

How to Write a Term Paper Proposal

Your term paper proposal needs to have three components:

1. A working title
2. A thesis statement
3. An annotated bibliography

1. *Working Title*

A working title simply means a title for your term paper that best describes what the term paper is all about. It must be descriptive and crisp. You want to grab your reader's attention. So, it has to be clear and inviting. The reason why it is called a "working title" is that you may change it, if needed, as you progress through writing your paper and get a better sense of the material.

2. *Thesis Statement*

A thesis statement is a clear and concise statement about the issue that you want to investigate. It should be written in such a way as to lend itself to investigation based on actual data/evidence. In a thesis statement you are *not* expressing an "opinion", rather you are making a statement that can reasonably be supported by evidence/data and analysis that you provide. An extremely simple thesis statement is: "it is raining outside." This thesis can be readily investigated by people going outside and observing whether or not it is in fact raining. Here are some examples of thesis statements by students who took this course in previous years (I have made some minor editorial changes):

- Iran's rich culture, long history and its current position have shaped the modern world in more ways than one. However, as a result of years of prejudice, conflicting beliefs, and poor foreign policy decisions, the Western world has constructed a miseducated and demonizing narrative against Iranian citizens, political figures, and cultural norms. Shirin Neshat stands at a nexus of understanding, in both her personal identity and professional career that has revolutionized Iranian art and the narrative of Iranian women in a collective sense. As a formerly exiled Iranian Muslim woman who chooses not to wear a veil, her perspective is unique and essential for bringing cultural empathy and education to the Western world, as well as bringing a voice to Iranian women in the wake of oppressive gender politics.
- The media in the United States have continued to push the narrative that Iran is a terrorist state, which is inconsistent with the facts. This paper sheds light on the fundamental biases of the media that have allowed for the propagation of false narratives about Iran. To this end, my paper will refer to Antonio Gramsci's concept of 'Cultural Hegemony,' which is how the ruling class exert power through cultural and ideological means, to explore and understand the creation, persistence, and effect of popular opinion.

- In current news, it appears that the United States and Iran are constantly close to being at war with one another. However, this was not always the case. Prior to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the U.S. and Iran enjoyed good relations. Since the Revolution, these relations have rapidly deteriorated and there appears to be no light at the end of the tunnel. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the efforts made by Iran in improving relations with the U.S. and examine how the U.S. has consistently rejected these efforts and imposed policies that even further inhibit diplomatic relations between the nations.
- The economic sanctions on Iran implemented by the United States, European Union and the United Nations have cost the U.S. billions of dollars and failed to accomplish the intended foreign policy goals. In addition, said sanctions have adversely affected the most vulnerable members of Iranian society by severely decreasing the availability and affordability of necessary healthcare options.
- The current relationship between Iran and China could have consequential effects in the future. These relations, as well as Iran's controversial history, have resulted in the involvement of the most powerful countries in the world. For the past few decades, the United States has implemented sanctions on Iran's economy and nuclear program, which has severely affected the abilities of other countries to utilize Iran's resources and location. Despite the reluctant complicity of many countries in the imposed US sanctions on Iran, China has continued to have a large presence in maintaining the Iranian economy due to larger ambitions of the Belt and Road Initiative Megaproject [the "New Silk Road."]. If this project materializes, the economic effects for China will be profound; however, this progress is currently being slowed by US deterrence.
- The purpose of this paper is to answer three very sharply-focused questions behind the CIA-sponsored coup in Iran in 1953: why it originally took place, how it was executed, and why did it "succeed"?
- Because the United States desire to bomb Iran is based on false assumptions and faulty analysis, it will have detrimental consequences for both countries. Therefore, a more fruitful option would be for the U.S. to instead opt for diplomacy in resolving its conflict with Iran in order to maintain economic and social stability for both sides.
- In an examination of the increased drug use since 1979, it has been determined that even with harsher punishments being implemented for drug possession in Iran, drug trafficking and drug use have continued to worsen since the Iranian Revolution. In addition to these harsher punishments, the government has also taken measures such as welfare and rehabilitation programs to address the situation.
- When the U.S. lost its influence on the Iranian government in 1979, there was a complete animosity towards each other from both sides. Americans have developed an orientalist way of thinking provoked by media outlets, our alliance with Israel, and the misunderstanding of a historical and storied culture because Iran insists on following an independent foreign policy.

3. Annotated Bibliography

Your term paper proposal must have an annotated bibliography. This is a list of 4-5 books, book chapters, articles, etc., that you have carefully read in relation to your term paper, and which address aspects of your thesis question. Here are a couple of links to what an annotated bibliography should look like:

<http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/annotated.html>

<http://libguides.wesleyan.edu/annotbib>