THE ART OF WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT: TIPS, TRICKS, AND TECHNIQUES
GRADGRANTS

- Databases for running searches
- Resources for grant-writing
- One-on-one consultations
  - Proposal consultation appointments
  - Mapping appointments
- Walk-in hours and workshops in SSRC
  - Internal funding
  - Questions
  - Workshops
- SAA Vacancies
- Twitter page with up-to-date funding opportunities @IUGradGrants
Let’s put this into perspective!

You should assume...
- Everyone is going to have good recommendations
- Everyone is going to have an interesting research project
- Everyone is qualified

The reviewers need...
- to be able to set you apart.
- a narrative (what motivates you?).
- to know why you are the perfect person for the research.
Remember that they are not just funding the project, but they are also funding the researcher!
Review *all* of the resources and literature about the specific grant.

- Know the format (length, Font size, etc.)
- Certain grants have specific review criteria (Fulbright, NSF, Boren, Soros, etc.)
Begin with a grabber, Hook ‘em (e.g. anecdote, question, engaging description of a scene).

Provide context (personal/academic) for your interest in doing what you are proposing.

Discuss experiences that have shaped and motivated you.

Explain why those experiences are relevant.
Use active voice.

Show don’t tell!
- Use concrete examples to illustrate your ideas.

Weave a narrative (with relevant material).

If discussing a setback or problem, state the facts then move on to positive statements about what you learned and how you grew from that experience (character arc).

Be sure that the personal statement is part of the total proposal package.
The reviewers need to know:

- Who you are.
- How you think.
- Why your past experiences are what they are.
- Why you are the perfect person to carry out the research.
- How you plan to reach your future goals.
DON’T LET IT HAPPEN TO YOU!

- Pitfalls
  - Whiney tone
  - Fanatical, extremist
  - Be careful with humor and clichés
  - Annotated CV, Chronological life story, resume in sentence form
STRATEGIES FOR UNLOCKING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT POTENTIAL

- **Do not** leave the personal statement until the last moment!!!!!!
- Reflect.
- Outline or draft it out.
- Get feedback (get a writing group going)
  - Don’t wait until you think it’s ready. Just get the feedback!
- Talk it out.
Next semester

- Stay ahead of the game
  - Keep searching databases
  - Start early, make a plan, map out funding opportunities!

- Come in for a one-on-one appointment
- More workshops from GGC

Thank you!