Overview

• Discuss role of academic conferences
• Explain goals of conference proposals
• Review strategies for writing proposals
Academic Conferences

• Conferences are important outlets for discussing nascent or early research
Academic Conferences

• Most conference presentations discuss research that has already been conducted but has yet to be translated into a formal publication
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• Many publications begin as conference presentations
Academic Conferences

• Discussing early research can help you get feedback

• Hearing early research can highlight new trends

• Also provide networking opportunities
Conference Themes

• Most conferences revolve around a theme

• Theme = a foundational premise that will tie together all presentations and sessions

• Themes can be single ideas, specific events, or keystone authors
Conference Themes

• A theme is often discussed in the initial CFP and/or chair’s address

• Sometimes the theme is discussed directly

• Sometimes the theme is implied in how the chair contextualizes the conference
Conference Themes

• Here are two important lessons about conference themes
Conference Themes

• First: conference organizers really like their themes

• Second: many times, conference organizers don’t really know what their theme means
Conference Themes

• A proposal needs to explain how you are defining and/or applying a theme within your research

• Show how your research can help expand a conference theme (not just repeat a theme)
Lastly, you need to explain the structure of your presentation.

How will your presentation engage with the ideas you’ve put forth?

What evidence, methods, guiding questions, and findings will you discuss?
Writing a Proposal

- Length varies between 200-500 words
- Word lengths are usually outlined in the CFP
- Pay attention to different word counts for different proposals (such as roundtables vs individual presentations)