The Evergreen State College
Graduate Program on the Environment
Thesis Prospectus

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STUDENT AGREEMENT:

SIGNATURE: *Jessica Kudlinski*   **DATE___12/06/2019___**

FACULTY READER APPROVAL:

SIGNATURE: _____   **DATE_____**

MES DIRECTOR APPROVAL:

SIGNATURE:_____   **DATE_____**

1) **Provide the working title of your thesis[1].**

   Case Study: The Impacts on Consumer Choices Following Kent Plastic Bag Ordinance

2) **In 250 words or less, summarize the key background information needed to understand your research problem and question.**

   Viewed as a persistent pollutant, plastics persist in the environment and food chains across the world (Andrady, 2011; Cole, Lindeque, Halsband, & Galloway, 2011).

Primarily produced from refined oil to be highly durable while cheap in cost, plastic materials are ubiquitous and damaging to the environment (Derraik, 2002). In 2012, Robb Krehbiel at Environment Washington Research and Policy Center conducted a study finding that in Washington, more than 2 billion plastic bags are used each year, with 25 million of those bags contributing to local pollution.

Plastics don't biodegrade or break down easily but can be weathered over time to break into pieces smaller than 5 mm (millimeters) called microplastics. Both macro- and microplastics have detrimental impacts, including entanglement and ingestion, on organisms, in addition to putting natural resources at risk. Eerkes-Medrano et al. (2019) reviewed studies that reported microplastics in both bottled and tap drinking water. Researchers and organizations are also working to show the public the destructive impacts that the production process of plastics has on the environment and surrounding communities, including air pollution, toxic discharges into waterways, and contribution to climate change (The Story of Stuff, Xanthos & Walker, 2017).

With the increased awareness of the problems around plastic pollution, banning single-use plastics has become a hot topic globally. Although it is important to maintain efforts removing plastic debris from the environment, stopping the initial use and consumption of plastic products can significantly help reduce the frequency of interactions of plastics in the environment.

3) State your research question.

What are the effects of the plastic bag ban on consumer bag choices through grocery and retail stores in Kent, Washington?

4) Situate your research problem within the relevant literature. What is the theoretical and/or practical framework of your research problem?

One theoretical framework that my research relates to is *loss aversion*. Tversky and Kahneman (1991) established this theory where the "losses and disadvantages have [a] greater impact on preferences than gains and advantages" (p. 1039). This is also highlighted in Homonoff (2015), who found that changes in consumer behavior stemmed from the 5-cent tax to disposable bags compared to the 5-cent bonus to bringing reusable bags. My research sits within this theoretical framework as it analyzes the changes consumers make when they are faced with a tax to use a bag that was once free. Loss

aversion sits within a larger framework, cost-benefit analysis, which evaluates the costs against the benefits of an action. Throughout my thesis, I will explore how these theories apply to the individual level of choice, in addition to influencing choices that businesses have to make. Additionally, this research intersects with the frameworks of sustainability and value of the environment for future generations. Restricting the availability of single-use plastic bags reduces the overall consumption of these items, and promotes a 'reduce and reuse' mindset.

5) **Explain the significance of this research problem. Why is this research important? What are the potential contributions of your work? How might your work advance scholarship?**

   Plastic production and the demand for virgin material, petroleum, has increased at an accelerated rate since the 1950s, and half of the total plastic produced has only been within the last 15 years (Geyer, Jambeck, & Law, 2017). Plastics have been repeatedly reported to have negative impacts on the environment, numerous organisms, and natural resources (Cole, Lindeque, Halsband, & Galloway, 2011; Gall & Thompson, 2015; EPA, 2011). Littered plastics break apart and disperse into the environment, then become smaller and smaller creating microplastics. As plastics persist in the environment, organisms can become entangled, ingest particles, and be faced with adverse health effects from plastic toxicity (Derraik, 2002).

   Several regions from a local to national scale have banned single-use plastics in efforts to reduce plastic pollution. The European Union has been without carryout plastic bags for several years and has recently voted to ban the top ten most polluting single-use plastics (Time, 2019). Eight states within the United States have adopted bans on plastic bags, however, some states have voted against these bans (NSCL, 2019). Washington, for example, has more than 20 cities that have implemented a plastic bag ordinance but voted against implementing a state-wide ban in early 2019. In response to this, the City of Kent proposed a bag ban in an attempt to reach litter reduction goals (Single-Use Plastic and Carry Out Ordinance, 2019).

   This thesis work will help Kent council members understand how the implementation of this ban affects consumers' bag choices and decisions around single-use plastic bags. This study has not been done in Kent or other cities within Washington and can help provide insight to other communities looking to propose a bag ban.

6) **Summarize your study design[2]. If applicable, identify the key variables in your study. What is their relationship to each other? For example, which variables are you considering as independent (explanatory) and dependent (response)?**

I plan to perform a mixed methods study, with interviews and an observational design in various stores across the city of Kent, Washington. Kent was chosen based on the new plastic bag ordinance that will be put into effect on March 1, 2020 (Single-Use Plastic and Carryout Bag Ordinance). This study will take place February 2020 through March 2020, allowing for comparison of pre- and post-ban periods. Six small (local/single businesses) and six large (nation- or state-wide chains) grocery stores will be randomly selected within Kent (n=12) for comparison.

Observations for 30 minutes will occur in each store once per week for eight weeks (four weeks both before and after the ban) and will be randomly rotated be ensure observations occur on different times/days of the week to capture a wider range of customers. Current prospective observation days are tentatively set as follows: between 1-10 on Tuesdays, 11-8 on Wednesdays, and 11-8 on Saturdays (or Sundays).

To evaluate changes in bag usage during this study, several variables will be recorded at each store. Some of the independent variables include, but are not limited to, presence of a bagger (also checker or self bagged); payer age range (up to 30, 30-50, 50-70, 70+); basic store information (location; size; type; time; date). The dependent variables for this study are purchased bag type and number used (single-use plastic; reusable paper; reusable plastic), and personal/brought bag type and number used (single-use plastic, reusable paper; reusable plastic; backpack; purse; box; suitcase; other).

For the other part of this study, I will interview stakeholders involved with plastic bag bans within Washington and Kent, in addition to higher level store managers of the locations which I am sampling. These interviews will capture impacts on consumer bags choices, their perceptions and implementation strategies of the plastic bag ordinance, and any trends that fall within the theoretical framework of loss aversion and cost-benefit analysis.

7) **Describe the data that will be the foundation of your thesis. Will you use existing data, or gather new data (or both)? Describe the process of acquiring or collecting data[3].**

Although I will be referring to two previous studies (Homonoff, 2015; Taylor & Villas-Bosas, 2016) and comparing my results to their collected data, I will collect my own data from stores in Kent. I will be sitting near a checkout stand to observe bag usage and record my observations including: number and types of bags used; the presence of a bagger; payer demographics; basic store information. The only equipment I would be needing is a clipboard, data sheets, and writing utensils; I may record my observations electronically using an iPad or computer to incorporate geospatial metadata.

In addition to observational data, I will be coordinating interviews with individuals that manage chosen stores in person (or by phone). I will structure the interviews similar to surveys used in previous studies evaluating plastic bag bans to allow for trends to be identified and compared. To perform interviews I will need to go through the Human Subjects Review Board for approval. Once they are approved, interviews will be scheduled based on the interviewees' availability and thesis timeframe.

8) **Summarize your methods of data analysis. If applicable, discuss specific techniques that you will use to understand the relationships between variables (e.g., interview coding, cost-benefit analysis, specific statistical analyses, spatial analysis) and the steps and tools (e.g., lab equipment, software) that you will take to complete your analyses.**

Based on the type of data I am collecting, I may be using a difference in difference estimation to evaluate the scale of the effects form the new ordinance as it can be compared to other studies (Homonoff, 2015; R. L. C. Taylor, 2019; Taylor & Villas-Bosas, 2016). I chose this method of analysis because it is frequently used to measure the effect of a specific treatment or intervention. This is applicable to this study's purpose of evaluating the effect of the implementation of a plastic bag ban. Interview responses will be analyzed for common themes and contrasting opinions. Various tests can be utilized including paired t-tests, correlation, and linear regression analysis, to look deeper into the data. RStudio and JMP! are available for use on the TESC campus in both Olympia and Tacoma, in addition to my personal computer. ArcGIS Pro will also be used as a spatial reference for store locations and visual effects, however, this study doesn't require heavy geospatial analysis.

9) **Address the ethical issues raised by your thesis work. Include issues such as risks to anyone involved in the research, as well as specific people or groups that might benefit from or be harmed by your thesis work, perhaps depending on**

your results. List any specific reviews you must complete first (e.g., Human Subjects Review or Animal Use Protocol Form), and specific permits or permissions you need to obtain before you begin collecting data (e.g. landowner permissions, agency permits).

Observing people and their actions or behaviors may not put a specific individual at risk of physical harm or injury; nevertheless, it may make someone uncomfortable or feel like they are doing something wrong if they are being watched. Interviews may make individuals feel uneasy if they feel their recorded answers could be traced back to them or be misinterpreted. Transparency and being clear about the expected use of the interview responses, as well as my top priority for privacy, will help address those known concerns. The outcomes from the study may also impact another city's decision to implement a plastic bag ban. Future decisions on bans can impact several stakeholders including business owners, bag distributors, plastic producing companies, recycling and waste management facilities, and customers. It is also important to highlight the impacts on the environment, as a new policy may lessen the number of bags polluted in the environment.

Conducting observational studies may not require an exchange of sensitive, identifiable information, therefore it does not need a Human Subjects Review. Interviews, however, do require a Human Subjects Review. In order to conduct this research, I will also need to connect with the store managers to confirm that I have permission to perform these studies on their premises. Research collected in this study will be used by the City of Kent to understand the changes in consumption of singe-use plastic and reusable bags in response to their upcoming ban.

10) **Reflect on how your positionality as a researcher could affect your results and how you will account for this in the research process[4].**

I have always lived near beaches and aquatic environments that have been littered with plastic. Seeing plastic bags blowing across the sand or tangled in the nearby brush at our local beach has motivated me to understand how plastic pollution impacts the environment, and what can we do to end it.

Although I may have had my own struggles in life, I have been privileged in several ways; my family had a car to take to and from the store so we didn't have to walk with our groceries and we could afford to purchase trash bags. Friends and acquaintances have told me before that these are reasons that they may use or rely on plastic bags free of

charge from a store. We also had several grocery stores nearby and did not have to depend on providing my own resources. In addition to all of this, I grew up in the United States of America, and plastic bag bans are recent compared to those that have been in place in the European Union. Other countries that have been involved in this ban may be more equipped than those in the USA to adjust to the change in available bag options.

I do believe that people should use other options, however, I understand that it may be challenging to not have the option of [free] plastic bags. Even though I may feel that single-use plastics bags are harmful to the environment, I will keep my personal feelings aside and evaluate the study with no bias or favoritism to those bringing their own bags.

While performing my study, quantifiable data will be collected to reduce bias in comparison to evaluating qualitative or subjective interviews. This research has no goal or bias to present specific outcomes; only to communicate changes in consumer use of single-use plastic and alternative bag options.

11) Provide at least a rough estimate of the costs associated with conducting your research. Provide details about each budget item so that the breakdown of the final cost is clear.

  Total estimated expected costs: $350

  (a) Driving to Kent stores for data collection and interviews over 12* weeks:
  > Puyallup (home address) to Kent (city center): 20 miles = one-way [40 miles = trip]
  > # trips per week: 3 days or trips
  > MPG avg highway: 25 mpg
  > Avg gas price per gallon: $3.50
  > *[3 trips/week] x [40 miles/trip] x [1 gal/25 miles] x [$3.50/gal] = $16.80/week*
  > *[$16.80 /week] x [12 weeks] = $201.60 ~ $200*

  (b) Driving between Kent stores for data collection over 12 weeks:
  > Avg driving between stores: About 12 stores (4 per trips/day)
  > Avg length between stores: 5 miles between stores (3 times = 15 miles/trip)
  > *[3 trips/week] x [15 miles/trip] x [1 gal/25 miles] x [$3.50/gal] = $6.30/week*
  > *[$6.30 /week] x [12 weeks] = $75.60 ~ $75*

  (c) Miscellaneous expenses for observational and interview study design: $75 (towards

miscalculations above or unexpected trips between stores; additional printing needs away from campus)

12 weeks allows for interviews to occur outside of the collection window, including addition drives to follow up with Kent Council Members.

12) Provide a detailed working outline of your thesis.

- Cover/Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Key Terms and Definitions
- Abstract
- Introduction
    - Exec summary of paper
        - brief intro
        - methodology used for study
        - highlight few results that stick out most
        - share some conclusions and interpretations of those results
        - where does this fit within larger research and what comes next?
- Literature Review/Background
    - History of plastic production and consumption
        - what are plastics made of; what is their life cycle? (cradle to grave)
        - evolved dependency on plastic products; especially plastic bags
    - Impacts on organisms and the environment
        - entanglement
            - "…animals can become trapped or entangled in derelict plastic bags. Even though plastic bags are single-use, they are quite sturdy and not easily ripped apart. Once a bag has been wrapped around an animal, such as a bag handle caught around their neck, it becomes challenging for it to be removed safely. This can lead to injury, inability to avoid predation or catch prey, malnutrition, and death" (Gall & Thompson, 2015)
        - ingestion
            - plastic bags, pieces, and fragments are ingested often as they are mistaken for prey, or are unknowingly ingested through filter feeding
            - this can cause plastics to be trapped in their air passages, stomach, digestive tracts, and particles could even enter the bloodstream and tissues (Cole, Lindeque, Halsband, & Galloway, 2011; Gall and Thompson 2015)
        - adverse health effects from plastic toxins and contaminants
            - toxins can be transferred from the environment to the

organism, including nano- and microplankton species through toxin contaminated plastic particles; this can also be a problem as plastic particles within an organism are transferred up the food chain between prey-predator relationships (Andrady, 2011)
- habitat loss and destruction from plastic pollution
- Impacts on the economy and community
  - costly to cities for litter maintenance
  - volunteer efforts to clean beaches and local areas (Ocean Conservancy); "Plastic bags were found to be the sixth-most common item collected off beaches worldwide over 25 years of cleanup events by the Ocean Conservancy (Krehbiel, 2011)"
  - material recovery facilities face challenges removing plastic bags that get jammed in the equipment; this can also pose safety risks to the personnel that have to remove the tangled plastics
  - "Ecology's 'Beyond the Curb' study of commingled residential recyclables from the Southwest Region estimates that it takes $700-$1000 per ton for recycling centers to remove plastic bags and films from other recyclables" (Single-Use Plastic and Carry Out Ordinance, 2019)
- Timeline/Evolution of plastic bag ordinances
  - Broad timeline with major turning points for bag bans
  - Plastic bag ban movements
  - Theoretical Frameworks
  - Alternatives to SUP and carryout bags
- Research on bag ban effects
  - What other burdens are created or shifted with ban on single-use plastics bags
  - spillover effects on surrounding communities
- Extended Producer Responsibility
- Conclusions and Research gaps/needs
- Methods
  - Store selection and choice of design
    - large (chain or national store)
    - small (single business or local only)
    - grocery (food convenience, market, grocer)
    - retail (clothing, mixed product, shoe)
  - Data collection methods
    - observational study design
    - variables of interest (bag type; presence of bagger; number of bags used; store information)
    - interviews with: store manager/associate(s), council members, and other stakeholders/organization members
  - Analytical methods

- description of appropriate method based on variable types and how available data meets needed criteria
- Results
  - Pre-ban baseline
  - Post-ban results
- Discussion
  - Discussion of Results and greater implications
  - Limitations of study
  - Future Research
- Conclusion
- Appendix
  - Figures
  - Tables
- References

13) Provide a specific work plan and a timeline for each of the major tasks in the work plan. Be as realistic as you can, even though you will probably need to alter this schedule as you complete the tasks. Remember that faculty readers take time to return your drafts and that the final polishing and formatting of your thesis for binding will take longer than you ever imagined.

*Timeline in tables at end of document; 3 quarter-term tables and 1 schedule table

14) Who, beyond your MES faculty reader, will support your thesis? Indicate support both within and outside of Evergreen. Be specific about who they are and in what capacity they will support your thesis. If you are working with an outside agency or expert, be specific about their expectations for your data analysis or publication of results.

MES Alumna Meara Heubach, an *Environmental Specialist* with Kent City Public Works Engineering, will be a support resource for me during this thesis process. She has put me in connection with a range of individuals including Kent City Councilmember Brenda Fincher, Heather Trim [Zero Waste Washington], and Abbe Gloor [Plastic Ain't Our Bag], to find more insights on plastic bag ordinances and plastic pollution reduction goals. Her colleague, Tony Donati, is also an available resource to answer questions I have regarding the new ordinance in Kent, and how it came to fruition.

This thesis project will be used to evaluate and record the changes in bag usage as a result of the Kent plastic bag ordinance. My methods, study design, and data collection protocol will be shared with Meara so it can be replicated and repeated to continue research and analysis of other stores within the city. I will present the results of this

project to Kent City Council and other Kent community members in March 2021, regardless of the impacts discovered during the study.

15) List the 3-5 most important references you have used to a) identify the specific questions and context of your topic, b) help with issues of research design and analysis, and c) provide a basis for interpretation. For each reference, explain how your project specifically connects to the source by extending, challenging, or responding to the conclusions, methods, or implications.

Derraik, J. G. B. (2002). The pollution of the marine environment by plastic debris: A review. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, *44*(9), 842–852. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0025-326X(02)00220-5

Derraik (2002) is a meta-analysis of available literature on marine plastic pollution, although it is still applicable to freshwater environments. While concluding the findings from his review of the literature, Derraik states that, "*thinking globally and acting locally is a fundamental attitude to reduce such an environmental threat*" (p. 848). While many people, including myself, would generally agree with this statement, it contributes to the idea that the responsibility of managing plastic pollution is on the local municipalities and public consumers. This contrasts with the concept that plastic producers should take more responsibility for addressing the plastic problem, and help manage the waste they've produced.

Homonoff, T. A. (2015). Can small incentives have large effects? The impact of taxes versus bonuses on disposable bag use. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *10*(4), 177–210. https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20150261

Taylor, R. L., & Villas-Boas, S. B. (2016). Bans vs. Fees: Disposable carryout bag policies and bag usage. *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*, *38*(2), 351–372. https://doi.org/10.1093/aepp/ppv025

Both of these studies are important resources for my study design and statistical approach [Homonoff, 2015; Taylor & Villas-Bosas, 2016]. These observational studies analyze the impacts of implementing a plastic bag ban and how consumers respond. The theoretical framework of loss aversion is also highlighted in each of these studies, which points out that people are more likely to change behavior in reaction to a loss rather than a gain. My study would be an attempt to extend the work that these researchers have participated in address the ban of plastic bags in Kent, WA.

References

Andrady, A. L. (2011). Microplastics in the marine environment. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, *62*(8), 1596–1605. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2011.05.030

Cole, M., Lindeque, P., Halsband, C., & Galloway, T. S. (2011). Microplastics as contaminants in the marine environment: A review. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, *62*(12), 2588–2597. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2011.09.025

Derraik, J. G. B. (2002). The pollution of the marine environment by plastic debris: A review. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, *44*(9), 842–852. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0025-326X(02)00220-5

Gall, S. C., & Thompson, R. C. (2015). The impact of debris on marine life. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, *92*(1–2), 170–179. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2014.12.041

Geyer, R., Jambeck, J. R., & Law, K. L. (2017). Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made. *Science Advances*, *3*(7), 25–29. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.1700782

Homonoff, T. A. (2015). Can small incentives have large effects? The impact of taxes versus bonuses on disposable bag use. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *10*(4), 177–210. https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20150261

Single-Use Plastic and Carry Out Ordinance, Cap 8.02, 2019

Taylor, R. L. C. (2019). Bag leakage: The effect of disposable carryout bag regulations on unregulated bags. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, *93*, 254–271. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeem.2019.01.001

Taylor, R. L., & Villas-Boas, S. B. (2016). Bans vs. Fees: Disposable carryout bag policies and bag usage. *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*, *38*(2), 351–372. https://doi.org/10.1093/aepp/ppv025

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1991). Loss Aversion in Riskless Choice: A Reference-Based Model. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 106(4), 1039–1061.

Xanthos, D., & Walker, T. R. (2017). International policies to reduce plastic marine pollution from single-use plastics (plastic bags and microbeads): A review. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, *118*(1–2), 17–26. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2017.02.048

Websites:

NSCL 2019: http://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/plastic-bag-legislation.aspx

Time 2019: https://time.com/5560105/european-union-plastic-ban/

Question #13
Fall 2019 Quarter

	Done	Week	Date	Due	Submit to..	Work on
NOV	X	3-9	3	Full Draft Prospectus	Canvas	*Thesis Prospectus Draft Full Edits
	X	10-16				
	X	17-23	17	Prospectus Draft 2	Thesis Reader and to Canvas	*Thesis Prospectus Draft Full Edits *Abstract Draft
	X		19	Draft Thesis Abstract	In-class Peer Review	*Draft data sheets *Interview Questions
	X	24-30	24	Working Full Draft Lit Review	Canvas	*Human Subjects Review form *Draft Poster
	X		23-30	THANKSGIVING BREAK		*Update all feedback *Finish poster *Mock observation run *Update edits/feedback from Abstract and Lit Review
DEC	X	1-7	5	Final Poster	Canvas	Making edits to data sheet as needed; running prints for Jan
	X	8-14	13	Final Prospectus	Canvas + Thesis Reader	*Edit Lit Review
		15-21				*Analyze results from mock run to test different statistical approaches
		22-28				*Start outlining any limitations or concerns to address in future studies on separate document
		29-31				*Outline any limitations or concerns to address in future studies on separate document

Winter Quarter 2020

	Done	Week	Date	Due	Submit to..	Work on
JAN		1-4				*Presentation filling out *Work on template formatting paper and references
		5-11				*Reference management and in-line citation list
		12-18	17-19	OUT OF TOWN	NO WORK	
		19-25				*Draft Methods
		26-31				*Draft Methods
FEB		1-8				*Data Collection & input data *Methods and other sections edits
		9-15				*Data Collection & input data *Update reference and formatting *Draft Introduction

	Done	Week	Date	Due	Submit to..	Work on
		16-22				*Data Collection & input data *Update and align thesis document formatting
		23-29				*Data Collection & input data
MAR		1-7				*Data Collection & input data *Analyze Feb/pre-ban data *Work on formatting paper and references *Manage visual elements for presentation and appendix
		8-14				*Data Collection & input data *Draft results of pre-ban section
		15-21				*Data Collection & input data *Draft conclusions and interpretations of pre-ban period
		22-28				*Data Collection & input data
		29-31		OUT OF TOWN	NO WORK	*Data Collection (Meara or Dawn cover) & input data

Spring Quarter 2020

	Done	Week	Date	Due	Submit to..	Work on
APR		1-4				*Analyze Mar results & draft in paper *Reference and citation management major review and edit
		5-11	10	Full Draft Thesis	Thesis Reader	*Adjust feedback and edits on rest of thesis for submission
		12-18				*Adjust feedback and edits on rest of thesis for submission
		19-25				*Final formatting of paper
		26-30				*Draft results and conclusion sections
MAY		1-2	1	"Request to Present Thesis Research"	Kevin Francis	*Presentation Draft
			1	*"Request to Extend Thesis Research" IF NEEDED*	Kevin Francis	*Presentation Draft
		3-9				*Finalizing all thesis sections and connecting with reader on feedback *Presentation practice
		10-16				*Presentation practice
		17-23	19-21	Thesis Presentations		
		24-31	26-28	Thesis Presentations		
			29	Final Draft	Thesis Reader	
JUN			5	Final Thesis	MES Office	

[1] You are not locked into this title; its purpose is to help you identify the main point or topic of your thesis at an early stage.

[2] You might discuss selection of case studies, sampling methods, experimental design, and/or specific hypotheses you will test. You should also address any specialized knowledge or skills that are necessary to complete the research.

[3] If you are planning to use existing data, explain the specific source, contact information, arrangement with collaborating agencies, and expectations about use of data and final products of your research. If you are planning to gather new data, describe specific methods, time, place, and equipment that will be required.

[4] Your *positionality as a researcher* refers to the fact that one's "…beliefs, values systems, and moral stances are as fundamentally present and inseparable from the research process as [one]'s physical, virtual, or metaphorical presence when facilitating, participating and/or leading the research project…" (The Weingarten Blog 2017).