

Project Memo 1: Student Questionnaire	Due 9/5
Project Memo 2: Researcher Goals Memo	Due 9/19
Project Memo 3: Research Question Memo	Due 9/26
Project Memo 4: Data Memo	Due 10/10
Project Memo 5: Reading List Memo	Due 11/19
Project Memo 6: Project Update	Due 11/28

1. Purpose:

- Each of the Project Memos is designed to break down the process of research design and implementation to keep you moving forward on your research project for the class. They build on each other and build into the Proposal and Final Paper. They also help us to be self-reflexive and aware of different aspects of the research process: coming up with a focused question, finding and working with primary data, and drawing upon and placing your project within the secondary literature.
- The Research Question memo will be shared with the class in a workshop to provide peer feedback.

2. Submission/ Format:

- All project memos are required. For late memos, unless an extension is arranged prior to the deadline, 1/3 letter grade will be taken off for each day past the deadline.
- All project memos should be **submitted online** by the deadline noted below, normally Tuesdays at 2pm.

3. Feedback/ Evaluation:

- Memos #1 and #2, and #6 are graded no credit / full credit (if turned in on time with a reasonable effort).
- Memos #3-5 are letter graded. Memo #6 (Reading List) counts for about 3 times as many points as the other memos.
- I will provide oral and/or written feedback on Memos #2-5 promptly to enable you to take the feedback into account for your next assignment.

4. Content:

Project Memo 1: Student Questionnaire

Due 9/5, 10p

Complete the Student Questionnaire that is available through a link on the course website assignment.

Project Memo 2: Researcher Goals Memo

Due 9/19, 2p

Complete exercise 2.1 in Maxwell, in Chapter 2. Focus on identifying the personal goals, feelings, experiences, and assumptions underlying your likely research paper for this class and/or your likely thesis project (make it clear which, and of course, start by stating the topic/ question/ puzzle/ problem you are thinking about focusing on). In addition to the prompt in exercise 2.1, make sure to **differentiate personal, practical, and intellectual goals** as Maxwell explains them, to the extent that any of those are at play. Conclude by discussing possible advantages, disadvantages, or biases that your personal “background package” might present to the research project. Memos should be 1.5-2 pages, single-spaced.

*Project Memo 3: Research Question Memo**Due 9/26, 2p*

The purpose of this memo is to take a first stab at articulating a research question for your research project for this class, and give some **background information** on the topic. First, explain what social movement* you expect to focus on, and give some information about it: a basic description of the movement, including its history, participants, goals, etc. Second, explain **why you chose this**. Please include a note about how this may relate to your thesis.

Then, use Exercise 4.1 in Maxwell on Research Questions **to brainstorm both about ideal research questions** (ie, what you would like to do, regardless of practicality), and to offer **1-3 questions of interest to you that you could realistically answer through a semester** worth of research. Finally, list **promising primary and secondary sources** that you could draw upon for the class project. What kind of primary data is available (statistical, archival, interview, observation, sources from the movement itself, etc)? What kind of secondary information is available from news media and academic studies? You don't need to have read or collected these, but you need to have done enough digging to be able to list some specific primary sources and secondary works. If you are considering more than one topic for the project, please choose one and focus on it, then mention briefly at the end what other ideas you are also considering. Although I urged you in class to just pick something as soon as possible and consider it a pilot study, I expect that I will discuss this further one-on-one with many of you after this memo provides a starting point. Memos should be approximately 2 pages, single-spaced.

*Note: your research project for this class does NOT have to be focused on a social movement. If it is not, it must be focused on something you expect will help you develop your thesis. (Actually, even if it is about a social movement, it should be something that will work towards your thesis.) The main objectives of this research paper are (a) to help you explore and develop potential thesis topics; (b) to get hands-on experience with research design and primary data analysis; and (c) to get experience integrating your own research with a secondary literature. Once I have read these memos, we will discuss how to put together a class project that meets all of these goals in a one-on-one meeting.

*Project Memo 4: Data Memo**Due 10/10, 2p*

Decide what sort of data you are going to look at. **Describe this data and why it is appropriate to your question**. Discuss the **accessibility of your data**- is it already available at Harvard's libraries? Is it something you are going to have to find or collect yourself? Do you anticipate any potential difficulties? What are the parameters of what you are going to look at? Ex, if you are looking at newspaper articles, how are you selecting these? Are you searching by keywords? Are you going to have to do some sort of sampling? What time period are you looking at? Are you comparing two sets of data? Looking for change over time? If doing interviews, on what basis will you choose respondents? Regardless of the type of data, the memo should **explicitly discuss the relevant issues on selection/ sampling, and speculate about what kinds of bias those might introduce**. Memos should be approximately 2 pages, single-spaced.

Project Memo 5: Reading List Memo

Due *Sunday* 11/19, 2p

Purpose: A big part of doing new research is determining what has already been done and how that applies to your work and/or how your work fits into that. Without this, it is impossible to explain the significance or contribution of your own research. What have others said about your case (empirical) and topic/question (conceptual/ theoretical)? To give you a head start on the “literature review” part of your paper, you will submit an annotated list of relevant secondary sources that is introduced by a critical overview of the literature. In this assignment, you will identify and discuss the 9-12 most important sources for your topic.

Format: Single-spaced and 11 or 12 point font with standard margins. To cover 9-12 sources plus the overview, it should be approximately 3-5 pages, single-spaced.

The memo consists of two components:

1) Overview: Write approx. 3 paragraphs that take a step back and attempt to describe these works as a body or field (or possibly two fields that your project intersects). How do the works (explicitly or implicitly) converse with one another? Do they offer debates, competing explanations or frameworks? Do they offer insight into different angles of a phenomenon? Can you identify gaps, puzzles, unidentified linkages across literatures, new potential applications, etc.? Where do you (tentatively) see your project fitting into this conversation or field? You are welcome, but not required, to include diagrams that map out the field. (Note: You will probably write this after the source list, but put it first in final draft of the memo that you turn in.)

2) Source List: List each source with a full citation and a 2-4 sentence (or bullet point) annotation that (a) summarizes the relevant findings or argument of the work and (b) identifies how it relates to your project. The 9-12 sources listed must include not fewer than 8 works that are *not listed on the syllabus as course readings*. It should also include any course readings that are substantially relevant to your project. These readings can be academic journal articles or academic books by scholars about relevant research, but not news articles or popular media publications (i.e. Malcolm Gladwell’s *The Tipping Point* does NOT count, but the source research Gladwell cites – like Mark Granovetter’s journal articles on social networks – definitely DO count).

- The Source List should be organized substantively (grouped by topic or perspective) instead of in alphabetical order.

- Please note that 9-12 items is a minimum; you may read and cite as much relevant literature as you would like in your reading list and final paper (but in this assignment try to focus on the core of literature that is most relevant to your empirical case and/or conceptual topic).

- Also note that it may not be necessary to have read the entirety of a book or article to list and discuss it for this assignment. For the purpose of this assignment, you may be able to sufficiently glean the main ideas and relevance of a work by its abstract or introduction.

Evaluation:

Sources: number & appropriateness	20%
Annotations: clear grasp of main ideas and relevance	40%
Overview: cogent description of field(s) and explanation of relationships among sources, including own project	40%

Project Memo 6: Project Update

Due 11/28, 2p

Let me know by email, briefly, how it is going. Outline what you have accomplished since the proposal, any revisions you have made in your project plan, and what you will be working on for the rest of the semester. Any challenges or problems that you've run into? Anything good/rewarding to report?