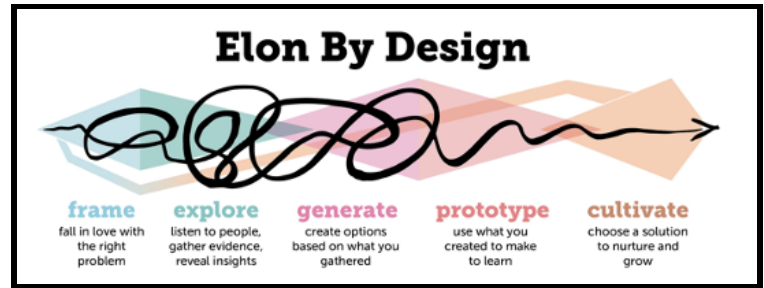


# *ECF Sophomore Seminar Assignment: Design Thinking*

## **Introduction & Motivation:**

“Design Thinking” is a process for understanding, brainstorming, and designing solutions to any kind of large problem. When a researcher decides to investigate a specific topic, design thinking skills provide us with “next steps” to explore. The process helps us to identify our own position in relation to the problem, empathize with others involved, and visualize possible outcomes. The process is important because it makes the researcher think deeply about the problem before jumping to a short-sighted solution.



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**Genre:** Summary of Findings and Reflection

**Audience:** ECF Sophomores

**Purpose:** To summarize the things you learned from Design Thinking exercises and reflect on how the exercises helped develop your identity as a researcher.

**Length:** 3-4 typed single-space pages.

## **Process:**

1. In class, we will complete lessons on Design Thinking and [do several exercises, contained in this packet.](#)
2. Write a reflection on the outcomes of the exercises. In particular, you should answer each of the following questions. Write out each question, with its number, before writing your response.

### Questions:

1. What is the purpose of an empathy map for research, in general? Give an example from your discipline of when an empathy map would be important to complete.
2. Research, by its very nature, is unpredictable. It is important to identify potential pitfalls and be as prepared as possible. What potential pitfalls did you identify for your project? How might identifying possible problems help you be more resilient during the research process?
3. How does the project connect with your prior experiences, current interest, and future goals? That is - how does the project connect with your identity?
4. You were challenged to explore the reachable ecosystem of your project, and that ecosystem will always include the researcher. What did you discover about your own motivation for the project? How might your motivation affect how you complete the project?

5. In this exercise you were asked to identify your “best possible outcome” for the project. This is another way of uncovering our own implicit biases. What steps could you take to ensure, as much as possible, that your biases don’t jeopardize the integrity of your findings?
6. Reflect as you wish on how learning design thinking skills has impacted you as a researcher.

**Assessment Criteria:**

- Does the work address each question?
- Does the writing show evidence that the design thinking exercises were completed thoroughly and correctly?
- Does the writing show a depth of thought and insight?
- Does the writing meet the length requirement and demonstrate polished prose?

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