


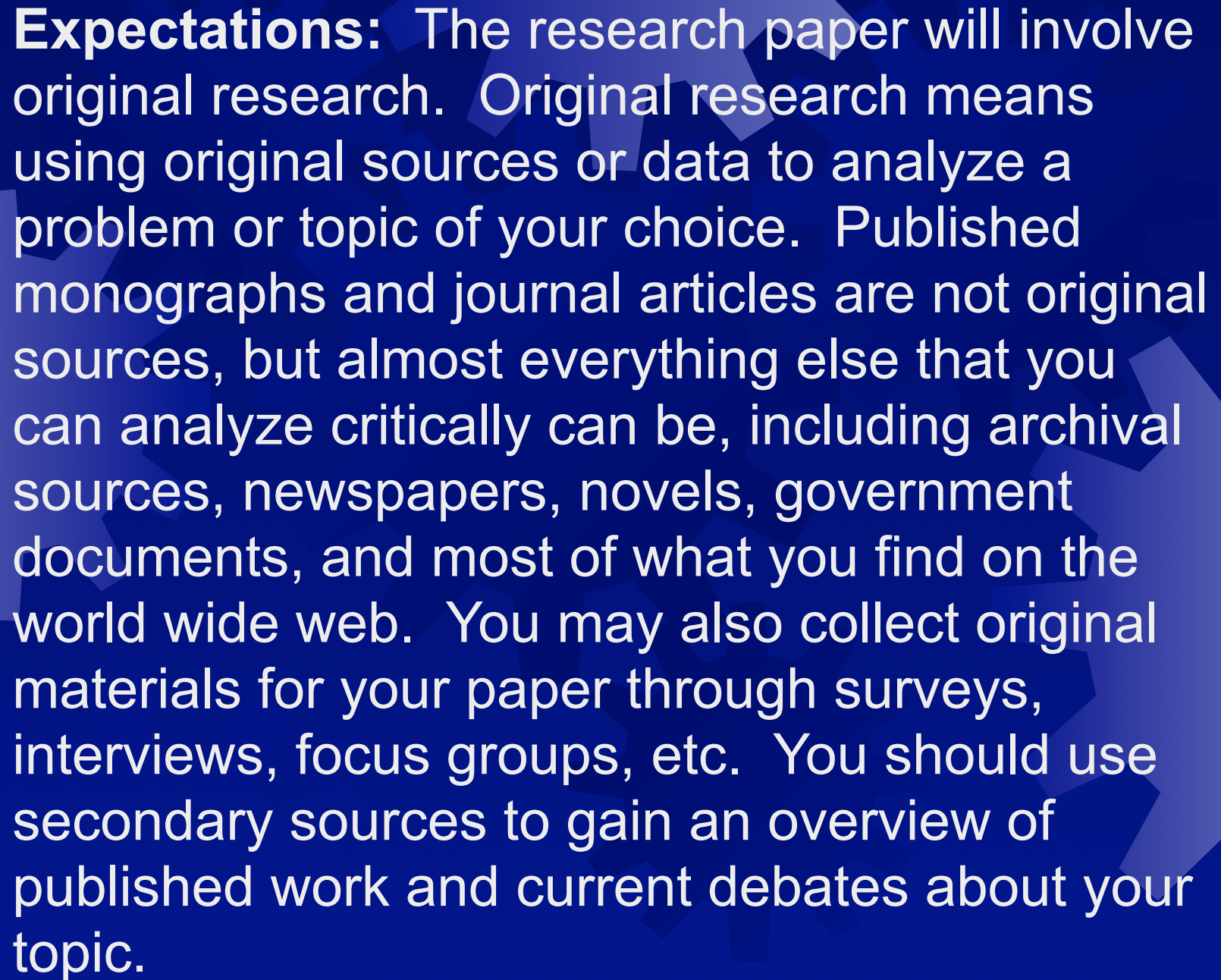


Framing and Doing Research Papers

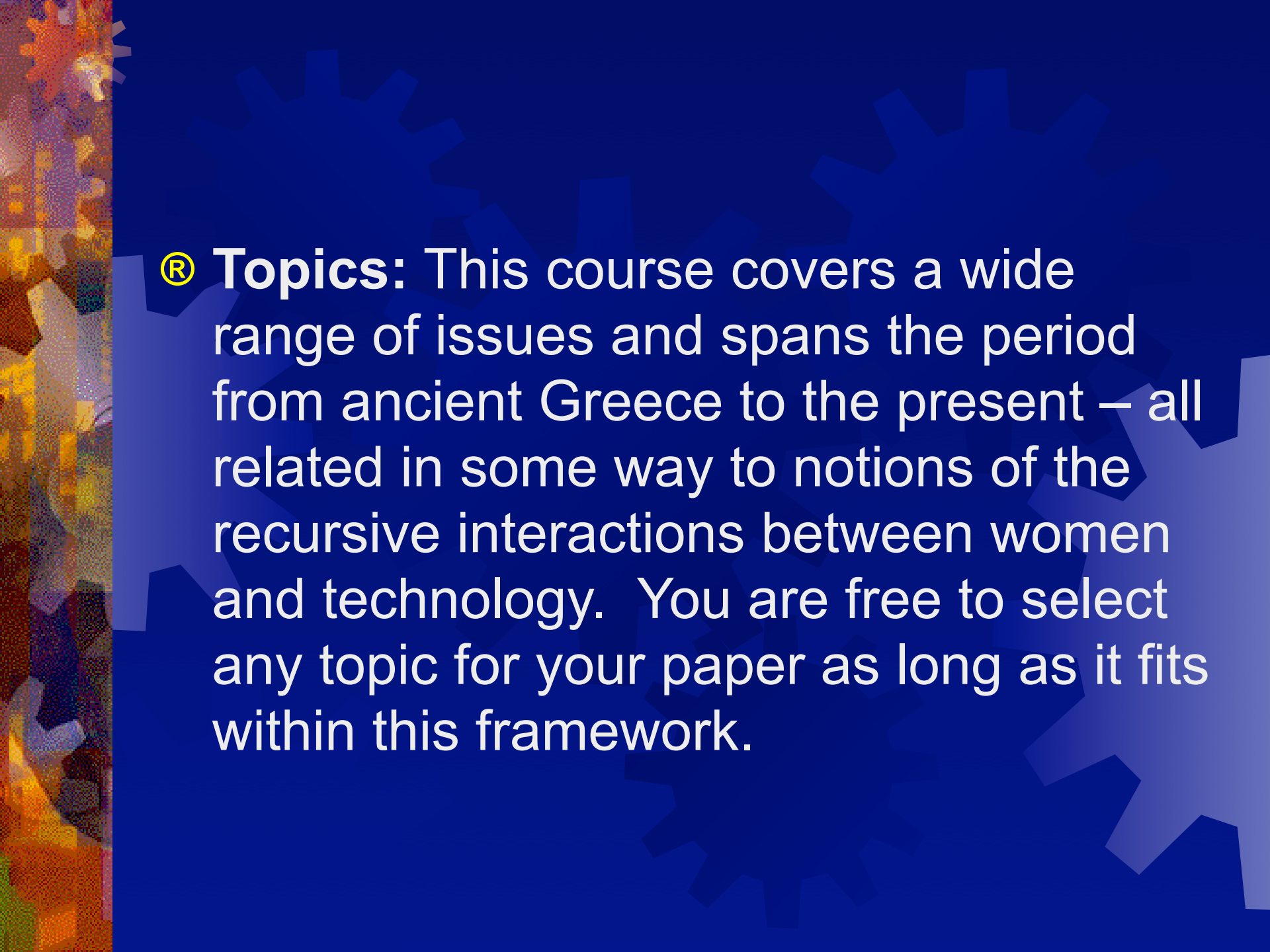
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School of Information
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Ⓜ **Research Paper:** The research paper is a very important part of this course and it constitutes 40 percent of your grade, with the research proposal worth 20%

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Expectations: The research paper will involve original research. Original research means using original sources or data to analyze a problem or topic of your choice. Published monographs and journal articles are not original sources, but almost everything else that you can analyze critically can be, including archival sources, newspapers, novels, government documents, and most of what you find on the world wide web. You may also collect original materials for your paper through surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc. You should use secondary sources to gain an overview of published work and current debates about your topic.



® **Topics:** This course covers a wide range of issues and spans the period from ancient Greece to the present – all related in some way to notions of the recursive interactions between women and technology. You are free to select any topic for your paper as long as it fits within this framework.

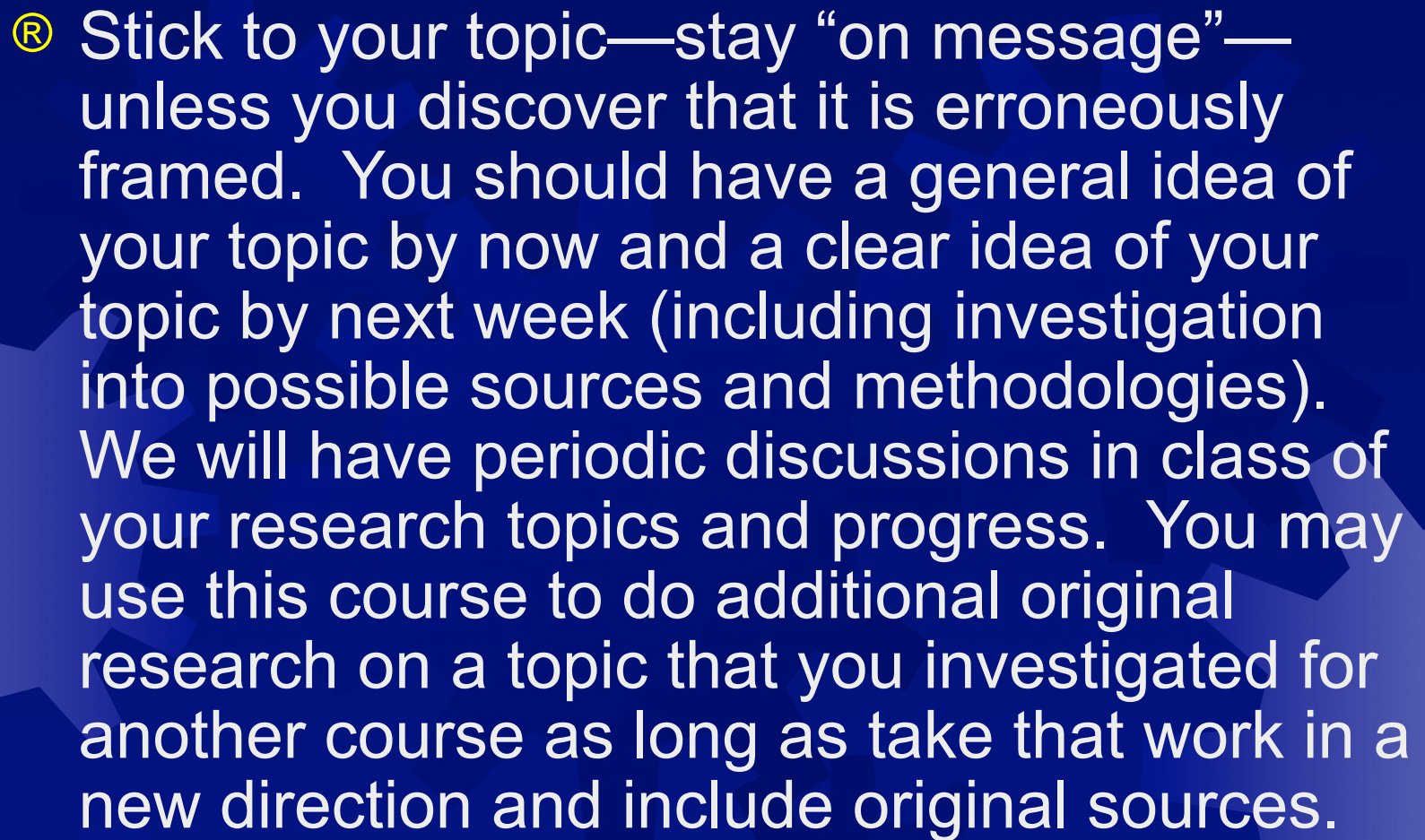
Advice on selecting a topic:

- ① Select a topic that interests you.
- ② Be careful to frame the topic narrowly enough so that you can reasonably do original research during the time frame of the course and so that you can pose a question and draw some conclusions about it. Most students select topics that are too broad to address in a single semester. Use time, place, or other factors to focus your research area.
- ③ Institutional boundaries can often be very useful in setting limits

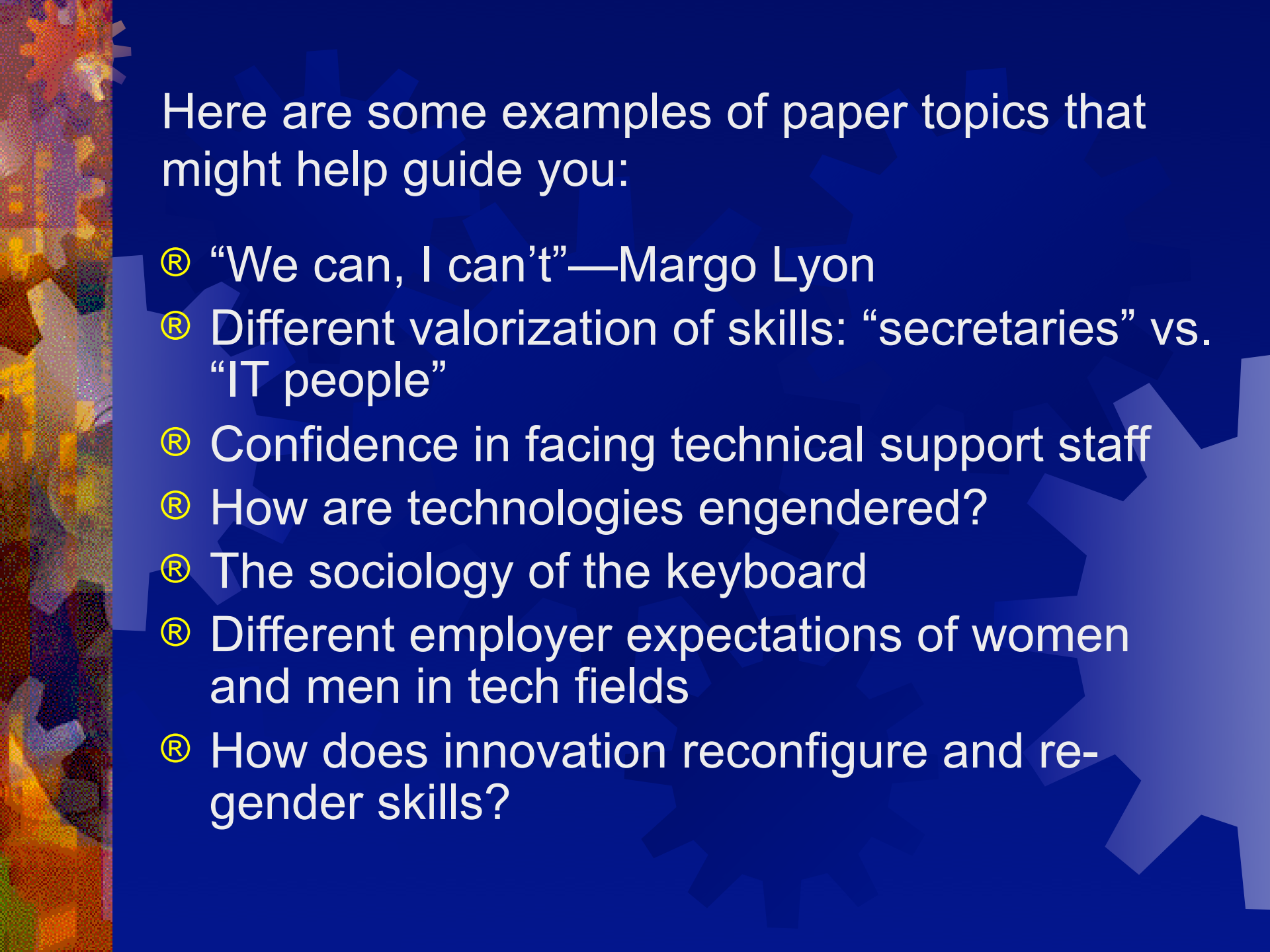


Three tests to help in determining whether your question is specific enough:

- ① *The one sentence test:* You can phrase your interest in a sentence that brings together key terms and citations in the field.
- ② *The embarrassment test:* Your study is so specific that you are actually embarrassed to tell people exactly what you are looking at because you are afraid that they will say, “That’s all?”
- ③ *The grandiosity test:* It’s so broad that it can’t credibly be done without a book.



① Stick to your topic—stay “on message”—unless you discover that it is erroneously framed. You should have a general idea of your topic by now and a clear idea of your topic by next week (including investigation into possible sources and methodologies). We will have periodic discussions in class of your research topics and progress. You may use this course to do additional original research on a topic that you investigated for another course as long as take that work in a new direction and include original sources.



Here are some examples of paper topics that might help guide you:

- ① “We can, I can’t”—Margo Lyon
- ① Different valorization of skills: “secretaries” vs. “IT people”
- ① Confidence in facing technical support staff
- ① How are technologies engendered?
- ① The sociology of the keyboard
- ① Different employer expectations of women and men in tech fields
- ① How does innovation reconfigure and re-gender skills?

Paper Proposal, I

Ⓜ A paper proposal is due ASAP. This written proposal should include a statement of your topic, proposed methodology, an overview (draft literature review) of secondary sources, and a bibliography. There is no required length for the proposal. You should use it as an opportunity to articulate your research question and initial findings, summarize the secondary literature, and get feedback on your approach.

Ⓜ A model proposal is at:

<http://www-personal.si.umich.edu/~rfrost/courses/Proposal.html>

Paper Proposal II

- ④ If you plan to conduct interviews or gather survey data, you should include interview questions, sample populations, and/or survey instruments. We will spend time throughout the term with updates.

Research Strategies

- ③ Bibliographic: how do you define what's hot or interesting and research it? Remember, the Web is not the entire universe of available info!
- ③ Chase leads, following links and references
- ③ Talk with experts here
- ③ Learn what you need to; for example, if you need to know how production managers decide when/who to hire, maybe learn some basic accounting principles

Final Paper:

- ① There is no required length for the paper, although somewhere between 20 and 30 pages is typical. Your paper should include a literature review of secondary works, but most of the paper should present your methodology, sources, findings and conclusions. The paper is due March 28.