A GENERAL MODEL OF RESEARCH FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY CLASSES
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1. Select a topic
   • Your topic should fall within one of the COAS interdisciplinary themes
   • Choose something that interests you, based on your own experience, inclinations, and/or interests

2. Do background research
   • Find out what others have learned
   • Discover what problems they had in studying your topic

3. Ask a question(s)
   • State your question(s) as clearly as possible—what exactly are you trying to find out?
   • State the goals of your research and describe the data (information) you think you will need to answer your questions. For example, what variables are you going to look at? What do you think they will tell you?

4. Design your research plan
   • Figure out how much time and/or money you have available and how much you will need
   • Determine whether or not you need special equipment or skills to get at the answers—can you do all the work yourself?
   • Determine whether there are ethical concerns—can the research harm anyone? Do you need to develop protocols for confidentiality and protection? Do you need to seek permission from the Internal Review Board (IRB)?
   • Decide on the methods (procedures/steps) you will use
   • Determine the procedures you will use for recording information so that it will make sense later on

5. Collect the data
   • Use the methods and recording procedures you have planned for
   • Be prepared to adjust/revise both methods and procedures if circumstances change or if they do not seem to be getting at the answers you need
   • Watch out for any bias that may creep into your work as you conduct your research

6. Analyze the data
   • Evaluate the information you have gathered—what does it say about your initial question(s)
   • Determine whether or not you need further information

7. Develop a hypothesis or an argument and test it
   • Phrase a possible answer to your initial question(s) based on your research
   • Decide what new data you might need to test that answer and do further research
   • Are there different ways to interpret your results?

8. Summarize your research and generate conclusions
   • State what you did and evaluate whether it was successful—what problems did you encounter in the research process? Did those problems influence the outcome?
   • Give the answer to the question(s) you asked initially, based on your research—were some questions left unanswered? Why?
   • Discuss any new questions that were raised and the best direction for future research—if you were to continue your research on this topic, what would you look at next?

9. Share what you have learned through presentations and/or publication