Principles of Your First Project
Developing research ideas is more about communication than creativity
Five Parts of a Research Project

- a question, problem, or provocation
- sources (primary or secondary)
- an analytical activity
- an audience
- concrete products
What Is a Project?

- sequence of related activities
- derived from a question, issue, or problem
- requires the development of resources
- requires an audience and/or other participants
- results in a product
What Is a Project?

event
meeting
workshop
class
symposium

research
analysis
investigation
experiment
development

telling a story, writing an argument,
answering a question, developing a theory
What is the role of Richmond, VA in the American Civil War?
Problem

George Alfred Townsend (1865) and Kenneth Noe (1997): “Richmond ... remains an offstage presence, a sort of metropolitan version of Hamlet's father, mentioned with frequency but rarely seen.”
Provocation

"Mining the Dispatch," seeks to explore—and encourage exploration of—the dramatic and often traumatic changes as well as the sometimes surprising continuities in the social and political life of Civil War Richmond.
Creating and/or Refining your Question

who?  to describe
what?  to contribute
when?  to develop
where? to explore
why?   for what purpose?
how?
Sources and Materials

scarcity and abundance

primary and secondary

feasibility

quality and complexity
Innovation?

Producing
- Producing your own secondary source
- Secondary Sources

Reading
- Major Questions
- Primary Sources/Archives

Transcribing & Analyzing
- Identifying
- Transcribing & Analyzing
- Revising your Questions
- Secondary Sources

Identifying
- Primary Sources/Archives
- Performances of the Scholar in Historiography-Centric Historical Research Processes

Producing
- Primary Sources/Archives
- Revising your Questions
- Secondary Sources

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- Transcribing & Analyzing
- Revising your Questions
- Secondary Sources
Serving Many Masters

"the roots of the concepts [of interdisciplinarity] lie in a number of ideas that resonate through modern discourse—the ideas of a unified science, general knowledge, synthesis and the integration of knowledge."