



Investigating Religion & Power

Research Goals

Research can have many goals. In the context of higher education, it is often assumed that the primary goal of a research project is a written text that is published as a peer-reviewed publication (e.g. books and journal articles). At CHIRP, we believe that successful research can have many different goals. The following list is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, we hope it helps you think creatively about how you and your research team conduct your research.

Formation Goals

1. **Personal Formation:** Research is successful if it helps you develop intellectual habits such as humility, empathy, courage, perseverance, and integrity.¹ Try to see your research as a series of exercises that are forming you into a creative, critical thinker.
2. **Professional Formation:** Research is successful if it helps you gain skills and competencies that prepare you for your professional future. Regardless of your research topic, make it a goal to learn new research methods and new software tools. Challenge yourself to develop public speaking skills and artistic abilities.
3. **Networking:** Research is successful when it allows you to build new communities and expand your social network. Make it a goal to meet new people and share ideas with them. Use your LinkedIn account (or other social media) to build and maintain a network of collaborators from different backgrounds.

Deliverable Goals

4. **Public Presentations:** Consider presenting your research to a public audience. This can take place at a university, a local library, a community center, or a pub (just to name a few). Doing a live presentation will provide an opportunity to meet and converse with people you would not have met otherwise. If you record your presentation, you will have a record of your work that we can host on our CHIRP website.
5. **Conference Presentations:** Many researchers present their work (or works-in-progress) at conferences that are dedicated to a particular topic. Many conferences have “calls for papers” that can help you develop a research topic. For example, the American Academy of Religions has [a website that lists upcoming events and conferences](#).
6. **Podcasts:** One popular way of sharing the fruits of your research is to create a podcast. Whether your podcast consists of interviews, story-telling, or presentations, this can be a

¹ For more information on intellectual habits see: <https://tomprof.stanford.edu/posting/1164>



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way to creatively communicate your research to the public. NPR has [a guide for students who are planning to create a podcast](#).

7. **Video Series:** If your research would benefit from integrating audio/visual data, you could consider producing a series of videos that present your research. For example, the [University of Nottingham has a video series called: Sacred Calendars](#). The University of St. Andrews has some [tips for beginners who want to start a vlog](#).
8. **Online Exhibits:** Another way to incorporate a media-rich presentation of your research is to use digital tools that allow you to tell your story in a dynamic fashion. Often called “online exhibits,” these websites integrate images, video, audio, and writing. Here is an [example from Yale called “The Kings at Yale.”](#) These exhibitions can be built using [the digital tools described in this University of Minnesota Duluth website](#).
9. **Creative Art Projects:** The fruits of your scholarship can be expressed artistically. Many artists do extensive research as the foundation of their artistic projects. Whether these projects consist of poetry, music, sculpture, painting, or any other form of art, the artists are contributing their voice to ongoing conversations. For example, to earn his PhD from Clemson, [A. D. Carson produced a hip hop album entitled “Owning My Masters.”](#) Some journals have entire sections dedicated to creative work that is published alongside discursive texts (e.g. [The Other Journal: An Intersection of Theology and Culture](#))
10. **Op-Ed:** An op-ed published in a public newspaper, magazine, or blog is a great way to introduce your research to the public. [The Harvard Kennedy School of Government has provided guidelines for writing an op-ed piece](#). Op-ed writing is a great way to supplement some of the other deliverables your team is working on.
11. **Peer-Reviewed Publications:** Lastly, peer-reviewed writing is perhaps the most standard form of academic writing. You will become very familiar with this writing in the course of your research. For more information on how to navigate the extensive world of academic writing, [the University of Portland has created a website called “Identifying, Finding, and Reading Scholarly Sources.”](#)