

## *Crafting a Research Question (Supplemental Resource for POLS-120)*

### **NOTE:**

- Many of these strategies are derived from *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science* by Lisa A. Baglione.

### **Traits of a Good Research Question:**

- Your research question should be interesting to you! Choose something that you want to spend a lot of time working on.
- Research questions should be important to scholars, public policy makers, and ordinary citizens.
- Your research question should be controversial so that others can argue and debate it.
- Your research question should be clear and concise. Try not to talk about too many things at once. Similarly, do not cover too broad of a subject. For example, “How does the idea of Manifest Destiny influence US foreign policy.” is *far* too broad. US foreign policy *where?* What *kind* of foreign policy: diplomacy, military action, etc?
- Your research question should be doable! You should pick a question that you can answer with the resources available to you.
- Your research question should start with the appropriate words (why, how, what, etc).
- It is ok if your question is puzzling. This often promotes better understanding of theory!

### **Good Research Questions vs. Bad Research Questions: <sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> <https://libguides.umgc.edu/c.php?g=709287&p=5388938>

