Creating a Research Plan

PART ONE—WHAT IS YOUR GENERAL RESEARCH TOPIC IDEA?

PART TWO—LIST LIBRARY RESEARCH GUIDES THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL:

PART THREE—FOCUS/REFINE YOUR TOPIC

WHAT? Which aspects of this topic most interest you?

WHY? Why is your topic important?

HOW? How does your topic relate to issues relevant to American Studies, such as race, gender, identity, intersectionality, agency, power?
**WHO?**  Who are the people or groups impacted by your topic? Who are those who act, and who are those who are acted upon?

**WHEN?**  
Is there a specific period of time or era that interests you? Is this a current or historic issue?

**WHERE?**  
Where do these events occur or where is the issue relevant? (e.g. Ethiopia, the United States, Pennsylvania, schools, etc.).

**PART FOUR - Develop a research question**

What specific question do you want to answer with your research?

**PART FIVE—Brainstorm possible keyword terms for searching.**

Think of various synonyms or related terms for each concept that you can use as search terms (e.g., African American or black; women or girls or females). As you search in the catalog and databases, note other relevant terms that show up in titles, abstracts, or keyword/subject(descriptor lists).
PART SIX – Researching your topic.

What CLASS READINGS from this course or others might relate to your topic?
Check their bibliographies for potential sources.

Which library DATABASES LISTS will be useful for researching your topic?

Some Librarian Recommendations:
- America: History and Life (US and Canadian History)
- Historical Abstracts (History of World except US and Canada)
- Race Relations Abstracts
- Women’s Studies International
- GenderWatch
- LGBT Life
- Communication and Mass Media Complete
- Caribbean Search
- SportDiscus
- Readers Guide (popular magazines)
- Readers Guide Retrospective (older popular magazines)
- Women’s Magazine Archive

What PRIMARY SOURCES might be relevant?