Sociology Dissertation

Your proposal should be done using the template on Moodle, and should have four sections: Briefly set out your topic (250 words max) the first section should demonstrate that you have started to look at the academic literature on this topic. But we are not asking you to write much on this, because the focus in this assessment is on the methods themselves – so this section should be no longer than 250 words! Ideally you would also identify some gaps in this literature, to which your question responds – but this is quite difficult to do (particularly in so short a space), so don’t worry if you don’t manage this. Note – you’re qualitative and quantitative mini-proposals may have slightly different questions, but they should be on the same topic. For example, if your topic is stigma around mental health, then your quantitative question might be, ‘Are older people more likely to stigmatize mental health conditions?’, and your qualitative question might be, ‘Does the experience of having a mental health condition differ across different generations?’ As you can see, the topic is the same, even if the questions are slightly different, reflecting the different questions that qualitative and quantitative research can answer. Qualitative mini-proposal (roughly 1,000 words) Qualitative research is anything that doesn’t use numbers – this includes interviews, ethnographies, discourse analysis, social media analysis, and archives, all of which we covered in the autumn term of SO602. (There are many other types of qualitative research that we didn’t cover, and you’re free to choose to use these if you do the necessary reading to understand them).You cannot simply repeat your SO602 qualitative proposal from last term – if you do this, you will fail the assessment. If you want to use the same topic, then your proposal should focus on a different qualitative method (e.g. ethnography, social media analysis) rather than interviews. Or you can simply use a different topic, and choose any qualitative method that you want. Your qualitative mini-proposal should have four parts to it: A question: tell us what your research question is for your qualitative mini-proposal. This should connect to your main topic (that you discussed in part 1), but develop it into a specific question that qualitative research can answer. Justify the design: you need to say which type of qualitative research you want to use (this is likely to be one of the ones you studied last term: Interviews, Ethnography, Discourse analysis, Social media analysis or Archives). And crucially, you need to justify this choice – that is, you need to tell us why this method is best for answering your specific question (this is what we mean by an ‘aligned’ proposal). This is one of the ways in which the proposal differs from the one you did last term, where everyone was using interviews. Explain the practicalities: your proposal needs to be clear – we need to know exactly what you would do! So explain how you would get hold of data (e.g. if you’re doing an ethnography in an organization, how would you get access to this? If you’re doing interviews, how would you get hold of them?). Make sure you explain how this is both practical and ethical for you yourself to do as a third-year student doing a dissertation at Kent – see the week 22 lecture for some tips on numbers of interviews et. Briefly explain what sort of analysis you would do: we went through several different sorts of qualitative analysis with you last term. Explain what sort of analysis you would do, and again, justify why this is the best choice for answering your specific question.You will find that 1,000 words is very short for a qualitative proposal – this is why we call it a mini-proposal! So you will need to be very focused in fitting all of this into such a short space. On the plus side, though, the short length should make it relatively easy for you to do the assessment, and to show us what you have learnt from the course. most interesting (where these differ), and/or (ii) the limitations of one or both of the mini-proposals. Limitations can include anything from the course (the challenges of causality in quantitative research, the difficulties of getting hold of people for qualitative interview research, the practical challenges of doing an ethnography for a student dissertation etc.)