Masters of Research, Year 2 Workshops
UNDERSTANDING YOUR OBJECT OF STUDY

Please fill out this task, and bring to Day 2 of our workshops (i.e. on Thursday February 5th). These questions are useful for you to be thinking about now, even if you don’t have the answer to all them at this stage.

Name: ______________________________________________________________

Discipline: ___________________________________________________________

Your topic (make one up if you don’t yet have one):
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

QUESTION 1
What is your ‘object of study’? Is it something discrete, or something which has fuzzy or permeable boundaries? Is it physical, biological, social, psychological or semiotic? Or some mix of these (e.g. ‘psycho-social’, ‘bio-semiotic’)

QUESTION 2
What kind of history does your object of study have? If it is physical, when and how was it first discovered? By whom? If it is non-physical, when and how was it first conceptualized? By whom?

QUESTION 3
Is your object of study a ‘whole’ or a part of something? Is it a thing, a relation, a process?

QUESTION 4
Is your object of study visible to the naked eye? If you need technology to observe it, what kind of technology? Is your technology mechanical or theoretical? Or both?

QUESTION 5
What kinds of theories help you articulate your object of study? Within your discipline, is the nature of your object of study contested? What other discipline, apart from your own most helps you understand your object of study?

QUESTION 6
Can you take a picture of your OOS? Can you give an abstract visual representation of it? If you can, put a picture or diagram of it here. What are the limitations of this visualisation of your object of study?

QUESTION 7
How is your object of study defined? Where did you get your definition? Is it contested? How do you observe it?

QUESTION 8
How will you collect this data? Does it need to be analysed? If your data is part of something bigger, how will you observe your object of study discretely, without losing its relations to the other things or processes of which it is part?

QUESTION 9
Is there something you need to do to your object of study to be able to study it? If so, what kind of process do you have to apply? How does this process make your object of study amenable to systematic analysis or observation?

QUESTION 10
Is your data natural or experimental? What limitations are there on your data by being either natural or experimental?

QUESTION 11
Is there anything you are counting or measuring? If you are counting, what kinds of things are you counting? If you are measuring, what is the unit of measurement, and where did it come from? If you are not counting or measuring, how are ensuring your evidence is systematic?

QUESTION 12
How much data do you need? If you are not sure, how will you decide?

QUESTION 13
Why are you interested in this topic?