

# RESEARCH TOPIC SEARCH

## PART I: INTRO

Watch the video explaining today's goal. I'm going to talk you through a series of exercises that may help you clarify your goals for the semester and choose a research topic. The video will be on Blackboard in the Week 1 content folder.

## PART II: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

1. Take this quiz:

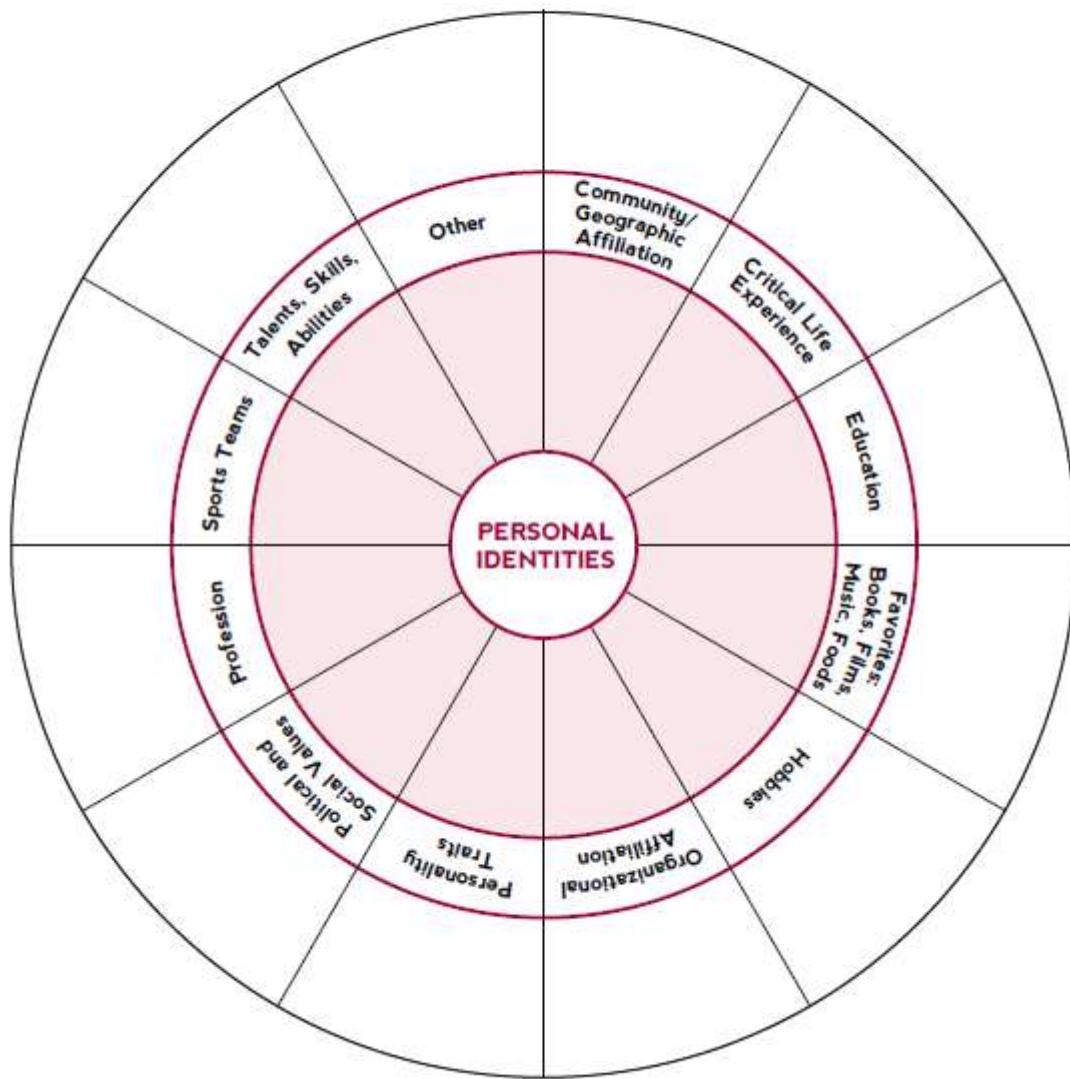
[https://programs.clearerthinking.org/philosophical\\_beliefs.html#.YwOmL3bMLIU](https://programs.clearerthinking.org/philosophical_beliefs.html#.YwOmL3bMLIU)

You should either keep a note of your answers as you go or be willing to give it an email to send you a report of your answers and their meanings. You must keep your answers in some way because we will do this again at the end of the semester. For the purposes of this assignment, though, all you need to do is write under this which question was most difficult for you and why:

2. Look at the wheels:

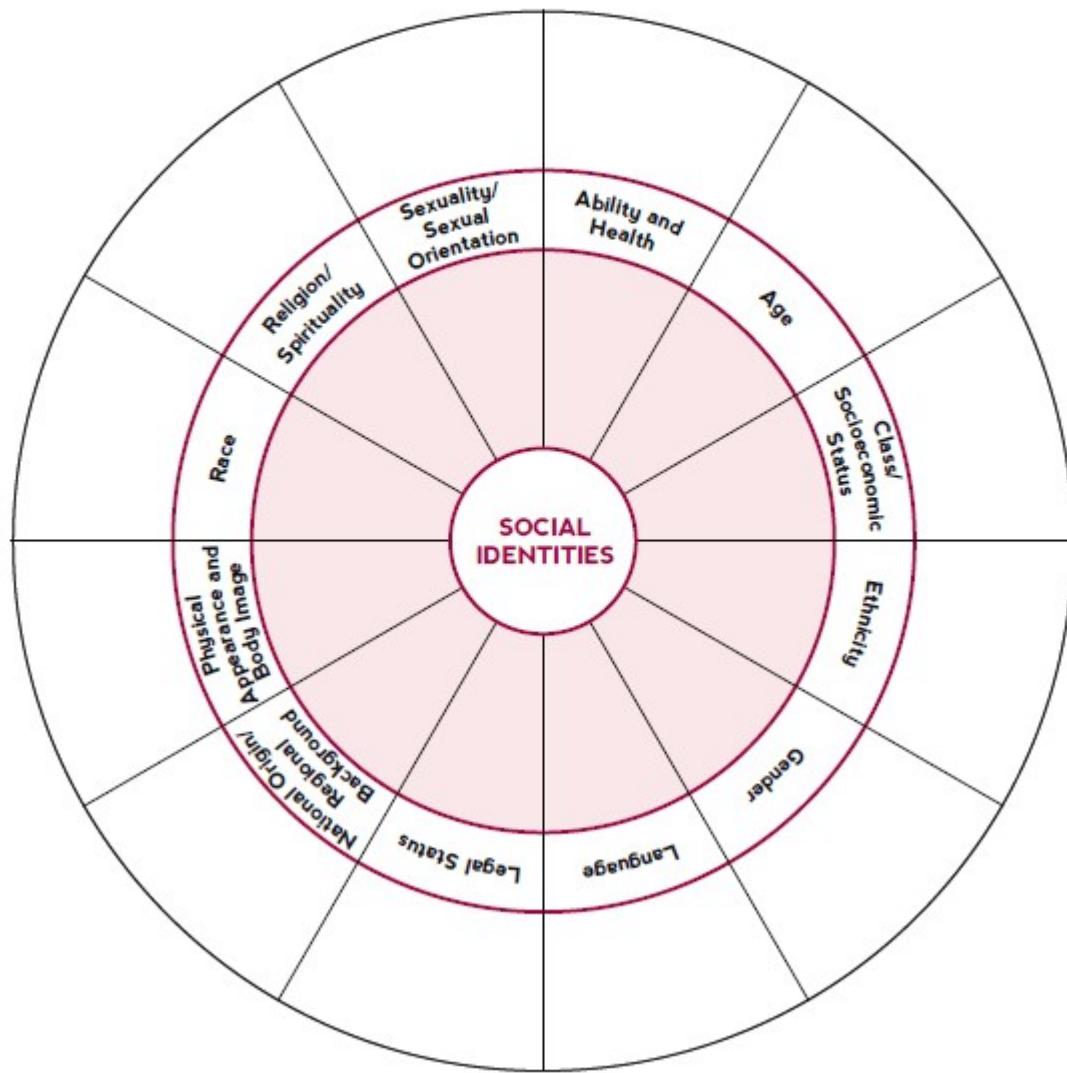
## PERSONAL IDENTITY WHEEL

Fill in your Identity for each of the categories listed. In the inner circle, record the identities that are the most important or salient to you. In the outer circle, record the identities that are less important or salient to you.



### SOCIAL IDENTITY WHEEL

Fill in your identity for each of the categories listed. In the inner circle, record the identities that are the most important or salient to you. In the outer circle, record the identities that are less important or salient to you.



Images adapted from Arizona State University

You do not need to fill these out for me to read, but you should reflect on them. In many cases, people are not aware of the multiplicity of factors that make up our sense of self. Look at these wheels and reflect on how you define these terms for yourself.

3. Think about which parts of the wheel you think are most important in constituting your identity. Most "important" can mean either the ones you value

most or the ones you feel have shaped you regardless of your personal choice. List the top three parts of the wheel for you in the personal identity wheel (no elaboration necessary; this is for your own reflection):

List the top three parts of the social identity wheel for you:

4. Now list the three parts of the wheels that matter least, either because you don't value those aspects of life as much or because you do not believe they influence your identity much.

Personal identity bottom three:

Social identity bottom three:

5. What experiences might cause you to think about some of these parts of your identity more than others?
6. What experiences might cause other people to be more affected by other parts of the wheel?

### PART III: COURSE GOALS

1. Now that you have done some reflection, list three concepts (preferably with philosophical or ethical dimensions) that you feel passionate about:
2. Now, look at the list of potential research topics. It's on Blackboard in Week 1. List three topics on the list that you think you could commit to for a full semester and why. Remember that you can also use the career-related research section to craft your own topic.
  - i.
  - ii.
  - iii.

Optional: You can list one or two topics that you'd like but don't see on the list below:

### PART IV: SOURCE EVALUATION

Now, we'll practice finding some sources about your topic. For SAEL, finding sources may be slightly different than the type of research you've experienced. You'll want the facts about your topic, of course, but you'll also want to research ethical dimensions. This may mean that after you find factual / historical sources, you'll try search terms that involve philosophical or ethical keywords. For example:

Start: Dog breeding history, science of dog breeding

Middle: Dog breeding arguments, un-breeding

End: Animal consciousness, deontology and animal rights, moral status of animals

Use this guide from the UofSC Library (an excellent resource!) to help you. The part about evaluating sources starts at around 5 minutes. For now, you may use the library site, Google Scholar, or regular Google to find what you're looking for.

1. Find one "background" source for one of your potential topics. This will be a credible source that gives you information about the facts involved in the field, question, or concept.

List it here:

2. Find another source that complicates your topic with an argument about the philosophical, moral, or ethical dimensions. This will probably be scholarly, but might not be. List it here:

## CONCLUSION

That's all! Please remember that you must choose a research topic by Friday, 9/2.

If you're interested in more than one topic, don't be discouraged! We will have opportunities to talk about a wide range of topics for in-class discussions