



Developing your dissertation and research stream

SMS 2017 Doctoral Workshop

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It doesn't have to be like this!





Keeping going: the rest of life

- Find something else consuming
 - Family, partner, rock collecting, sky diving(!)
- Exercise several times a week
 - Better if you can hit something—a tennis ball, punching bag...

Keeping going: structure your time

- Thirty minutes of *writing* first thing every day
 - *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day*—Joan Bolker
- At least two hours *every* day
- Make a daily task list and leave when you are done
- End by setting up the next day



Structure: write in the correct order

- Table of contents
 - *Don't re-invent the wheel*
- Move from section to section
- Drop things in as they come to you
- Acknowledgements early and often
- Introduction close to last



Unified or three essay

- Three essay
 - Separate papers for submission
 - At least one paper ready early
- Unified
 - Deeper knowledge
 - Greater long term potential, but more pain

Writing: don't confuse writing with rewriting

- Writing

- Write to think, so follow your thoughts
- Exploratory, rapid, sloppy, poor grammar
- Notes to the side
- XXX Williamson 19?? XXX

- Rewrite, rewrite, rewrite

- Slow, painstaking, perfect grammar, robust text
 - *Style*--Joseph Williams
 - *Writing With Precision*--J. Bates
- Keep a “clippings” file
- Keep sequential, date-labeled drafts



Writing: don't worry about the papers

- You don't know what is interesting until you are done (or even after)
- It probably won't break the way you expected, anyway
- The publication payoff probably isn't as good

Defending the proposal

- When
 - Late
 - Near final negotiation about what needs to be done
 - Possibility of laying a bad foundation
 - Early
 - Get the foundation right and committee on board
 - Can diverge from committee's vision over extended process
- Which to choose
 - Chair preference and local practice
 - Fix the weakness of whichever you choose
- Best chance to get committee excited
- Best chance to get focused input



The final defense

- No surprises
- Minimal loose ends
- Goal
 - Not “Please, leave me alone and let me start my new job”
 - “You’ve helped me do something really exciting and important. Let’s celebrate it and figure out how to put the final polish on it”
- Take revisions seriously



Good luck!