

**CULT320- Research Proposal Project**  
Allison Lakomski, Spring 2015

**Part 1: Research Topic & Questions**

Due: Thursday, 2/19

Points: 100

Length: 2-3 pages

**Choosing a topic:**

You need to decide on a text, set of texts, or a cultural object that you want to research and that is/are related to the two core concepts of this class: globalization and culture. The definition of text is broad including books, digital media, museums, music, film, photography, visual art etc. An object could be a particular group of people or community, a certain physical space or aspect of the built environment, a particular policy or law, an event, a specific cultural practice or set of practices. Almost any kind of object or set of objects is acceptable, as long as it will connect to a research question generally relatable to globalization and culture. Choose something that will sustain your interest for the semester, can lead to original research, and is narrow enough for you to describe it in detail and ask answerable questions about it. An object could be something like Hershey's Chocolate or Levi's Jeans. A text(s) could be something like Korean science fiction films, news coverage of the Gaza war, or Brazilian heavy metal music. (Note: From here on out, I will refer to all text/texts/objects as "objects")

There are a few objects you WILL NOT be allowed to write on: iPhone/iPad, McDonalds, Starbucks.

You will need to do some preliminary research to demonstrate a clear understanding of your object and why it is a compelling topic for research. I would suggest keeping track of your sources. Scholarly publications can be used in your annotated bibliography, which is Part 2 of this project and news and popular sources can go in your complete bibliography that you will turn in at the end of the semester with your complete research plan.

**Prepare your document according to the following guidelines:**

1. Start with a simple description of your object including physical attributes, dates, places and people involved. Try to avoid anything evaluative; focus on creating just an "objective" description. Then add nuance to your description by placing your object in context with other related objects, texts, movements/trends, individuals, etc. This requires drawing connections between the particularities of your object and the political, economic, cultural, ecological or other systems in which it exists. You may support your description by citing evidence from your research. Specifically, you may wish to cite facts regarding the production or circulation of the object that are not general knowledge but are helpful to connecting the object to globalization. Your entire description should be about 1-2 pages in length.

This part of the assignment should show careful consideration of your object within a global context. This is not the place to make an argument or theorize about your object. Try to put aside your assumptions and/or biases and don't become concerned with the cultural arguments or theories surrounding this object at this point.

2. In a few sentences describe why you are interested in this object and how/why it is relevant to a course on globalization **and** culture.
3. After your description, you must pose 3-4 possible one-sentence research questions for your object (you can just bullet point these in your document). These questions should indicate that you

understand the global relevance of your object within the perimeters of this course and there is something about this specific object that is of interest to you (and will sustain your interest for the semester).

Some aspects of a good to excellent research question:

- It requires an answer beyond “yes or no”.
- It makes no assumptions about the answer in the question itself. It should not imply you already know the answer.
- It is answerable. The evidence/data you need to answer it is accessible, the methods employed to answer it are ones you are familiar with or could learn, etc.
- It is stated as specifically as possible. For example, the question is limited to a specific time period, medium or geographical area.
- It is stated clearly and concisely and is free of jargon.
- It has not been answered before (or not answered correctly from your view)
- It is directed at a problem or a gap in the current literature

### **In-class on Thursday, February 19:**

The academic research process is often collaborative, with scholars working with and getting advice from other scholars. You will meet in class on the day this assignment is due to workshop each other’s potential questions. Briefly explain to your object to your group and why you have chosen it so they can better assess your possible research questions. Based on this group input (and your own thoughts), you will select one research question out of your initial list.

### **At the end of class, you will turn in your document with:**

- The one research question that you have decided upon clearly indicated with a star or asterisk.
- The names of your group members.
- A couple sentences on why you and your group collectively decided on this question.

**Your engagement in the peer-review process will account for a possible 25 out of the 100 total points for this assignment, so it is imperative that you show up to class on time and work with your group on this day.**

Please adhere to the format requirements for all assignments for this course as follows:

- Double-spaced, in 12 pt. Times New Roman font.
- Use 1-inch margins all around.
- Pages should be double-sided and/or stapled. No paperclips, tape, rip-folds, folders, etc.
- Be certain to check for spelling mistakes and typos before turning in the assignment.

**LATE OR EMAILED ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**