

20. Common Research Topics for This Class

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While there are an unlimited number of potential ways to continue your study of humor and develop good research questions based on what you've learned this semester, there are three common approaches to continuing research in this field. Many students choose one of the following approaches and tailor it to their interests.

Personal approach

Building on what you've already done to explore and analyze your own sense of humor, what else would you like to learn about you and the things that make you laugh. This approach might include doing more research into the psychology of humor. It might involve focusing on a specific person or humorous text and doing more research into those subjects. You might even consider framing your research as a study of what humor can do for you or how you use it and let the research guide you to larger arguments about humor's role in our lives.

Professional Approach

What role might humor play in your professional life both in and beyond the college classroom? Is there a place for humor in the career you're seeking? Are certain types of humor condoned or forbidden in certain workplaces? When we consider humor in the context of our professional lives, we start to ask really interesting questions and think about this subject in different ways. For example, do you think that a teacher should have a sense of humor? A nurse? Are the kinds of jokes a nurse makes different than a teacher? Does it matter who is joking with whom at work?

All kinds of questions arise when considering this approach.

Social approach

Taking the social approach means continuing to consider some of the big ways in which humor and society intersect. This might involve doing more research into questions of race, gender, nationality, and ethics, for example. You might do some research into current controversies regarding humor, comedians, and culture. This approach allows you to really explore some of the big questions that we briefly touched on and potentially do some analysis of contemporary society.

Paraphrasing

putting information from a source into your own words. Often, this will be done in a slightly shorter or similar amount of words to the original source. When paraphrasing, you are attempting to take what someone else says and say it in a way that is clear for your readers in the context of your essay.

Primary sources

original texts and first-hand accounts of events or research. These may include things like literary texts (poems, plays, stories, etc.), films, works of art, interviews, original research, and original data.

Quoting

using the exact words of the source and presenting them as they were originally written or said using quotation marks

rustics

country-folk

Secondary sources

sources that are about primary sources and/or offer interpretation and analysis. These include most academic journal articles, books on various subject, and any source that is looking at other sources and synthesizing, analyzing, or interpreting them.

Summarizing

condensing a source down to its most important and essential ideas. When we summarize, we are taking a large amount of information and shortening it to focus only on the ideas that are necessary for the points we're making.