## Project Purpose and Questions

**By now, you have a project and data and you know your path for this class. The objective of this part is to be clear about the purpose of the project and the questions it answers.**

- (re)Develop your project purpose/motivation
  - Provide examples to explain your motivation
  - What's the benefit of this project?

- What are your research questions?  (See below for assistance)

- Suggest a revised title for your project

**General steps for coming  up with a research question:**

- *Choose an interesting topic.* Start thinking about project ideas. Come up with a list of 2 to 3 areas that are of interest to you. These can be areas of curiosity, topics that you'd like to become more familiar with, or something that may help you get a job that you want.

- *Do some preliminary research on your general topic.* Do a few quick searches in current periodicals, journals, and Google search engine on your topic to see what's already been done and to help you narrow your focus. What issues are scholars and others are discussing, when it comes to your topic? What questions occur to you as you read these articles?

- *Consider your audience.* For most college papers, your audience will be academic, but always keep your audience in mind when narrowing your topic and developing your question. Would that particular audience be interested in the question you are developing?

- *Start asking questions.* Taking into consideration all of the above, start asking yourself open-ended "how" and "why" questions about your general topic.

- *Evaluate your question.* After you've put a question or even a couple of questions down on paper, evaluate these questions to determine whether they would be effective research questions or whether they need more revising and refining.
  - *Is your research question clear?* With so much research available on any given topic, research questions must be as clear as possible in order to be effective in helping the writer direct his or her research.
  - *Is your research question focused?* Research questions must be specific enough to be well covered in the space available.
  - *Is your research question complex?* Research questions should not be answerable with a simple "yes" or "no" or by easily-found facts.  They should, instead, require both research and analysis on the part of the writer. They often begin with "How" or "Why."