Picking a Topic and Search Terms

Developing a topic in a research area that you are not familiar with is a challenge. But, what you need to remember is that no matter what major you are studying, ultimately, all human activity has an impact on other human beings. A good place to start to pick a topic to try to think how your field of study have an impact (positive or negative) on humans (indigenous people, minority groups, etc.)

The key to successfully picking a topic is to select one that is not too broad (with 10,000 results) but also not too narrow (with little or no results). If you are trying to pick a topic on a subject you are not familiar with, here are some steps to follow:

- Read the assignment and make sure you understand what it is asking you. If you are not sure, ask your professor to clarify the assignment for you.
- Do some background research on the topic you are interested with.
- Read through your syllabus and textbooks to get inspiration for topics.
- Identify key concepts and keywords while doing background research that you can use later to search for articles on your topic.
- Write a research question that captures the main concepts you want to research.
- Don't be afraid to rewrite or change your research question after learning more about your topic.
- Don't limit yourself to searching only anthropological databases. Anthropology is a multi and cross-disciplinary field, so make sure to check other subject specific databases to find other useful sources in your topic.

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