Developing a Research Topic
The XYZ Method

Name: _________________________________________________
Email: __________________________________________________

Purpose
The goal of this activity is to help you design a detailed, easily-researchable, and strategic research topic. You will be guided through the process of creating a draft of your thesis statement and brainstorming keywords. Your librarian will review your work and give you helpful suggestions to get started on your project.

Crafting a Basic Thesis Statement
To create your basic thesis statement, you will fill in the X, Y, and Z pieces of the template provided below. The X is your broad, general research topic. The Y is a narrowed aspect of your general topic. The Z will address why your topic is important or valuable for others.

Use the examples below to help you create your answers and then fill in the blanks in the template at the bottom of the page to complete your own thesis statement.

X - Your General Topic
- Solitary confinement
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Climate change

Y - Narrowed Topic
- Psychological effects of solitary confinement
- Use of meditation practice to alleviate PTSD symptoms
- Increase of humanitarian crises and migration conflicts as a result of climate change

Z - The 'So What?'/Purpose
- Legal and ethical concerns should be addressed to ensure humane treatment of inmates.
- Discovering possible applications of non-pharmaceutical PTSD treatments
- Identifying ways that U.S. policy changes could potentially mitigate or avoid climate change-related global security risks

Your Beginning Thesis Statement
I am working on the topic of (X) _________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________
because I want to understand more about (Y)_____________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________so that I can help others understand (Z) ___________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________

This activity is adapted from Kate Turabian’s book, A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 2013, p. 6-10