

## URS Thesis Proposal Example – Creative Works

Download a blank URS Application Planning Template to draft your proposal here:

<http://tx.ag/2526URSPlanningTemplate>

Refer to the **Application Instructions & Examples Guide** for content requirements expectations.

### Section 1: Contact Information

#### Student Applicant

Aggie First	Click or tap here to enter text.	Aggie Last	123456789
<i>First Name</i>	<i>Middle Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>9-digit UIN</i>

#### Check Thesis Type

- ☐ Team Thesis (Up to 5 Members)
 ☒ Individual Thesis

#### Faculty Advisor(s)

##### PRIMARY ADVISOR:

Advisor First	Advisor Last	DEPT	advisor@tamu.edu
<i>First Name (and Middle Initial)</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Email Address</i>

##### SECONDARY ADVISOR (IF APPLICABLE):

Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
<i>First Name (and Middle Initial)</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Email Address</i>

##### TERTIARY ADVISOR (IF APPLICABLE):

Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
<i>First Name (and Middle Initial)</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Email Address</i>

## **Section 2: Proposal**

### *Section 2.1: Project Summary*

#### **PROPOSAL TITLE:**

Grief and Trauma

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#### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The aim of this project is to explore and understand the complexities of grief at an age where death seems improbable through review of existing literature and the first ten chapters of a novel, *The Sticky Note Wall*. Though the death in this work is not caused by COVID-19, the pandemic environment surrounding the narrative is integral to its development. The world—particularly the United States with its taboo death culture—has been forced to confront what it truly means to be human in the wake of a global health emergency. In a post-pandemic society grappling with a plethora of death and collective trauma, it is paramount that discussions of loss, grief, and growth take place, particularly in regards to the construction of memory. As artists and researchers grapple with the implications of COVID-19, both ethically and creatively, post-pandemic media remains in its limbo as humanity decides how it will construct and address the narrative of our collective trauma. *The Sticky Note Wall* will work to explore this phenomenon through the eyes of a young girl undergoing immense life changes (college, career struggles, relationships, etc.) in the midst of unprecedented circumstances: a global pandemic and the unexpected loss of a close friend.

## Section 2.2: Introduction

How we discuss, record, and create memories surrounding loss and trauma are directly into the concept of legacy. The exploration of the field of rhetoric and memory has a plethora of preexisting research. Traditional trauma scholarship by powerhouses such as Cathy Caruth explored the media and linguistic effects of trauma and the intersection of group experience on the individual psyche, leaning heavily on psychoanalysis and fragmentation (Balaev 363). New scholarship sought to expand the traditional Freudian-Caruthian model by exploring the diversity of traumatic experiences, viewing trauma as fluid rather than a static experience, and examining the intersection of individual and collective experiences (Balaev 366-367). Through affect theory, we can observe a similar interplay between the memory externalization in the public sphere and emotional internalization in the private one (Pruchnic 484).

Though memory has been studied since Aristotle (Pruchnic 481), and the roles of trauma and loss on memory have been examined for almost just as long, this field is now more relevant than ever as society comes to terms with the history-altering events of the last few years, not to mention the events of the 21st century. With the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the 2008 global recession, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the attacks of January 6th, it is more critical than ever before to study how we communicate our feelings and experiences as both individuals and as a society. The neglect of this task may result in the irreversible consequences of repressed trauma, the oppression of marginalized groups, and the repetition of our past mistakes.

The Sticky Note Wall looks to explore how individual and collective memory is shaped and shaped by traumatic experiences through the lens of an 18-year-old girl named Lauren. Entering college in the fall of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Lauren must grapple with her ascent into adulthood while processing the loss of her close friend during her senior year of high school. Through a writing assignment for her English class, she begins to examine her emotions regarding death, quarantine, loss, and young adulthood.

Told in a cyclical fashion with two storylines—one in the first person point of view of Lauren in real time, the other through third person point of view as a character in Lauren’s assignment—the structure of The Sticky Note Wall inherently relies on trauma scholarship in order to creatively demonstrate a personal experience of reliving and reenacting past memories (Balaev 367).

***Section 2.3: Objective(s)/Goal(s)***

The goal of this project is to investigate the effects of trauma and tragedy on the rhetorical formation of memory, with particular focus on the grieving process. Through the examination of academic articles and literary sources, I will work to identify key components of memory, assess the role of trauma in changing the memory process, evaluate public responses to tragedy, and recommend potential solutions to issues associated with this process. I hope to shed more light on the processing of trauma and the making of memory and gain relevant insight for a world stricken by profound loss in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in regards to young adults.

***Section 2.4: Methodology/Theoretical Framework***

The creative artifact will be informed by the portrayals of mourning, descriptions of the perception of time, and examples of the construction of both public and private memory throughout the grieving process analyzed through the lens of pluralistic trauma theory and affect theory throughout the research process. Resources that will be used to support the creative artifact include, but are not limited to: ten fiction books, two to three psychology books, history texts, social media samples, newspapers, and scholarly articles. These resources are critical in order to craft a more authentic, accurate protagonist, as well as to lend scholarly weight and consistency to an emotional, sporadic, individualized experience. Understanding how media displays grief is vital to the exploration of how memory is made, and history written.

**Section 2.5: Bibliography/References/Works Cited****MLA (MODERN LANGUAGES ASSOCIATION) EXAMPLE**

Mathis, Carlton et al. "What Prevents Business Faculty and Students from Participating in Undergraduate Research?" *Council on Undergraduate Research Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2015, 35-41.

**APA (AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION) EXAMPLE**

Mathis, C., Ramos, H., Gonzalez, E., & Datta, S. (2015). What prevents business faculty and students from participating in undergraduate research? *Council on Undergraduate Research Quarterly Council on Undergraduate Research Quarterly*, 35(4), 35-41.

**CHICAGO EXAMPLE**

Mathis, Carlton et al., "What Prevents Business Faculty and Students from Participating in Undergraduate Research?" *Council on Undergraduate Research Quarterly* 35, no.4 (2015): 35-41, accessed June 15, 2023, <https://www.cur.org/what/publications/journals/curq/issues/>.

## Section 5: Contingency Plan

### *Section 5: Contingency Plan*

The issue that I foresee most impacting my research and creative work is the loss of access to my research materials such as books and papers due to unforeseen circumstances (ex: pandemic outbreak, construction, weather emergency, etc.). This also applies to Amazon/other mainstream means of acquiring books such as Barnes and Noble shipping, which while a good option to obtain copies of books if there is no library present, are often affected by supply chain disruptions or delays. In order to mitigate this unfortunate scenario, I would rely on online access through the university databases. The Internet is often a resource that is given priority in emergency situations, so utilizing digital copies of texts would be feasible and likely. If there was a pandemic outbreak similar to that of 2020 and we had to move to an online school/presentation format, I would adapt my project to fit the online medium and still showcase my work at a high level. This would include scheduling Zoom sessions to conduct live readings, creating a PowerPoint presentation that could be shared as a visual aid, and posting videos of myself reading snippets of work to my own social media accounts/website. In the instance that I am unable to thoroughly analyze all of my planned sources or reach my intended conclusion, I will adapt my expectations and my research aims. This might look like a broader analysis of the rhetoric of memory, shrinking my pool of sources, or a response to the aspects of my research that I was unable to answer or locate. While my creative artifact will stay the same, my research question will change. With these changes the creative artifact will be influenced in a slightly different way but will retain the same basic plot points and goals. As change and discovery are some of the best parts of research, I don't see this as a hindrance, but rather as an opportunity if we reach that point.

## Section 6: Timeline

### Section 6.1: September and October Goals

#### WEEKLY GOALS: September

- Week 1:
  - Finalize and submit URS Application
  - Complete research compliance training
- Week 2:
  - Wait to receive application comments/revise application
  - Continue preliminary literature review work
- Week 3:
  - Wait to receive application comments/revise application
  - Schedule recurring meetings with advisor
- Week 4:
  - Read/analyze research material (in order below)
    - Phillips' *Framing Public Memory*
    - "The future of forgetting: memory, public, affect"
    - Sanders' *1919: The Year that Changed America*
    - Hayslip's *Death and Dying*

#### WEEKLY GOALS: October

- Week 1:
  - Continue literature review and artifact planning
  - Review URS Canvas Community and mark requirements/deadlines in calendar
- Week 2:
  - Read/analyze research material (in order below)
    - "The Archival Anatomy of Disaster"
    - Kubler-Ross's *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*
    - Other sources as needed/as discovered
  - Review URS Canvas Modules and choose a URS Template
- Week 3:
  - Attend URS group check-in meeting
  - Begin drafting thesis outline
- Week 4:
  - Begin writing abstract and aesthetic motivation/research questions
  - Send thesis outline draft to advisor
  - Write abstract, research question, historical contexts sections by the end of October.



## Section 6.2: November and December Goals

### WEEKLY GOALS: November

- Week 1:
  - Submit URS Orientation Module Quiz on Canvas
  - Begin to wrap up research and analysis
- Week 2:
  - Review Canvas Formatting Modules to prepare for upcoming group check-in meeting and formatting quiz
  - Attend URS group check-in meeting
  - Start to focus on creative artifact development and possible exhibit options
- Week 3:
  - Start preparing fall progress report
  - Complete the Thesis Formatting Module on Canvas
  - Finish reviewing all sources and begin organizing citations
- Week 4:
  - Conclude any pending research, wrap up literature review, motivations, and historical background.
  - Write Explanation of Exhibit, works cited, and acknowledgements by end of November
  - Thanksgiving Break

### WEEKLY GOALS: December

- Week 1:
  - Attend Writing Productivity Workshop
  - Send draft to advisor before Winter Break
- Week 2:
  - Submit Fall Progress Report on Canvas
  - Continue developing artifact and exhibit
  - Balance finals/final paper with URS obligations
- Week 3: Winter Break
  - Continue work on creative artifact and revise over winter break
  - Work on Aesthetic Motivation and Research Question section of thesis
- Week 4: Winter Break
  - Continue work on creative artifact and revise over winter break

## Section 6.3: January and February Goals

### WEEKLY GOALS: January

- Week 1:
  - Winter Break
  - Continue writing. Goal: 30 minutes per day
- Week 2:
  - Schedule recurring meeting with Advisor: Mondays at 1 pm over Zoom with Dr. Aggie
  - Confirm plans to present with advisor
  - Attend Writing Abstracts Workshop
  - Revisit thesis draft and prepare for first installment deadline
- Week 3:
  - Attend URS group check-in meeting
  - Finalize draft abstract and register for the URS Symposium
  - Creative Artifact: Revise Chapters 1-5
  - Finish Historical Context, Disciplinary Paradigms, and Aesthetic Standards section of thesis
- Week 4:
  - Continue working on and revising thesis draft
  - Send current thesis draft to advisor before installment deadline
  - Begin working on presentation draft for URS Symposium

### WEEKLY GOALS: February

- Week 1:
  - Submit Installment 1 and revise as requested
  - Submit spring Progress Report 1
  - Send presentation draft to advisor for feedback.
  - Recurring meetings with advisor: Mondays at 1 pm over Zoom with Dr. Aggie. We will discuss my progress and any questions I might have.
- Week 2:
  - Finalize URS Symposium presentation and print poster
  - Creative Artifact: Revise Chapters 6-10
  - Work on Reflection section of thesis
  - Prepare material and practice public speaking for URS
- Week 3:
  - Present at the URS Symposium
  - Continue formatting citations
  - Continue working on and revising thesis draft
- Week 4:
  - Prepare final figures and captions
  - Send current thesis draft to advisor before installment deadline
  - Attend URS Drop-in Session for thesis formatting help

**Section 6.4: March and April Goals****IMPORTANT DATES:**

- Due April 1, 2026 at 9:00 AM: Final Thesis submission and Faculty Advisor approval.
- Due April 15, 2026 at 5:00 PM: Public presentation and presentation report deadline

**WEEKLY GOALS: March**

- Week 1:
  - Submit Installment 2 and revise as requested
  - Submit spring Progress Report 2
  - Meet advisor for thesis proofing and feedback session
  - Finalize thesis sections and creative artifact
- Week 2:
  - Spring Break
  - Edit and revise final thesis draft
  - Incorporate all suggested formatting edits and finalize thesis document
- Week 3:
  - Submit Presentation Report
  - Attend second spring URS group check-in meeting
  - Send final thesis draft to faculty advisor by March 18 and complete suggested edits
- Week 4:
  - Finalize thesis and incorporate new edits
  - Review draft one last time and re-check formatting

**WEEKLY GOALS: April**

- Week 1:
  - Attend Drop-in Sessions for help with thesis
  - Submit final thesis to Canvas by April 1
- Week 2:
  - Final thesis document formatting check, fix document formatting as requested
- Week 3:
  - Make sure Presentation Report is submitted
  - Complete program