

ESD.83 Assignment 8: Developing a Well-Posed Research Question

(750 word paper, 10% of the total)

Assigned: Session 8; Due: Session 12.

Select an important problem associated with your primary area of scholarly interest. Write a memo that includes the following:

- Overarching Problem Statement – motivation for the research
- Specific Research Question – posed broad enough to be relevant, narrow enough to be the subject of a rigorous **18-36** month research study that has a high probability of yielding valuable insights
- Additional Request: Also include an example of a research question in this same domain that is far too broad and an example of one that is far too narrow
- Summary of your approach and a succinct statement on the way you will go about addressing the research question (recognizing that there is always additional learning that emerges in the research process)

Thus, the memo should have three major parts, which correspond to:

- 1) "What" you will study (the research question, with the overly narrow and overly broad additions),
- 2) "Why" the study is important (the problem statement and why your work will matter), and
- 3) "How" you will do the research. You should:
 - a) Suggest several falsifiable hypotheses that you may use to structure your work,
 - b) Suggest the nature of possible observations, potential data and data reduction and analysis methods, and
 - c) Suggest other methods, frameworks and models you anticipate potentially using.

NB: we realize that many of you are at a very early stage of your research and we will evaluate your response in that context. Indeed, while this is a "thesis sized" proposal, it does not have to be based on the thesis topic you actually expect to follow if you have another idea that fulfills this assignment and that you prefer to submit at this time.

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