goals during college and your career goals beyond. (You'll have an opportunity to expand on this in your conclusion.)

Main Body

Second paragraph: Identify your Area of Concentration (AC) and explain what you mean by it and why you chose it. This paragraph should serve as the **thesis** for your proposal of study and describe what you intend to focus on as a human biology major. Many ACs may appear similar on the surface: try to be concrete about what *your* particular theme or emphasis is, and how it might be different from other ACs that share a similar title. The first sentence should identify the title of your AC (in boldface), what you mean by it, and why you chose it. From there, you should explain what aspect of the broader field you plan to explore with your coursework. *Format notes:* The title of your AC should not be a heading; rather, it should be incorporated into a sentence. For example, you could write, "I chose **Medical Ethics** as my Area of Concentration because I want to understand the effects of emerging technology on medical practice." Capitalize "A" in Area and "C" in Concentration.

Third paragraph: Identify your degree option (B.A. or B.S.) and why you are interested in pursuing that degree option. Please talk about how your Area of Concentration, personal interests, and selected course work supports that degree option. (2 to 4 sentences max)

Fourth - nth paragraphs: Write a series of paragraphs explaining how the individual classes in your Depth constitute a cohesive area of study. You may write a paragraph for each class, or you may cluster the courses together so that you write about two or three related classes in each paragraph. However you proceed, the emphasis should be on how the classes work together to form a path or explore dimensions of a theme. *Format notes:* List the department name, course number, exact title of each course, and the name of the instructor (first initial, last name). Boldface this information, and insert it into the first sentence of the paragraph. Ex: "I plan to take **Health Care in America (Human Biology 120, D. Barr)** because it will..."

Penultimate paragraph: a broad description of the background you will achieve through your Breadth. You must write at least one sentence for each of your Breadth courses describing how it contributes to your course of study. *Format notes:* Do not include course numbers, only course titles and name of the instructor in parentheses (First Initial, Last Name).

Conclusion

Your conclusion should distill the value of the course of study you have described in terms of your own career or life aspirations or in terms of broader social values. If it is relevant, include how your internship experience will contribute to your course of study.

Notes on Developing your Proposal

- There is a sample proposal available in the SA office and online at the Human Biology website (<https://goo.gl/w3Gn6k>). Feel free to use it as a model of the general format for your own proposal.
- Before writing your proposal, you may find it useful to do some structured pre-writing or brainstorming to discover ways to articulate the connections you made as you designed your particular course of study. A set of helpful strategies is available as a second handout. Feel free to bring a rough draft to the SAs or to the Hume Writing Center if you are having trouble getting started or expressing your proposed area of study in words.
- Give your 2nd draft proposals to the same SA who reviewed the first one for a quicker turnaround and consistency with revisions

Overall

The proposal is an important part of your Human Biology file, and is often referred to by Faculty Advisors, recommendation writers, and others. As such, it is important for you to check for spelling and grammatical errors so that the statement best represents you and the overall quality of your work. You may be asked to make a few changes and bring back a revised copy. Good Luck!

Qualities of a Successful Proposal

Introductory Section:

- Details about your background and experience should be specific and relevant.
- Connections made between background information and your aspirations should be explicit and thoughtful.
- Your educational and life goals should be formulated in as concrete terms as possible.

Main Body:

- The Area of Concentration should be clearly and precisely defined, reflecting your particular emphasis or approach to your subject.
- It should describe a coherent program of study and make that coherence explicit by connecting descriptions of classes to the interests and goals identified in the first two paragraphs.
- It should make connections among (and distinctions between) classes to explain how they fulfill different aspects of the proposed course of study.
- The description of the Breadth should clearly indicate how the courses will serve your AC.

Conclusion:

- The conclusion should offer a clear distillation of the values, interests, and aspirations described in the earlier sections of the proposal.

Overall Style:

- The language should be clear, precise, and direct.
- The paragraphs and overall structure should be coherent.
- There should be no mechanical or grammatical errors.