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# So how is this going to actually work?

Choose a Theme or Topic Area: read over all of the theme areas in this handout and combine and refine ideas and areas you're interested in to decide on a thematic area you would like to explore.

Develop Questions: Why are you interested in this theme/topic in the first place? What do you know? What do you want to know? What are you curious about, or have always wondered about your topic? These questions will drive the formation of your thesis, which we'll begin Week 6 in the library workshop.

Collect and Record Data: this will be an ongoing process, probably all the way up until you complete your paper.

The evolution of your questions and writing will influence the type and quantity of information you collect as you go forward.

Use Data: You will go back and forth between collecting and using data throughout the project. Not everything you collect will be used—at times you'll discover that you collected the wrong type of information, or a new area opens up in your work that you need to explore.

### Explain and format findings related to

questions: You'll be interpreting, synthesizing, and writing about connections among the information you find that relate to your central questions/thesis.

#### **DUE DATES:**

#### Thursday, February 19th

Bring research sources and notes, along with several questions you've drafted to class.

Friday, February 20th

Thesis question due

Friday, February 27th

Thesis draft one due.

Friday, March 5th

Thesis draft two due. Final due with portfolio on the last day of class

#### Key concepts of the project:

- develop an understanding of the systems and processes underlying effective community action and change.
- understand the role of citizens in the development of community.
- use research and writing to present ideas and reflections in a clear manner.
- critically evaluate, analyze, and interpret various sources of information around a particular topic.
- develop research skills.
- develop expository writing process skills.

### research methods

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There are many approaches to research—an essential part of every business and profession—and many ways to document your findings. You will gather your research in three main ways:

#### Print, historical and statistical research

- What types of information do you need to gather from reading and other forms of library research (books, professional and academic journals, internet, demographic and economic statistics, newspaper archives, photography archives, etc.)?
- What print materials can you gather directly from an organization?
- How can you use research to verify information gathered?
   Observation
- What types of information can you gather through observation?
- How can you verify data gathered through observation?

#### **Interviews and conversation**

- What types of information can you gather through interviews and conversation?
- How can you best decide who to speak with/interview to get a good sample of individuals involved with an organization?
- How can you verify data gathered through these means?

## There are several required sources that you should plan on including in your research project:

- ¤ One text relating to your topic that helps provide context beyond the local level.
- ¤ At least 2 articles from academic journals or professional publications.
- **x** Some form of Primary Source Documentation
  - Photographs
- Maps
- Artwork
- Letters
- Newspapers
- Legal documents: court transcripts, legislation, court papers
- Public Records: birth and death certificates, sale of property
- a An interview with a local person involved in the issue you are researching, or information obtained from attending a meeting or event relating to the topic you are researching.

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The why of your research is the most important part. In developing your thesis question(s), you will be beginning to establish the direction your content will take. Through research and writing, you will be providing an interpretation of the answer to those questions that will need to interest the reader into wanting to discover the answers along with you. We'll brainstorm some questions together, and it's important to begin recording your questions as we go along so that you can begin to develop a strong focus.

# Potential Research Topic Areas

- Public Parks
- Public Space
- Recreation and Leisure Activities
- Pubic Art Program
- Percent for Art Program
- City Government--councils, departments, structure, citizen involvement in, etc.
- Legislation and Acts
- Planning and zoning
- Population growth and distribution
- Public utilities
- Land use and the environment--changes in the land
- Habitat conservation and reclamation
- Water--bodies of water, water systems, water supply, reclamation
- Natural resources: their presence and use/misuse
- Agricultural: migrant workers, farmers, major crops, markets and trade
- Community celebrations
- A particular not-for-profit organization
- A church or religious group
- An ethnic or cultural group
- A particular civic organization
- A public or private organization devoted to music, culture, or art
- Educational institutions and organizations
- Health and Medicine
- Architecture: Commercial, school, home, churches,
- Agriculture: major crops and farmers
- Pivotal Events: the naming of Oly as the Capitol, the Chinese expulsion
- Neighborhood development
- Business and Industry
- Work--domestic, industry, labor, craft, artisans
- Home Life
- Transportation: the railroad , public transportation, personal forms, the highway system
- Interpretive dance. Of course.

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#### Criteria for the

**Assignment**: Questions to ask yourself as you go along, and which will be used to evaluate your work

- Is it interesting--to you, to other students, to the community?
- Is it significant--does it capture key issues, events, people, places, important trends?
- Is it useful--is it an original idea/area of study, or is the same info already out there? To students, teachers, townspeople, people from elsewhere?
- Is it analyzed versus being merely collected?
   Is the commentary and interpretation/organization insightful, accurate, and supported with documentation?
- Is there good organization of information, and is it accessible to the audience for whom it is written?