Detailed Outline Format for Theses

[This isn’t set in stone, but is a big leap in the right direction. Section and subsection headings are bulleted, advice/commands are *italicized* –LP]

*Front Matter*

*Hardbound cover*

* + Title page
  + Signed committee approvals form
  + Abstract
  + Acknowledgements
  + Table of Contents
  + List of Tables and Figures
* Introduction

*Broad social/research/etc. context of your thesis’s topic*

*Medium scope focus on how your issue is an example within the context*

*Tight focus on your thesis’s specific topic*

*Transition statement to project justification*

* Project Justification

*State the need for a study of this kind*

*State the potential benefits of your study*

*Transition to comprehensive literature review*

* Comprehensive Literature Review

*Connect every theory your study relies on with logical progression*

*Organize the previous studies that touch on your topic*

*Prove that your research question has not been previously answered*

*Transition to research question(s)*

* Research Questions / Hypotheses

*Clearly and simply state exactly what this study investigated*

* Objectives

*The specific steps, in order, which needed to be accomplished one-by-one*

* Timeline

*Table format*

* Journal Article 1

*Pick the target journal before you begin writing this, and format it according to that journal’s Guidelines For Authors*

* + Title
  + Authors and contact information, author of correspondence noted
  + Abstract
  + Keywords
  + Running head
  + Introduction/Succinct Literature Review
  + Methods

*Past tense – the work is already done*

* + - Site description
    - Sampling design

*Sample size, blocking factors, stratification*

* + - Delimitations

*What was excluded from the scope of the study that a reader would credibly expect, and why*

* + - Timeline

*Sentence format, not table format*

*When was the work done? Season? Calendar year? Relative to key characteristics of your study subjects?*

* + - Data collection

*Procedures, tools, and techniques used*

*Processing/error-checking*

* + - Limitations
    - Analyses

*Name the statistical tests*

* + Results and discussion

*Each useful statistic stated with its output values*

*Interpret meaning of statistic*

*Refer to table as needed*

*A few sentences per table to explain what it represents to the reader*

*Repeat for all statistics, tables, charts, and figures you’ve generated*

* + Conclusions
  + Tables
  + Figures
  + Literature Cited

*Only the articles that were used in this article*

* [Journal Article 2]
* Comprehensive Literature Cited

*APA, MLA, Chicago, Turabian, etc. formatted.*

* Appendices
  + Complete Data Tables

*This can be a hundred pages or more*

*Clearly titled, plenty of whitespace, annotated as needed*

* + Survey Instruments

*Copy from the draft you actually printed and used*

* + Survey Protocol

*Copy and paste this from final, approved Human Subject Committee review application*

*Include complete contact script*

* + Survey Protocol
  + Maps

*Title, legend, north arrow, scale bar, relevant features/layers/overlays*

* + Procedure photos

*Illustrate what you did with onsite photos*

*Can be marked-up or plain*

*Always captioned*

* + Diagrams
  + Illustrations