Thesis!

Getting Started
(and keeping going!)

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Obviously

See Deparmental Models Department

Cultivating the thesis state of mind: don't panic!

(We'll come back to this!)

3

Challenges

- Scale (course paper to thesis; there's a *reason* for the scale—your degree is not just a bunch of courses)
- The known or knowable unknowns (unit models)
- The unknown unknowns (research mazes)
- The adviser relationship (cold calling?)
- The committee (herding cats)

4

Um . . . What's my topic??

- A good topic is:
- **DOABLE** (in dimension and time requirements)
- **RESEARCHABLE** (materials or subjects actually exist for you to research)
- **GUIDABLE** (there is a fit with the person/s available to mentor you)

5

Reduce Stress by Getting Information

- Department or Unit Guidebook?
- Conversation with your adviser
- Look at actual theses or dissertations
- Talk to people who are currently writing them, or have written them

Find out what your model is!

- Department of Models: Masters
  - Exploration, Synthesis and a bit more
  - Long form research essay?
  - Hypothesis—data gathering—conclusion?
  - Case study?
  - Real world practical project report?
- Department of Models: Doctorate—synthesis + original research, breaking new ground

6

Your plan (A)

- How do I find an advisor? (How to avoid cold-calling: the 3-step process)
  - Investigate the possible choices early (2 quarters before)
  - Make an appointment to discuss common interests. Research your idea and come to the meeting with work done. (But: Don't make the ask!)
  - Later: If appropriate, make the ask. (Understand the commitment you're asking for and be grateful.)
- How do I form a committee?
- Things to look for and watch out for (common interests, personality issues, challenge—oh yes, and they write letters, too)

7

Your plan (B)

- The importance of the proposal; it's not just a requirement.
- There may be guidelines.
- Make sure your proposal is a concrete plan, not just ideas to investigate.
- Timetable!
- Make it long and detailed and get feedback from your adviser and readers. (Hound them!)

8

Getting it done (A) Blood-sucking vampires

- I've never done this before.
- I'm not smart enough.
- It's overwhelming.
- Am I on the right track?
- Nobody will read this.
- It's not perfect.

9

Getting it done (B)

Don't despair! There's help.

10

Support: Be Pro-active (a)

Academic Support

- Wrangle your adviser; keep up those regular meetings.
- Writing Support: UCWbL *loves* graduate students. They have grad students to work with you!
- Library Support: they can only help you if you ask (believe it or not! They can help you with things you were too embarrassed to ask about and not make you feel stupid!

11

Support: Be Pro-active (b)

"Mental Health" Support

- Thesis buddies or thesis group
- Physical exercise
- Meditation
- "Get out of your head so you can get back into your head"
- Diet, alcohol & drugs
- Actual mental health resources (University Counseling Services, a division of Student Affairs)

12

Getting it done (C)

Procrastination: DePaul has the guy who "wrote the book"!
(Check out Prof. Joe Ferrari's books.)

13

Reminders: Why you're doing it

- What a CAPSTONE means for your education intellectually: integration of knowledge, taking it to a new level
- LAUNCH for your life plan: status, credentials, employment, earning power
- You will soon arrive at:

14

But really

15