Getting Started on Your Thesis

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Questions to Consider…

- How does a thesis differ from other research, writing or design projects that you have completed in the past?
- What are your faculty and/or departmental expectations for thesis?
- What are your own expectations?
- What is your timeline for completion?
- How does thesis fit into the rest of your course work and program?
Choosing a Topic

- What interests you?
- What do you want to know more about?
- What does your faculty recommend?
- What is a current topic of interest in major journals/publications in your area?
- What is it possible for you to undertake and complete in 4 semesters?
Suggestions for Articulating a Topic

- **Name your topic**
  - the relationship between color and texture on leaves in the tropics

- **State what you hope to discover**
  - how to convey that visual complexity through designing fabric… “

- **Why/ How it’s significant to you or other designers**
  - To inspire others to appreciate this complexity in design.
A simplified heuristic

- **Name your topic**
  - To analyze apparel merchandizing networks in Northeastern India

- **State your indirect question**
  - To understand better how kinship and family networks advance regional commerce

- **State how the answer to your question will help to answer something important or significant.**
  - And thus affect international distribution and supply systems.
Write out answers to these questions

- What is the purpose of my study/project?
- What questions do I need to answer?
- What would a Map of my topic look like? How do the parts relate to each other?
- What sources would help me to answer my question(s)?
- Uncertain about sources? Consult advisors/librarians, published sources.
Define the purposes of your study

- Personal Purposes
  - What are your individual needs, desires, or passions that are motivating you to do this study?

- Practical Purposes
  - What do you hope to accomplish with this research?

- Research Purposes
  - What do you hope to understand or what insight do you hope to gain by doing this research?
Draft Some Questions

- “What happens when…?”
- “What is the relationship between…?”
- “What effect does ________ have on ________ in this context?”
- “What role does ______ play in _____?”
To facilitate this recursive process...

- Analyze what you read.
- Keep reading notes in dedicated files.
- Write FIRST! Use writing to think.
- Talk with peers, professors, and colleagues.
- Keep a thesis journal/portfolio-dedicated to articulating your thought process over time.
- Periodically (monthly) use your journal to outline or sketch the parameters of your project.
Tips for Thesis

- Learn program and faculty expectations
- Consider what drives your interest and will sustain you through a long project
- Read/examine published material in your field
- Consult with librarians and your advisor about sources
- Use the writing tutoring services to brainstorm, organize, write, as well as polish your drafts