DEVELOPING YOUR RESEARCH TOPIC

This exercise is designed to help you develop a thoughtful topic for your research assignment. Answer the following questions to help you better understand and refine your thinking about your research topic.

A  WHAT IS THE TOPIC YOU WOULD LIKE TO RESEARCH?

Don’t have a topic? Browse the following online library resources for inspiration: CQ Researcher, Opposing Viewpoints, or World News Digest. You can find links to these sites at http://libguides.lmu.edu/RA-find-a-topic

B  WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THIS TOPIC?

C  THINK ABOUT THESE ELEMENTS OF YOUR TOPIC:

**WHO**
Who is involved? Whom does it affect? Is there a specific population you want to focus on? Who are the primary stakeholders?

**WHAT**
What is the problem or issue?

**WHERE**
Where did it begin? Is there a geographic location you want to focus on? Where does it fall on the moral spectrum (Good/Bad/Just)?

**HOW**
How does one aspect of your topic affect another? How serious is the issue/problem?
Do background reading:

Search Google, Wikipedia, and the online library resources Gale Virtual Reference Library, Credo Reference, Oxford Reference, or Sage Knowledge to find basic background information about your topic and answer the questions below. Links to the online library resources mentioned above can be found here: http://libguides.lmu.edu/FindSources

Did you identify any major concepts or theories related to your topic?

List the concepts or theories here:

Did you see any unfamiliar terminology?

List the unfamiliar terminology here:

Could you identify any scholars or experts who do research on your topic?

List the experts/scholars here:

Did you find any additional keywords to use when you search?

List new keywords here:

Did the articles cite any scholarly sources that would be useful for your research?

List additional sources here:
Using everything that you now know about your topic, create a concept map. To get started, look at the example concept map below. For more examples of concept maps, visit http://libguides.lmu.edu/TopicDevelopment

**EXAMPLE CONCEPT MAP**

**Minimum Wage**

- Company actions
  - Hiring decreases?
  - Reduce hours? (shifts)

- Impact on government programs
  - Raise prices to pass on increases to consumers?
  - Demand for welfare & poverty initiatives
  - Tax impact?

- Impact on workers
  - Working poor = More money? Fewer shifts so no change?
  - “Living Wage” concept
  - Teenagers may not be hired? Do they need higher wages?

**YOUR CONCEPT MAP**
My Written/Oral Assignment is: ____________________________

My research topic is: ____________________________

Instructor Comments:

Most library resources are arranged by subject areas (disciplines), including databases, books and even our Research Guides http://libguides.lmu.edu/