# Week 2 | Research Resources, Ethics & Integrity

# (Literature &) Resources Review

This week you should focus on developing your resources review of the field you will be working in.

The *literature* should incorporate a map of the research methods you will use (your 'research design'). If you want to continue working on what you did here for Art + Anthroplogy and/or Curating, you should. If you are starting afresh, then you should follow the same *process* for creating your literature and resources review (which follows now…)

## Research Question

A research question is an itch; doing research is how you scratch that itch.

A good research question, then, is one that is led by your curiosity. The question is how you articulate what motivates you.

You should consider how attempting to answer the question might satisfy your curiosity.

A good research question, however, isn't all about you. A good research question is one that is connected to other lines of inquiry; it is a **hypothesis** that will have a much broader impact. Its impact might be social, political, academic, financial, etc. The **broader significance** of your question should, to some extent, **translate.**

Asking the right question isn't the end of the matter. A good research question is one that leads to further lines of inquiry.

*Your University Login may be required to access this video:*

### What Makes a Good Research Question? (link)

*Prof. Sean Kelly explains creating research questions. Kelly discusses developing the question and processes to create an effective question.*

You want to arrive, finally, at a research question that is a **concise summary** of your inquiry. This will take time. You need to start with one question that really has meaning for you — allow it to open up other sub-questions — then narrow it back down again.

Remember that the question is the first thing that anyone will read in your Research Proposal. The first and last thing *you* write in a Research Proposal, thus, is your Research Question.

*Your University Login may be required to access this video:*

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### Developing Research Questions Skills for Success (link)

*Dr. Jay Lucker explores the process of developing a research project. Lucker explains question formation, hypothesis generation, and methodologies.*

## Minding the Gap

The research gap is something that has not yet been *adequately* addressed in existing knowledge.

Existing knowledge is located in fields; fields are the concern of disciplines.

This might be a gap in the field of contemporary art (practice/theory) or in the field of anthropology. **Ideally**, it will be a gap in *both* fields.

Here are few questions to answer here:

- *What gaps are there in what's currently known/currently practiced about the area you are thinking of?* (Do some preliminary research to find out more).

- *Are these gaps in knowledge worth 'filling'?* (You need to be able to say 'yes' to this with honesty. If they aren't worth filling, do not fill them).

- *What makes the gaps important?* (Moreover, *who* or *what* are they important to?)

These are crucial questions that you need to address as you begin your project. They serve as the main catalyst for focusing your research and finding momentum to get the process rolling.

Remember that identifying a gap will not, in its own right, ensure that your research will be valuable. If you want to consider 'gap spotting' in context, then read this chapter:

Alvesson, M. & Sandberg, J. (2013). A critical evaluation of gap-spotting research: does it lead to interesting theories?. in *Constructing research questions: Doing interesting research* (pp. 38-46). SAGE Publications Ltd, https://www-doi-org.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/10.4135/97814462700 35

## 🔗 **Resource List: Minding the Gap (link) contains reading that will help you to identify mapping a gap in knowledge.**

How do you *know* that what you have identified is a gap? Identifying the gap requires:

# Mapping the Field

Once you have identified (what you think might be) a gap, you can start to map out the fields that form around the gap. Think of your gap is a 'fissure' in knowledge. Fields congregate around this fissure. The fissure can't be filled by a single approach; it requires you understanding what is congregating around it so that you can create your own 'pincer movement'. Your job is to identify tools and methods from disciplines that might help you to start to fill in that fissure.

To identify where a fissure might be, you need to understand what research already exists in your field. To gain such an understanding, you need to conduct a Literature Review. Please watch the video that follows on Literature Reviews.

> *Your University Login may be required to access this video:*
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> Your browser does not support iFrames.

## An Introduction to Literature Reviews (link)

*Dr. Eric Jensen, Professor of Sociology at the University of Warwick, and Dr. Charles Laurie, Director of Research at Verisk Maplecroft, explain how to write a literature review, and why researchers need to do so.*

More general guidance on *Literature* Reviews is available on the IAD website here:

> https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/study-hub/learning-resources/literature-review (link)

Scoping and reviewing the research (both the literature and the practice) in the field(s) wherein you think you have found a gap will tell you if the gap is something that has already been *adequately* addressed in existing knowledge.

To do this, you need to generate a **mind map** of the fields that

you will be engaging with. Keep a detailed systematic map of what you find.

## *Systematic Reviews*

Search for **Systematic Reviews** to begin with. By way of illustration, in Anthropology, a Systematic Review will be most commonly be in the form of a journal paper or an edited collection of conference papers. In art, it can be the same thing, but, additionally, takes the form of large scale international exhibition programmes (*biennale*). Remember that artworks embody research outcomes, artistic practices are research processes. Given how large they have become, *biennale* offer systematic reviews of artistic research outcomes and artistic practices – but they additional provide a broader context for both. What are the main **practice tropes**, or **key concepts** emerging here?

Following your engagement with Systematic Reviews you should begin to have a better understanding of which artists/curators/anthropologists are having the greatest impact in relation to the gap you have identified. You should turn your attention to scoping and engaging with their contributions **and** to the critical *reviews* of their contributions.

## *Revising your Question*

When you scope and review your field(s) and gain a better understanding of what has and has not been done vis a vis the gap you have identified; it will help you to refine, narrow and redraft your research question accordingly.

## *Argumention: Argument Mapping (link)*

You can use the mapping process to understand and construct your arguments. For more information on this, follow this link

📖 **Resource List: Mapping the Field (link) contains reading that will help you to identify mapping your field.**

## Problematisation

Mapping your field to find gaps in existing knowledge is an approach to 'research question design' that is challenged both within artistic research and within the social sciences (including Anthropology). Having completed the above components — you should consider how you might (already) engage with *problematisation* as a method for generating research questions. To gain a sense of what this means, please read this text:

> Alvesson, M. & Sandberg, J. (2013). Problematization as a methodology for generating research questions. In *Constructing research questions: Doing interesting research* (pp. 47-70). SAGE Publications Ltd, https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446270035

# Research Ethics and Integrity

## What is Research Integrity in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS).

All researchers have responsibility to contribute to knowledge. Whatever kind of research you pursue, this responsibility necessitates adhering to ethical principles that safeguard the rights, dignity, and well-being of any and all individuals involved in the process.

The College (CAHSS) has a research ethics framework. All

research activities must comply with these guidelines. This framework for ethical conduct of research is guided by principles of: **dignity, respect, care for others, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.**

Please note that these principles apply equally to **staff and students** in the College. Please read the CAHSS guidance on this here: https://www.ed.ac.uk/research-office/research-integrity/what-is-research-integrity

To ensure that you maintain the ethical standards, please consider the following key points:

**<u>Informed Consent:</u>** Obtaining informed consent from participants (should you have any) is <u>*essential*</u> in any research **involving human subjects**. You must ensure that participants fully understand the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of your work. Respecting their autonomy and privacy is paramount. This is, thus, a key question in the Research Ethics review.

**<u>Data Integrity and Confidentiality:</u>** You must handle research data with integrity, ensuring accuracy, reliability, and transparency. Safeguarding the confidentiality of personal information and employing secure data storage and handling practices is vital to protect the privacy and anonymity of participants in your research. Again, this is, thus, a key question in the Research Ethics review. You must have a viable plan of how you will store, protect (and destroy) the data you collect.

**<u>Research Design:</u>** Your research should be well-planned, robust, and methodologically sound. Your methods and planning must demonstrate rigour and openness. You must find ways of avoiding biases, conflicts of interest, and misleading practices.

**<u>Plagiarism:</u>** As you know, respecting intellectual property rights and giving proper credit to the works of others is

fundamental. As has been the case throughout your studies in Edinburgh College of Art, you need to be diligent in citing and referencing sources accurately to acknowledge the contributions of others and avoid any form of plagiarism.

**Collaboration / Authorship:** Collaboration plays an important role in research, fostering innovation and a greater diversity of perspectives. If you are planning to engage in any collaborative projects, you should establish clear guidelines for authorship, ensuring proper attribution and recognition of each individual's contribution.

**Publication / Exhibition Ethics:** If you disseminate your research in a public domain (e.g. publishing, exhibition, online), you must adhere to the University's publication ethics guidelines. This includes acknowledging all relevant contributions, and disclosing any potential conflicts of interest.

**Responsible Use of Research:** Your research should promote the common good, and avoid any potential harm. You must consider the ethical implications of your findings, and take responsibility for their appropriate use.

# Mandatory Ethical Review

Remember that you and your Supervisor both need to understand the ethical implications of your proposed research and know how to review and support your ethical approach. You must complete the Ethical Review before you continue with your research plans:

To further support your research ethics and integrity, we highly recommend that you all enrol on this LEARN course:

## 'Research Ethics and Integrity – An Introduction' (Self-Enrol via LEARN)

This module is designed to help you understand the core principles of research ethics and integrity. It's aimed at all research students and doesn't replace any subject or project-specific advice or policies. Although written for research

students, the principles apply to any project so it may also be useful if you are an undergraduate or a masters student working on a substantial project. Please not that the module is **not** part of your curriculum or training provision. If you have any questions you should talk to your supervisor, who is responsibile for ensuring you engage with research ethics and integrity.

Research Ethics and Integrity (link to enroll)

# Digital Data Research Ethics

This is also a very useful resource to follow if you plan to create or use digital data:

https://mantra.edina.ac.uk/ (link)

*MANTRA is a free online course for those who manage digital data as part of their research project.*

# Informed Consent

You will need to gain informed consent if you intend to work with people. Here are some examples of Informed Consent forms you may adapt:

Examples of Informed Consent Forms (link to download PDF)

# COVID-19 Research Ethics

You will additionally need to consider the ethical implications of COVID-19

Rethinking Research Projects in Light of COVID 19 Situation: Ethical Considerations (link to PDF).

# Further Viewing:

Improve your research skills with SAGE Research Methods

# Further Support from the Institute for Academic Development (IAD)

Our Institute for Academic Development run Open Workshops that will support the production of your research projects and your writing.

**Open workshops from IAD (link)**

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