

## Research Proposal

What specific topic within the general subject of "work" will we as a class study over the next weeks? As a small group, publicly present a proposal that suggests an organizational plan for this class research.

## How to Find Your Topic

What do you want to know about work (motives, fair wages, unions, migrant workers, class, wealth, corporations, management, business ethics, environmental justice, globalization, work-related injuries, outsourcing, etc)? Find a topic *big* enough and interesting enough for us to pursue together:

1. Peruse recent issues of general interest journals (located at bookstores, the library, and online) to see what is being currently discussed about work.
2. Find a focused topic related to the theme of work that your group finds interesting.
3. Email me no later than noon Friday to reserve your topic. One member of your group should send the email and copy all other members.

## How to Prepare Your Presentation

Meet as a group to plan for your in-class presentation. First, determine your topic and next steps for each member of the group. How will you conduct research on this topic (internet, interviews, etc)? How will you divide and organize the work equitably? How will you sell this idea to your classmates?

Each member of the group should do individual research to help the group prepare for the presentation, maintaining a comprehensive bibliography as you go. Then meet together again (virtually or in person) to prepare your argument for why the entire class should pursue your group's topic for the remainder of the semester (this will include a list of viable subtopics). Decide how you will effectively sell your plan to us.

## What to Present

Identify research questions that we must ask to investigate this topic well, narrating *how* the class can try to answer those questions. Name the subtopics that individuals might pursue if the class chooses your topic, and present a beginning bibliography for us: name experts that must be interviewed or texts that must be read, explain what sources are significant, describe how to find and evaluate sources on the topic, estimate how many hours are required to thoroughly treat the topic, detail any expenses that the research might require, and explain why the findings would be relevant to the rest of the first-year class.

## Why This?

Why not just pick your own topic? Why work in small groups to propose shared research topics?

1. The course content and readings will be more experiential.
2. If your group puts a lot of work into your proposal, it will be attractive to rest of class as a more feasible and better-developed plan. This offers incentive and becomes its own reward.
3. What any group learns through the proposal process isn't wasted. The organization plan and research strategies you've used once can be easily applied to the new topic/subtopic.
4. The final course approach may be a combination of group proposals (a topic from one, a research plan from another, a presentation strategy from a third).

When we vote on a shared topic, we will not be judging individuals' ideas or interests but the **topics** and how suitable they are for all of us to research and think about together. The onus is on the topic and organizational plan itself: can we, as a group, actually follow these threads, interview these people, read these items, etc., and enjoy the process and learn something?