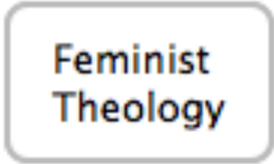


# MAPPING YOUR RESEARCH IDEAS

Figure out what you want to write about & then learn how to broaden and narrow your topic.

1



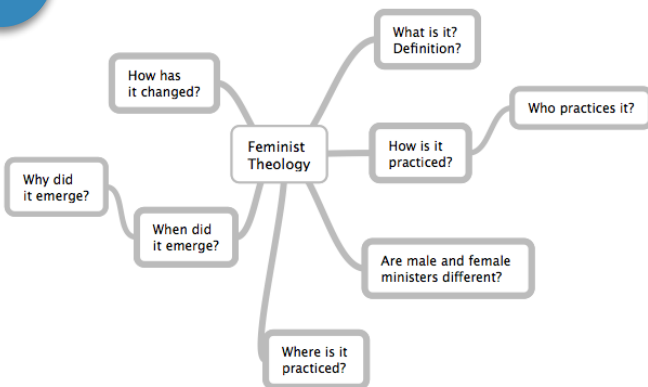
Feminist  
Theology

Draw a circle in the middle of a blank piece of paper. Inside the circle, put an idea for your paper topic.

If you're not sure what to write, start by connecting keywords from the paper prompt with something you are passionate about.

For example, if the paper is on theology and you are interested in feminism, you might start with "feminist theology."

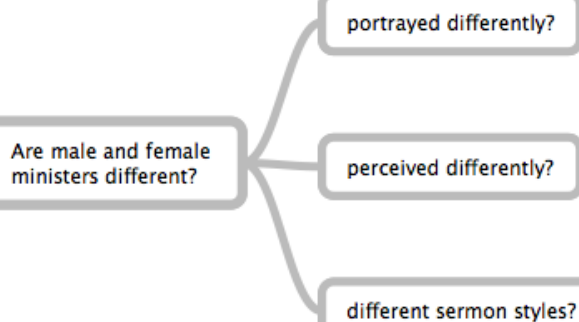
2



Next, take 2-3 minutes to brainstorm as many questions as you can about the topic. Write down questions for everything you're curious about. Experiment with a variety of question words and phrases:

- Why?
- How?
- What?
- Who?
- When?
- Where?
- Are?
- Do?
- In what ways?
- Under what circumstances?

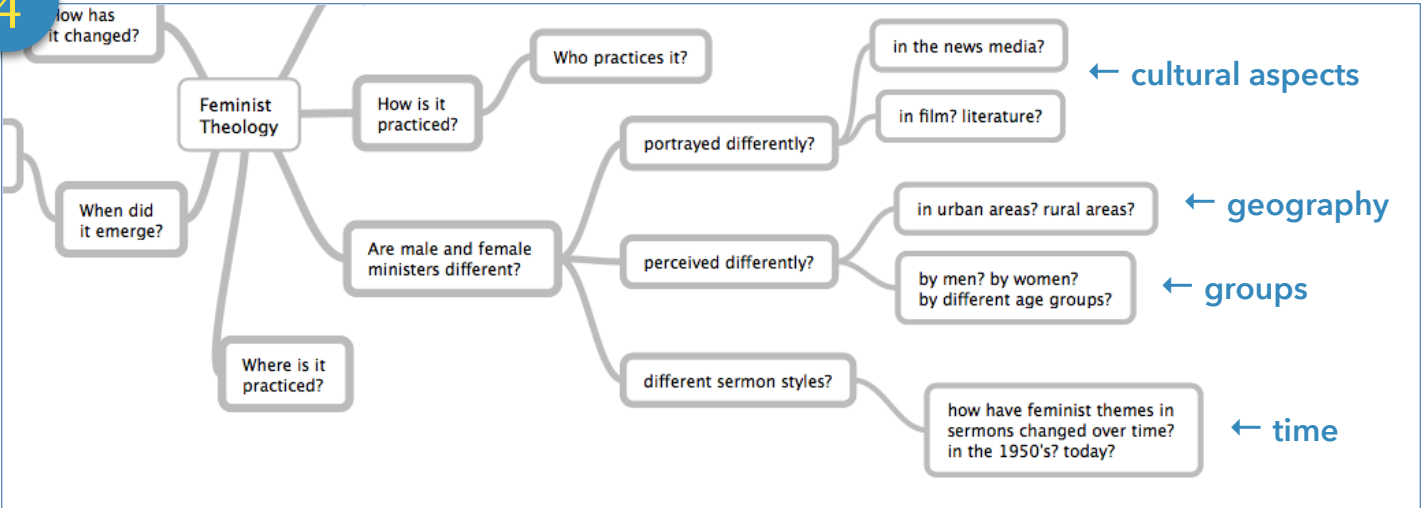
3



Now, look for opportunities to build on your questions. For example, you might:

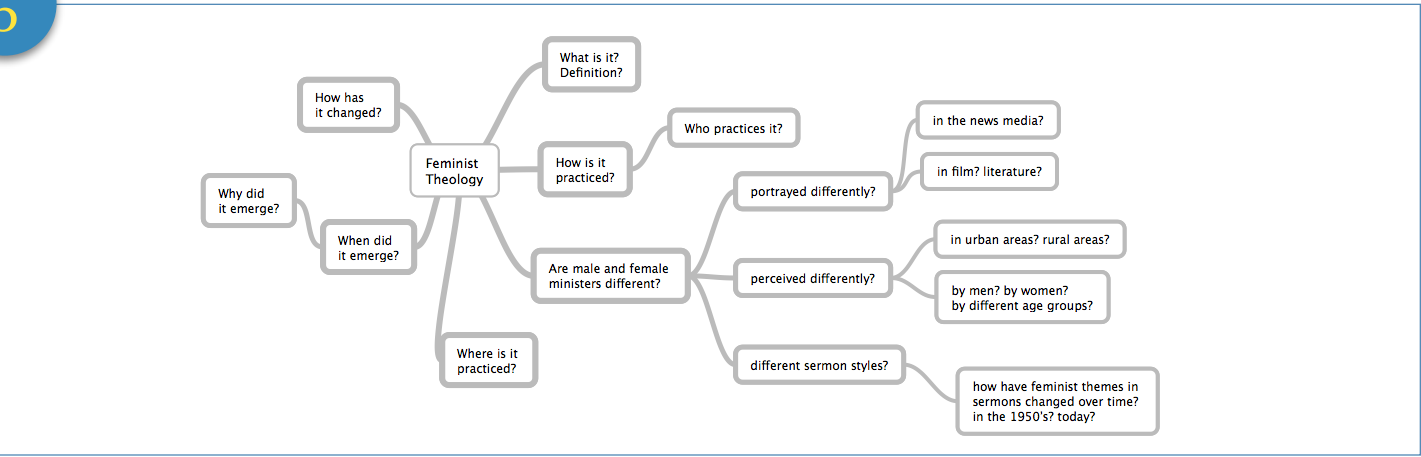
- think about your question from a variety of perspectives.
- divide broad questions into narrow ones.
- ask a friend to help you generate questions - what questions do they have about your topic?

4



You can continue narrowing your topic by asking questions about cultural aspects, geographic areas, groups of people, time spans, and historical events.

5



Now review your topic map. Which questions are you most passionate about? Which ones have the most potential to address the paper prompt? Highlight the words and phrases you are most interested in investigating in the next phase of your research!



**What's next?**

- Find 1 or more research guides related to your topic at [guides.library.ucla.edu](https://guides.library.ucla.edu)
- Look for a "Reference" or "Encyclopedias" tab on the research guide. Search an online encyclopedia to get background information on your topic.
- Find the "Articles" tab on the research guide. Then search for scholarly articles.
- Visit your instructor during office hours. Bring your topic. Get feedback on which research questions have the most potential.
- Come visit us in the Inquiry Labs (Powell 220) for more help. Bring your topic map, and we'll help you search for sources for your paper!