Getting Started on Dissertation Research (890S, Fall 2017)

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This class is about getting you on track for your dissertation. You have begun the shift from a consumer of knowledge to a producer of knowledge. The set of skills that have made you a good consumer will be helpful in being a producer, but there are other skills, typically not taught, that you will need to be successful in research.

Many students have some difficulties with this transition. Many students work hard, but do not work well, resulting in spending much time on tasks that should take little time, tasks that are not important, or paralyzed because they don’t know what to do next.

Much of this course will be about keeping you on track by breaking down your dissertation work into a series of manageable steps.

The schedule for each week will follow:

1) The class will be split into small groups (3 or 4 students). On Wednesdays, you will review your progress with your group and work to develop your tasks for the next week. Your group can meet in social sciences, in the house, or wherever you like… as long as you meet!

2) By Thursday morning, you will enter three tasks into a software the department has developed to keep you on track. You can access this software at: https://focus.ssri.duke.edu

   One of the tasks you put in must be a writing task... it is important to spend some time writing every week.

   I will comment on these tasks by Thursday night.

3) By Monday evening, you will enter the progress you made on that week’s tasks. I will review your progress and enter comments on Tuesday.