

# TOPIC PROPOSAL

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RESEARCH 101 AND BEYOND



# TOPIC PROPOSAL SECTIONS

## Section #1:

- ▶ Explain the general topic that you ideally wish to pursue and **WHY** it sincerely and legitimately merits attention.
  - ▶ Explain the **larger social significance** of the topic. (See social significance criteria and the senior seminar project requirements.)
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## Section #2:

- ▶ Explain how your proposed topic has **traditionally or typically** been treated by **both MAINSTREAM MEDIA and ACADEMIC research**. You should address the standard approaches and answers which have been communicated in past research. What past research have you consulted? Attach a bibliography/works cited list.
- ▶ Describe what questions or issues have **NOT** been addressed or examined.
- ▶ Then describe what could (and should) be done to address those questions.

## Section #3:

- ▶ THEN, identify and explain the **7-10 questions** that you hope to explore and examine in detail with your proposed topic. **These should be presented as questions and then explained.**
- ▶ Describe what **interesting angles or approaches** could/should be applied to the exploration of the topic.

## Section #4:

- ▶ Describe the end product that you propose to complete: E~Book, Web Documentary, or Film Documentary. Describe **why** and **how** that particular medium would be effective for this topic; also describe your experience working in this medium.
- ▶ Describe whether you hope to be working individually or in a group. If working with a partner or in a group, identify the people you will be working with. Make sure that you've talked with them at length.
- ▶ Explain what **knowledge and skill sets each person would bring to the project**. (So, the knowledge and skills you bring if you are working independently, or what each person brings for a group project.)

# RESEARCH 101:

- ▶ GENUINE CURIOSITY about the topic, issues, people and trends associated with your topic.
- ▶ IDEAL PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS!!!
- ▶ **START CONNECTING** with people and organizations related to your topic.
- ▶ **BIG PICTURE** perspectives
  - Cross-Disciplines AND Across Cultures
  - Across “interpretive communities”
- ▶ **IMPORTANT TERMS/IDEAS, STATS, & QUOTES**
- ▶ **COOL/INTERESTING EXAMPLES of MEDIA THAT YOU’D LIKE TO EMULATE**
- ▶ Things to AVOID and/or Be Aware of:
  - ▶ Your EGO and your **FEARS**.
  - ▶ Digital **Tunnel Vision** → *information confirmation bias (filter bubbles)*.
  - ▶ Bi-polar (or “polarized”) Thinking (**Either/Or Complex**)
  - ▶ Short-sighted **Single-Sided-Answers** to complex problems
  - ▶ The bias of Busine**\$\$** and Technological imperatives



# Media FRAMES, Stereotypes, Skins... And CRAP DETECTION

✓ **FIND, READ, LISTEN TO, & SCREEN** a **WIDE** range of media articles, essays, documentaries, blogs, podcasts, video clips, etc.

✓ **MAINSTREAM MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS—TYPICAL? REPEATEDLY?**

- How is your topic **TYPICALLY** and **REPEATEDLY** presented/conveyed by mainstream media? (Think about visuals, concepts, headlines, people, events, etc. )
- What **PATTERNS** of representation appear to be utilized?
- **WHO** tends to get **privileged, profiled, quoted** or put on a pedestal?
- What aspects of your topic tend to get **LEFT OUT** and/or **MARGINALIZED**?
- How frequently is the topic examined or covered?

✓ **STORY FRAMES → STEREOTYPES → AGENDAS?**

- What are the typical **STORY FRAMES** or **ANGLES of APPROACH** in addressing your topic?
- **POLARIZATION?** What are the ways in which the topic is **POLARIZED** or presented as an **either/or** set of issues?
- Who makes up the **AGENDA SETTERS**, **knowledge monopolies** or **cultural POWER BROKERS** associated with this topic? (Particular types of people, types of organizations, media producers, companies, governments, etc.)
- What are the **TYPICAL** and **STEREOTYPICAL** images, icons, headlines, or graphics which illustrate and/or frequently accompany any story associated with your topic?
- What types of **QUOTES** or **STATISTICS** are used to simplify or give meaning to issues related to the topic?



# Symbolic, Communicative, & MEDIA Perspectives

## 1. LANGUAGE

- What are the WORDS, terms, phrasings, and expressions are typically used to describe the topic and associated issues?
- Technical terminology???

## 2. SYMBOLS and SYMBOL SYSTEMS?

- What types of major and minor symbols (or symbol systems) are used to communicate ideas about this topic?
- Graphic designs + Infographics
- Illustrations + Other imagery?

## 3. MEDIA TYPES & New Technologies → YouTube, IG, Tiktok, VR/AR

## 4. New Behaviors and/or Beliefs, Values, Priorities of living?

- What types of media devices are traditionally used to communicate ideas about the topic?
- How do new media change behavior related to this topic?

# Historical Perspectives

## **1.LONG-TERM TRENDS-Movements?**

- How is the topic/subject part of a longer trend or set of patterns over time (decades, centuries,...)?

## **2.LANDMARK EVENTS?**

- What landmark events or transitions are part of the larger “stories” related to the topic/issue?

## **3.CENTRAL FIGURES?**

- Who are the central figures associated with the evolution of the topic/issue?

## **4.Paradigm Shifts?**

- New/different ways of thinking or approaching?

