**Introduction and Literature Review Template**

**Introduction to your project:**

* Start with a “hook”
  + Try to capture the attention of the reader and draw them in to your project
  + Something to help generate interest in your topic
* A problem statement explaining:
  + The “puzzle” and your research question(s)
  + General context for your project
  + Brief statement on existing literature
  + Identify the “gap” in the literature and why there is a gap (no data until now, new methodology, new cases etc. )
* How your research fills that gap
* Your thesis statement/ overall argument
* A brief statement on the methodology used
* Any key findings/implications
* For grants/proposals:
  + Why is it important to conduct this research? Why is it important to conduct in now?
  + What are the potential implications: What do you expect to learn from this research? How will it help inform political science or policy makers?
  + Why are you uniquely able to carry out this research? (advanced methods/stats training, new data access, language skills, connections to the country/organization etc.)
  + Put the mission of the grant-issuing institution front and center, ensure your research aligns explicitly with their goals

**Literature review:**

* First paragraph: overview of literature
  + Summarize the overall field and the major trends and themes (these will become your sub-headings)
  + Discuss how it all fits together, what major divides exist, what different fields are saying about it, how use of different methods affects outcomes, etc.
  + Cite all the relevant literature within the main themes: e.g. Most scholars have found/said X about this topic (study 1, study 2, study 3 etc), yet with the new data/method now used, a growing minority of scholars are beginning to say Y about this topic (study 4, study 5 etc.)
* Theme 1: (start furthest/most different from your theme/approach)
  + Topic sentence: overview of theme + subthemes
  + Sub-theme 1.1:
    - Study 1: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
    - Study 2: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
    - Study 3: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
  + Sub-theme 1.2:
    - Study 4: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
    - Study 5: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
  + Sub-theme 1.3:
    - Study 6: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
    - Study 7: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
  + Consider strengths/weaknesses: be liberal when citing previous contributions and considerate when exposing gaps/shortcomings/flaws
  + Transition sentence
* Theme 2: (main counterpart to theme 1, next furthest from your them/approach)
  + Topic sentence: overview of theme + subthemes
  + Sub-theme 2.1:
    - Study 8: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
    - Study 9: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
    - Study 10: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
  + Sub-theme 2.2:
    - Study 11: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
    - Study 12: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
  + Sub-theme 2.3:
    - Study 13: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
    - Study 14: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
  + Consider strengths/weaknesses: be liberal when citing previous contributions and considerate when exposing gaps/shortcomings/flaws
  + Transition sentence
* Theme 3: (closest to your theme/approach, what your project builds most directly out of)
  + Topic sentence: overview of theme + subthemes
  + Sub-theme 3.1:
    - Study 15: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
    - Study 16: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
  + Sub-theme 3.2:
    - Study 17: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
    - Study 18: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
  + Sub-theme 3.3:
    - Study 19: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
    - Study 20: main arguments, findings, methods, data/cases
  + Consider strengths/weaknesses: be liberal when citing previous contributions and considerate when exposing gaps/shortcomings/flaws
  + Transition sentence
* Number of themes, sub-themes, and studies will, of course, vary based on your topic.
* Conclusion paragraph:
  + Summarize major themes again, except with added nuance of your arguments for the previous important contributions and shortcomings.
  + Identify “gap” in greater detail than intro and include a longer explanation of why such a gap persists despite all the previous literature just discussed.
  + How your project fills this gap, in greater detail than intro.
  + Transition to your explanatory argument