# Developing your dissertation and research stream

#### SMS 2017 Doctoral Workshop

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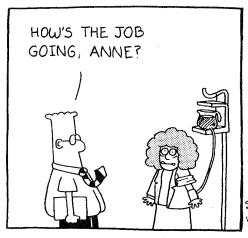
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### It doesn't have to be like this!







### Keeping going: the rest of life

- Find something else consuming
  - Family, partner, rock collecting, sky diving(!)
- Exercise several times a week
  - Better if you can hit something—a tennis ball, punching bag…

## Keeping going: structure your time

- Thirty minutes of writing first thing every day
  - Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day-Joan Bolker
- At least two hours every day
- Make a daily task list and leave when you are done
- End by setting up the next day

### Structure: write in the correct order

- Table of contents
  - Don't re-invent the wheel
- Move from section to section
- Drop things in as they come to you
- Acknowledgements early and often
- Introduction close to last

## Unified or three essay

- Three essay
  - Separate papers for submission
  - At least one paper ready early
- Unified
  - Deeper knowledge
  - Greater long term potential, but more pain

## Writing: don't confuse writing with rewriting

#### Writing

- Write to think, so follow your thoughts
- Exploratory, rapid, sloppy, poor grammar
- Notes to the side
- XXX Williamson 19?? XXX
- Rewrite, rewrite, rewrite
  - Slow, painstaking, perfect grammar, robust text
    - Style--Joseph Williams
    - Writing With Precision--J. Bates
  - Keep a "clippings" file
  - Keep sequential, date-labeled drafts

### Writing: don't worry about the papers

- You don't know what is interesting until you are done (or even after)
- It probably won't break the way you expected, anyway
- The publication payoff probably isn't as good

## Defending the proposal

- When
  - Late
    - Near final negotiation about what needs to be done
    - Possibility of laying a bad foundation
  - Early
    - Get the foundation right and committee on board
    - Can diverge from committee's vision over extended process
- Which to choose
  - Chair preference and local practice
  - Fix the weakness of whichever you choose
- Best chance to get committee excited
- Best chance to get focused input

### The final defense

- No surprises
- Minimal loose ends
- Goal
  - Not "Please, leave me alone and let me start my new job"
  - "You've helped me do something really exciting and important. Let's celebrate it and figure out how to put the final polish on it"
- Take revisions seriously

## Good luck!