Name:	
Date:	
LIB 1201	
Prof. Leonard	

Developing a Research Topic

This exercise will help you detail what you already know about your topic and perhaps highlight some of your assumptions or biases. Your answers to these questions, along with other questions and thoughts that occur to you, will be useful as you plan your research strategy and begin your project.

FIRST: State your topic simply in one or two sentences, and try to phrase it as a question
WHY? Why did you select this topic? What interests you about it? Do you have an opinion on the issues involved?
How? How do people refer to your topic? Do different groups use distinct terms to describe or discuss
the issues? What keywords (phrases, buzzwords, vocabulary, jargon, etc.) are associated with your topic? No need for full sentences here – just write down keywords and phrases.
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WHERE? What places or areas will you include in your research? Are there specific regions, countries,
states, or cities pertinent to your topic? Will you be comparing policy or legal practices in different
places?

WHEN? Are you interested in finding current day, recent past, or historical information? Are there specific dates or periods of time associated with your topic? Will you be comparing past practice with today's standards?
WHO? Who is affected by the issues related to your topic? Who might write or publish information on the topic? Are specific professions or occupations associated with the issues? Do certain academic disciplines study the issues? Are there individuals who might form organizations concerned with the issues? Are there well known persons associated with the topic?

Start a rough outline here, with special attention to the research question and its importance.

- 1. Research question
 - a. Background information
 - b. Why is this question important?
- 2. First argument
 - a. Your own
 - b. Supporting evidence from research source #1
 - c. Supporting evidence from research source #2
 - d. Repeat if needed
 - e. Conclusion for that section
- 3. Second argument
 - a. Your own
 - b. Supporting evidence from research source #1
 - c. Supporting evidence from research source #2
 - d. Repeat if needed
 - e. Conclusion for that section
- 4. Third argument
 - a. Your own
 - b. Supporting evidence from research source #1
 - c. Supporting evidence from research source #2
 - d. Repeat if needed
 - e. Conclusion for that section
- 5. Conclusion
 - a. How your paper answers your research question
 - b. Recommendations for further research