Concept Papers, What’s expected

First, understand that you must turn in a one- or two-page concept paper. The intent of this assignment is to (encourage you to) move you along towards the completion of your research project. Since it’s a concept paper, note that the merits of your research idea will not be graded. That is, this is a required but not graded assignment. Due October 7, 2014.

What’s expected? See Chapter 13 of Dawson and Trapp “Reading the Medical Literature” See the “Information for authors” handouts from the Journal of Endodontics, Pediatric Dentistry, Journal of Periodontology, and American Journal of Orthodontics & Dentofacial Orthopedics. And, of course, talk to the director of your research. What is required in the concept paper is:

1. Title & etc.
   The title should be a short but clear description of your question. Also include your name, program, and the date.

2. Introduction (also called Background and Significance)
   The beginnings of your literature review. This section (of your final thesis) will include a concise review of the background of the subject area. It will include both a description of previous work and how it leads to a rationale for your study. Use the referencing style for the journal in your area.
   Note that on 1 December your complete literature review and clear specific aim(s) are due.

3. Specific Aims (also called Purpose)
   State your question, the purpose of the study. A somewhat vague statement is OK at this point.

4. References (also called Bibliography)
   All papers included in the concept paper need to be fully cited. There is a literature related to your question, begin the process of finding it, digesting it, and including it in your thesis. Use the reference style for the journal in your area.

Looking ahead, your expanded concept paper—really the first draft of your thesis—will include a full “Introduction” section, including full literature review and specific aims. Due December 2, the Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

What is required in the final paper is:

And finally, the “final paper” of this course is the draft of your thesis that includes everything except “Results” and “Discussion.” That is, you’ll have an additional section required in your final paper. For the concept paper, you may be able to include some of this. The final research protocol will have all of the above topics fully addressed, fully fleshed out. Then:
5. **Material and Methods** (also called **Research Design**)

How, exactly, will you perform the study? Where (how) will you get your raw material or subjects? If you have different “treatment” groups, how will this be done? Exactly, how will you measure the variables you need to record? How will you set up the data-collection system to capture the data? What statistical test(s) will you use to answer your question?

The final paper is due on the last day of class, probably the second week of February.