
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