Research Proposal

Think of your own self as the primary audience for your Research Proposal. The point of this document is to help you to develop your plan of attack on significant project. With a bit of planning, it can be quite manageable / without, it can be quite overwhelming. The Proposal addresses the four big questions: what, why, when, and how. Of course, the exercise of drafting this proposal will be most useful if you do indeed end up doing the proposed research; however, even if your plans change significantly, I hope that the practice of thinking through these questions will help you to set those new plans.

Title:

General Goal: What do you hope this project will achieve?

Motivation: Why is this interesting /useful?

Context: What's the general background for this project – similar work that has been done, theory and/or experiment? Of course, here at the outset of the project, you won't be in a position to give a *full* answer to this question, but you should be able to give a brief one (and thus begin thinking about how go about researching the deeper answer that would appear in your thesis about a year from now.)

Procedure & Timeline: Think about the main goal of the project and break that down into the smaller steps you'd take to get there. Given that your Sr. Thesis should be drafted about a year from now (next March), you should pace out the steps you'll take.

References: In the course of addressing some of the subjects above, you should look at a few resources (texts, articles, manuals, …); for that matter, as you go ahead and execute your plan, you're going to be gathering and looking at a few more. You certainly don't need to read and digest a whole slew for writing the proposal, but you will want to look to a couple to get a better sense of the motivation, context, and procedure. In addition, at this point it's valuable to do an initial survey of what resources are around. In the proposal therefore, you should cite the resources used to generate the proposal and also indicate what further resources you expect you'll be calling upon.