

## Unit 1: Conference Proposal

In Unit 1, you will create the questions that drive your project, invent a tentative thesis, and potentially gain access to the venue at which you may receive feedback: an academic conference. To do this, you must write a **conference proposal**, a 300-600 word description of a research project you are interested in presenting either at the Spring PIT Conference and/or at the Office of Undergraduate Research's annual Undergraduate Research Symposium. This proposal should confidently explain the potential intellectual goal or practical payoff of your research (even if it changes later). It will let your peers know why your work will make a significant contribution to your field.

**Goals:** Learn how to conduct and organize academic research, how to describe and critically interpret scholarly writing, and how to unite these two processes to articulate a project.

See a guide to writing a successful conference proposal: <http://pitstop.web.unc.edu/proposal-guide/>

See sample proposals: <http://pitstop.web.unc.edu/handouts/sample-proposals/>

See a past PIT Call for Papers: <http://pitjournal.unc.edu/cfp/fall-2012>

**Rhetorical Chart**

| Genre               | Purpose                                                                                                                                                                           | Audience                  | Role            | Rhetorical Situation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Conference proposal | Suggest a research project to present at the PIT Conference; show the conference organizers that you have an interesting topic and an effective, original approach to that topic. | PIT Conference organizers | Student scholar | You've begun a fascinating research project and want to get feedback from other scholars at the PIT Conference, so you must submit a proposal. By writing this, you will learn how to find information about questions that superiors in any profession may expect you to investigate. You will also learn how to propose long-term projects in a |

### FEEDER #1: Source Map

This first feeder is a tool I like to call a "source map." When I'm beginning a research project, I find that this helps me keep a tight leash on the many books and articles I'll encounter. The source map is a basic MLA-style bibliography—you may know it as a "works cited"—organized by research questions that function as sub-headings. By creating this space and allowing it to grow over the course of the semester by adding sources and fine-tuning questions, you will gain a clear sense of direction as you explore your topic.

See a model source map here: <http://pitstop.web.unc.edu/files/2012/07/Engel-Source-Map.docx>

This is one of my own source maps; notice how many branches it can have. This is your research sandbox! As you make progress, you will find certain lines of questioning useful and fascinating, and as you answer these questions, new ones will arise; others will wither away, and this is fine.

#### What to Do:

1. Invent at least one main research question, and make this large and prominent on your page.
2. Choose two or three supporting questions, or simply themes that will help you investigate your

main question. For example: If your main research question is “Was William Shakespeare the real author of the plays attributed to him?” then your supporting questions might be (1) “According to scholars, who else might have written the plays?” (2) “What evidence is there in the plays themselves about who wrote them?” and (3) “What historical evidence (outside the plays) is there about who wrote the plays?”

3. Collect at least five promising sources. Cite them in correct MLA style.
4. Place the sources under the questions or themes you believe they will help address. You DO NOT have to read the sources in their entirety for this; skim them or read their abstracts (summaries), or even just use the titles to determine how they *may* contribute to your project. However, you will read the sources for the next feeder, so you can get a head start if you’d like.
5. If necessary, add notes about the physical location of these sources underneath their citations: library call numbers, websites, etc. I like to put these in parentheses, since they’re not part of the MLA citation.

### Questions you may have:

*Does this mean I have to choose one topic already?*

Not necessarily. You should aim to have the general shape of your project in mind, and the bibliography can be a bit explorative at first. You may also bring “options” to the table for next class (in terms of sources), and your group members will help you narrow down your sources.

*I have never cited using MLA before. What am I supposed to do?*

Check Purdue’s Online Writing Lab (OWL) Tutorial: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/05/>. Or, try the library’s Citation Builder: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/house/citationbuilder/> (make sure to select MLA style). Your group mates will also help proofread your first draft’s citations.

**DUE: Friday, January 22**

## FEEDER #2: Progressive Annotated Bibliography

In our first feeder, you prepared a bibliography. In this feeder, you will add annotations. Like a regular bibliography, an annotated bibliography contains citations that reference sources—in this case, sources that you plan to use and/or sources you think you might use. “Progressive” means that instead of waiting until you finish the project to create the bibliography you start it much earlier, during the research phase of your project, and that you update it little by little as you collect more sources, discard some of your original sources, and figure out the scholarly conversation that surrounds your topic. Annotations are brief paragraphs that you write to describe the citation.

### The annotation under each citation should include:

1. A short **summary** (3-4 sentences) of the source. Your summary should include the main claim (s) of the source, and the information that will be useful for your research (these are not necessarily the same).
2. A short **evaluation** (2-3 sentences) of the source. Follow the UNC Writing Center’s guidelines for evaluative annotations:
  - Evaluate the source or author critically (biases, lack of evidence, objective, etc.).
  - Show how the work may or may not be useful for a particular field of study or audience.
  - Explain how you may use this work in your own project.

***Citations must be in proper MLA style with all necessary information.***

See the Writing Center handout for tips: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/annotated-bibliographies/>  
Submit the final version of your annotated bibliography to the Dropbox on our course website.

Note: Your source map is designed to keep track of your research questions, their relation to sources, and the physical location of materials. This is distinct from the annotated bibliography, which helps you to contextualize sources and remember their content. Therefore, you should *keep both of these as two separate documents* that you'll update throughout the semester.

**DUE: Friday, January 29 (draft with 3 sources, including at least 2 scholarly sources); Wednesday, February 3 (final version with 5-6 sources, including at least 4 scholarly sources)**  
*(to be updated throughout the semester and submitted a third time during Unit 3)*

## **UNIT PROJECT: Conference Proposal**

Your proposal should meet the requirements of the PIT Call for Papers and be designed to make the conference organizers want to include your presentation. It should have three parts: contextualization (background information), your claim (your answer to your research question), and impact (how your claim relates to a current academic debate, and why your claim is important). Make sure your proposal follows proper MLA citation guidelines. See the OWL website for help with this: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/05/>.

### **What to do:**

1. Read a past PIT Call for Papers here: <http://pitjournal.unc.edu/cfp/fall-2012> (a new CFP is coming out soon)
2. Read handout "How to Write a Successful Conference Proposal" under Handouts on the course website. You may also wish to look at "Three Sample Conference Proposals" written by actual researchers, also under Handouts.
3. Write a conference proposal of 300-600 words in reply to the PIT Conference Call for Papers.
4. Submit all drafts by the beginning of class on the dates listed below, and submit the final version to the Dropbox by the start of class on 2/12.

**DUE: Monday, February 8 (draft); Friday, February 12 (final version)**