MA Thesis Seminar
2019 Spring

Department of Design / Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture

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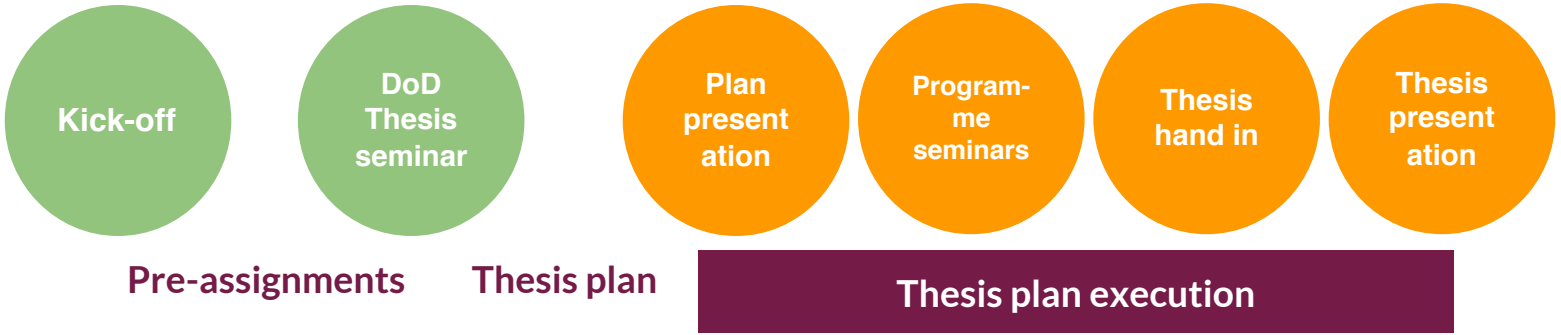
Introduction to the course



Agenda

Date	Day 1 April 8, Mon	Day 2 April 9, Tue	Day 3 April 10, Wed	Day 4 April 11, Thu	Day 5 April 12, Fri
Type	Contact Teaching	Independent learning*	Contact Teaching	Independent learning*	Contact Teaching
Content	Basics	Thesis plan	Techniques	Thesis plan	Actions
Assignment	-	2 templates	-	2 reviews	1 blueprint

* Tutoring option

* Tutoring option

Requirements to Pass

- **Participation** in 3 contact teaching sessions this week (Mon, Wed, Fri)
- **Submission** of 5 assignments in MyCourses
    - 2 templates (D-S-M-G-R exercise & Fourfold exercise)
    - 2 reviews of recent theses based on books or presentations
    - 1 action plan / thesis plan draft >> you'll get feedback before presentation.
- **Presentation** of the thesis plan in your MA programme.

Pre Assignments

- Read Master's Thesis Guide by Aalto ARTS
- Watch Turkka Keinonen's video about thesis plan design.
- Study and evaluate two recent theses from aaltodoc.aalto.fi database

Contact Teaching 1: What is a thesis?

‘Thesis’ as a Noun

a. A statement or theory that is put forward as a premise to be maintained or proved.

a. A long essay or dissertation involving personal research, written by a candidate for a university degree.

- Oxford English Dictionary

>>> There are different ways of doing a thesis
>>> Also there are different ways of using ‘a project’ or ‘projects’ for your thesis

D-S-M-G-R Exercise

1. This exercise will help you identify relevant categories (“building blocks”) for possible scenarios of your thesis.
2. See the description and template to fill up each category.
3. Connect written option(s) from each category to build different scenarios.
4. Examine which scenario works best for your interest.

>> Assignment: Check the template on MyCourses and submit yours by the end of April 9

Fourfold Exercise

1. This exercise will guide you build a narrative from the D-S-M-G-R exercise result.
2. See the description and template to fill up each category.
3. Review different scenarios that you examined according to the fourfold structure.
4. Fourfold does not need to be filled in a particular order. Start filling in each category at your convenience.

>> Assignment: Check the template on MyCourses and submit yours by the end of April 9

Five Questions to Craft a Thesis

- What does this idea claim?
- What reason do I have for accepting this claim?
- What evidence do I have for thinking those reasons are true?
- What alternatives and objections can I think of?
- What general principle of reasoning makes my reasons relevant to my claim?

- The Craft of Argument (2007)

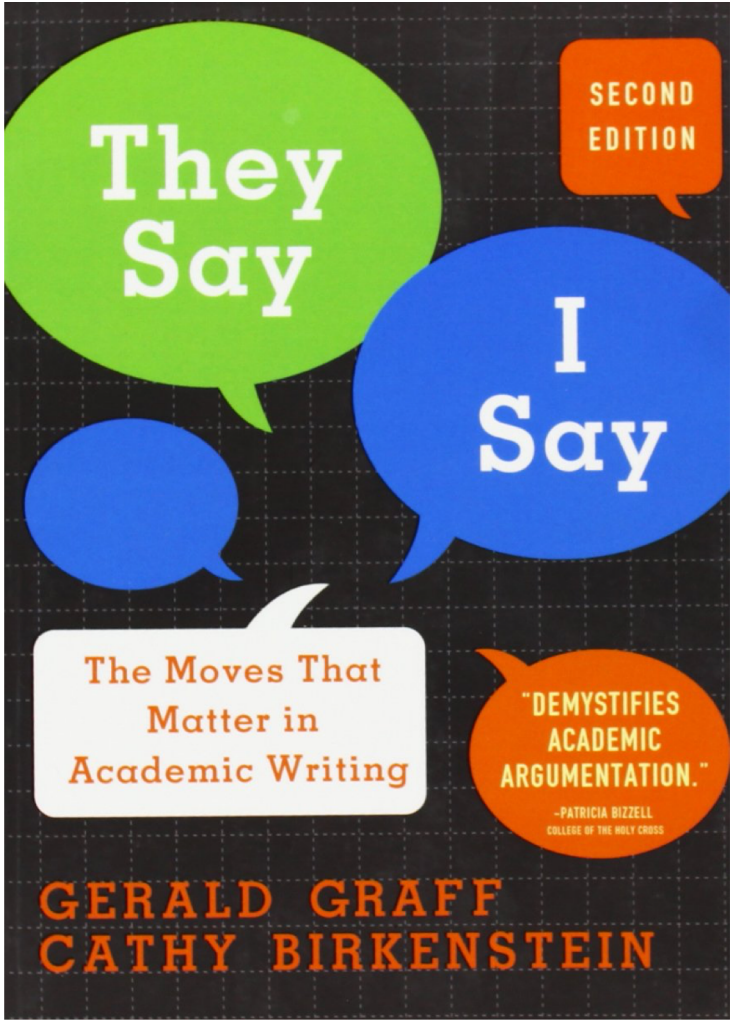
Five Questions to Craft a Thesis (problem-solving version)

- What is the problem?
- How will the action you propose solve the problem?
- How will your solution be implemented?
- How is your solution better than alternatives?
- What is the value of your action?

Five Questions to Craft a Thesis (sense-making version)

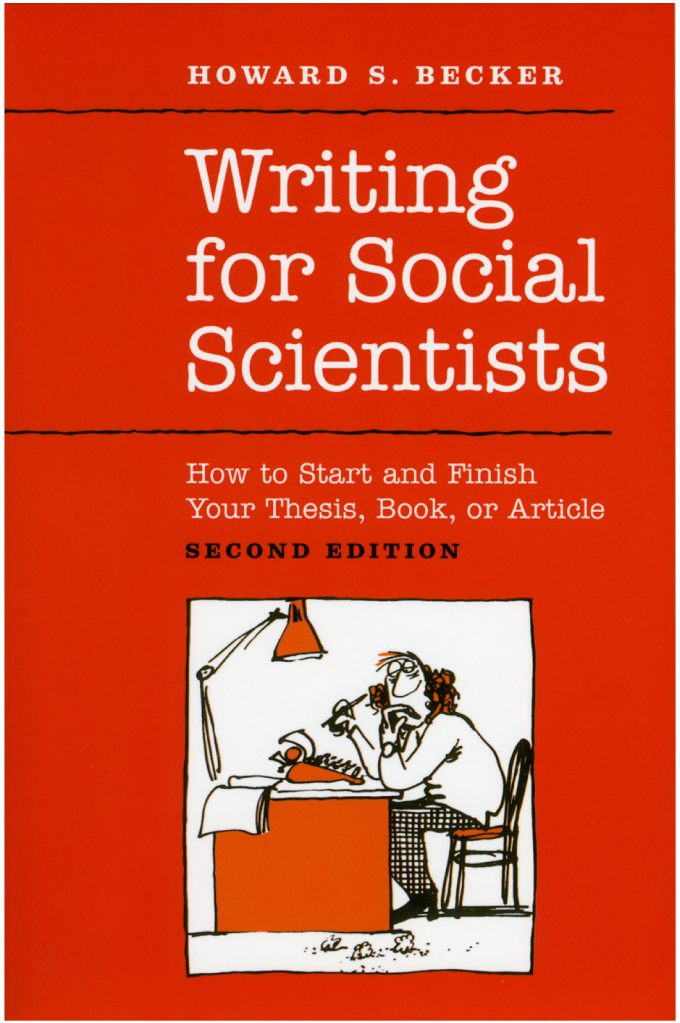
- What is the concept?
- How will the action you propose introduce something new?
- How will your concept be implemented?
- How is your concept built on something already existing?
- What is the value of your action?

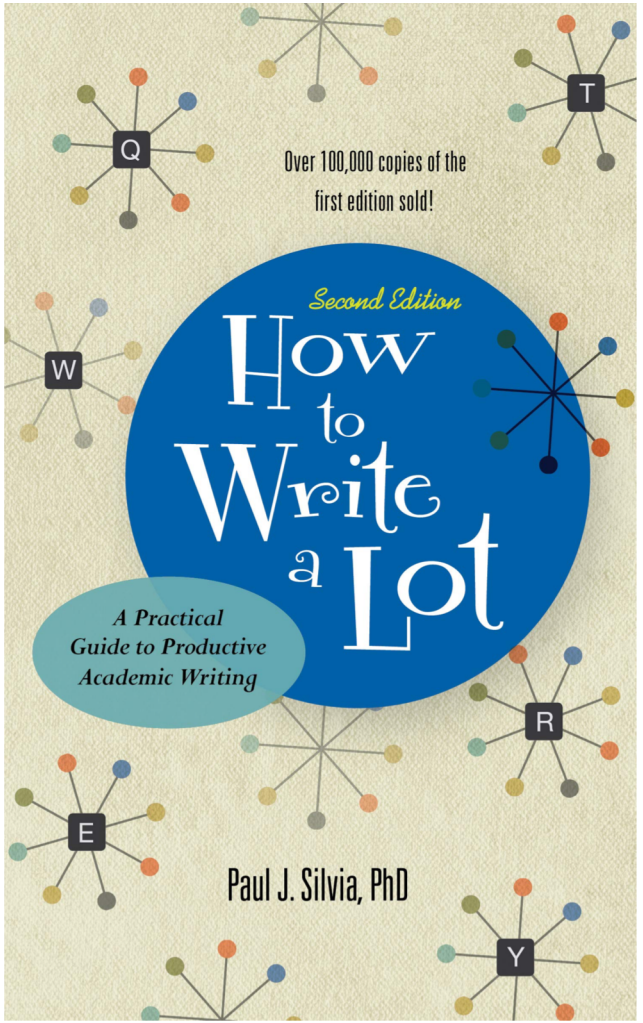
Books & tips

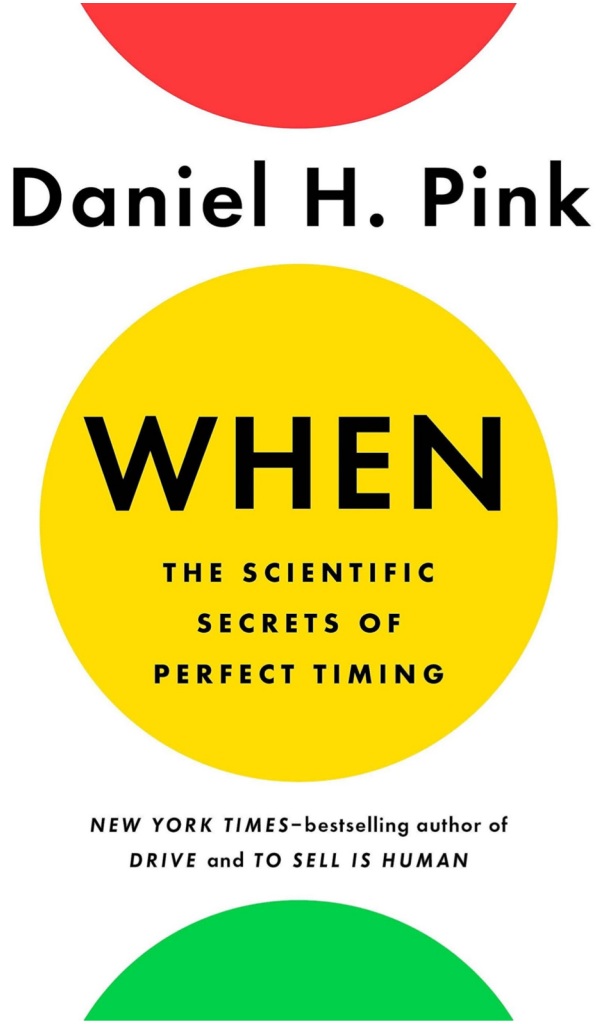


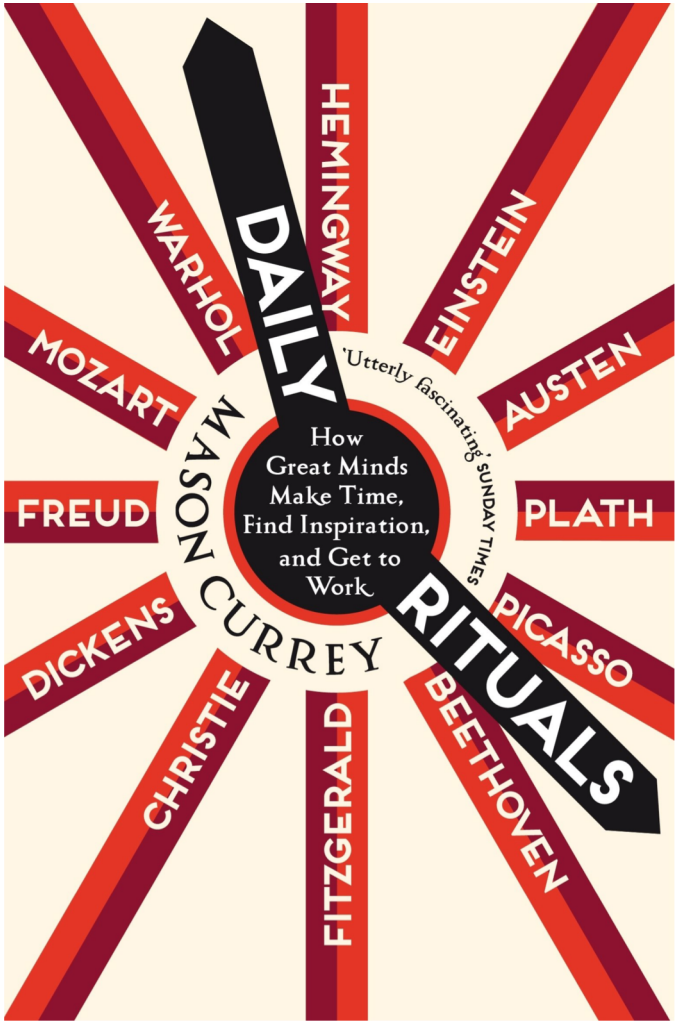
They Say, I Say Templates for Agreeing and Disagreeing
From They Say, I Say by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein

They Say (Use quotation marks if you copy the wording; always use the author's name!!!)	**I Say**
Signaling these are someone else's views • X offered a harsh critique of _____ for_____. • Many people assumed that _____. • X acknowledges that _____. • X argues that _____. • X believes that _____. • X denies/does not deny that _____. • X claims that _____. • X complains that _____. • X concedes that _____. • X emphasizes that _____. • X insists that _____. • X observes that _____. • X questions whether _____. • X refutes the claim that _____. • X reminds us that _____. • X reports that _____. • X suggests that _____. • X urges us to _____. • According to X, "_____." • In X's view, "_____." **Tying in another They Say** • X agrees, saying, "_____." • X disagrees when he writes, "_____." • X agrees that _____. • X complicates matters furter when he writes, "_____."	**Explaining Quotations** • Basically, X is saying _____. • In other words, X believes _____. • In making this comment, X argues that _____. • X is insisting that _____. • X's point is that _____. **Agreeing** • X is right that… • I agree because… • I completely agree with X because… **Disagreeing, With Reasons** • I think X is mistaken because she overlooks _____. • X's claim that _____ rests upon the questionable assumption that _____. • I disagree with X's view that _____ because… • X contradicts herself/can't have if both ways. On one hand she argues _____. But on the other hand, she also says _____. • By focusing on _____, X overlooks the deeper problem of _____. • My own view, however, is that… • However, it is simply not true that… **Agreeing and Disagreeing Simultaneously** • Although I agree with X up to a point, I cannot accept his overall conclusion that _____. • Although I disagree with much that X says, I fully endorse his final conclusion that _____. • Though I agree that _____, I still insist that _____.


HOWARD S. BECKER
Writing for Social Scientists
How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article
SECOND EDITION


Over 100,000 copies of the first edition sold!
Second Edition
How to Write a Lot
A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing
Paul J. Silvia, PhD


Daniel H. Pink
WHEN
THE SCIENTIFIC SECRETS OF PERFECT TIMING
NEW YORK TIMES–bestselling author of DRIVE and TO SELL IS HUMAN


DAILY RITUALS
How Great Minds Make Time, Find Inspiration, and Get to Work
MASON CURREY
'Utterly fascinating' SUNDAY TIMES
HEMINGWAY
EINSTEIN
AUSTEN
PLATH
PICASSO
BEETHOVEN
FITZGERALD
CHRISTIE
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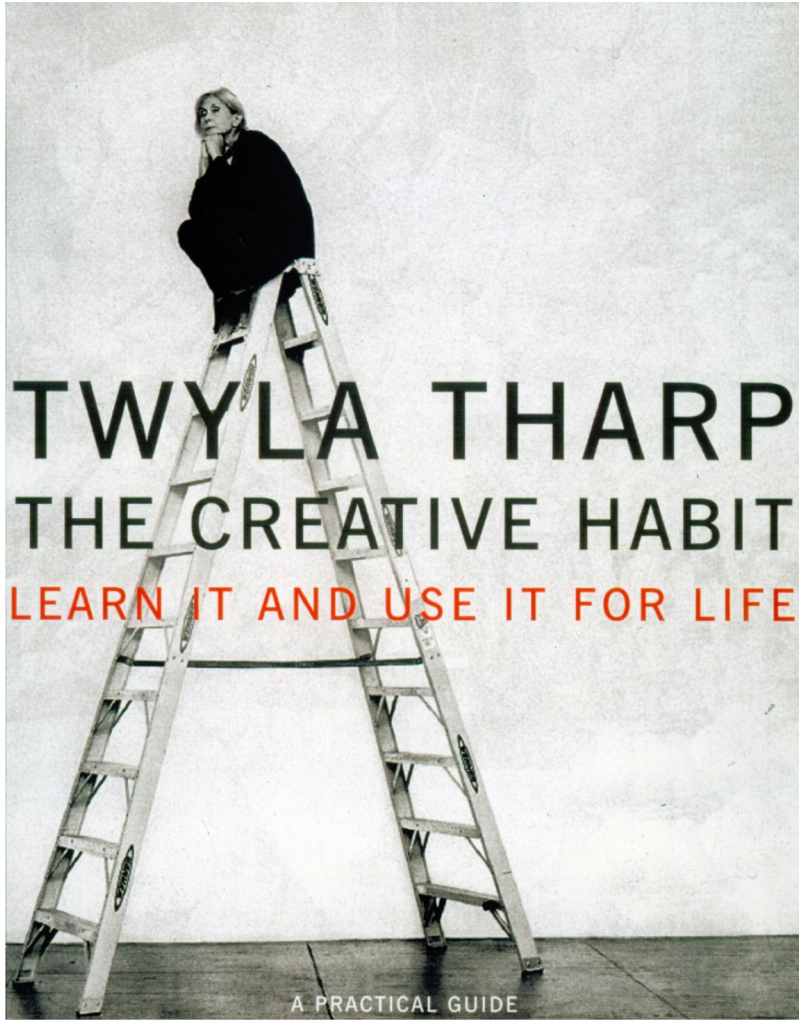


Teaching as Creative Process

DR. KEVIN WASS
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Advancing Teaching and Learning Conference
Texas Tech University
March 4, 2016

What is creative process?

- Series of thoughts and actions
- Often results in change or innovation
- Non-linear, ends and achievements are uncertain
- New but not necessarily original: "Steal Like an Artist"
- Process, not product-oriented, not "inspiration"

Process #1: Think like an artist

TEXT: TWYLA THARP WITH MARK REITER, "THE CREATIVE HABIT: LEARN IT AND USE IT FOR LIFE", SIMON AND SCHUSTER, 2003

Ritual

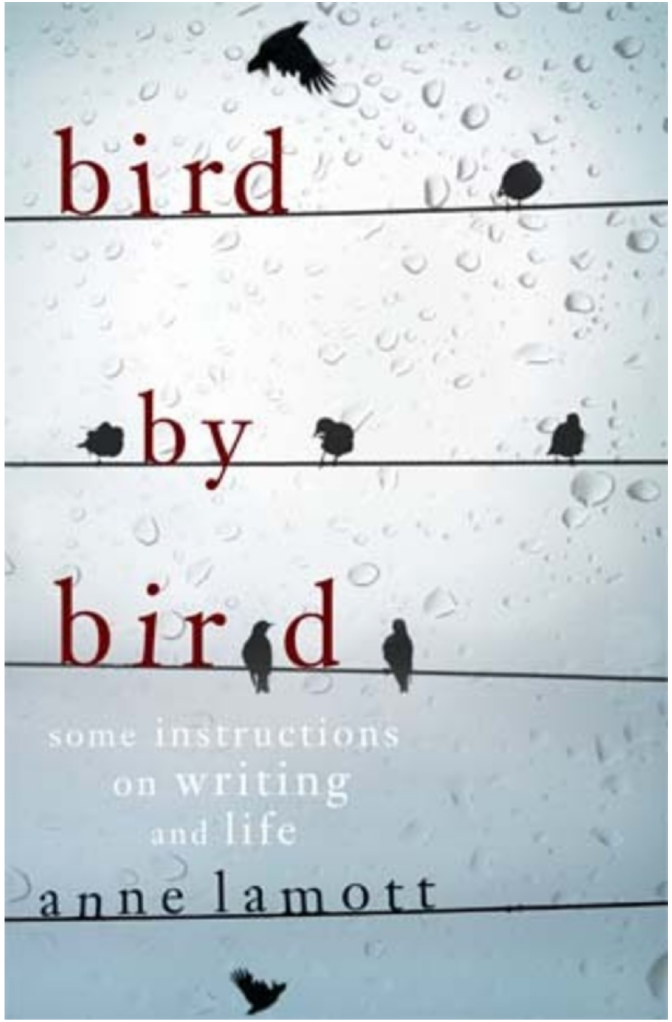
"It's vital to establish some rituals—automatic but decisive patterns of behavior—at the beginning of the creative process, when you are most at peril of turning back, chickening out, giving up, or going the wrong way." *Tharp/Reiter, p. 15*

My Rituals

- Sunday NY Times
- Reversing my process—audience point of view—become a better performer through listening
- Engage the basic fundamental skills of my art form

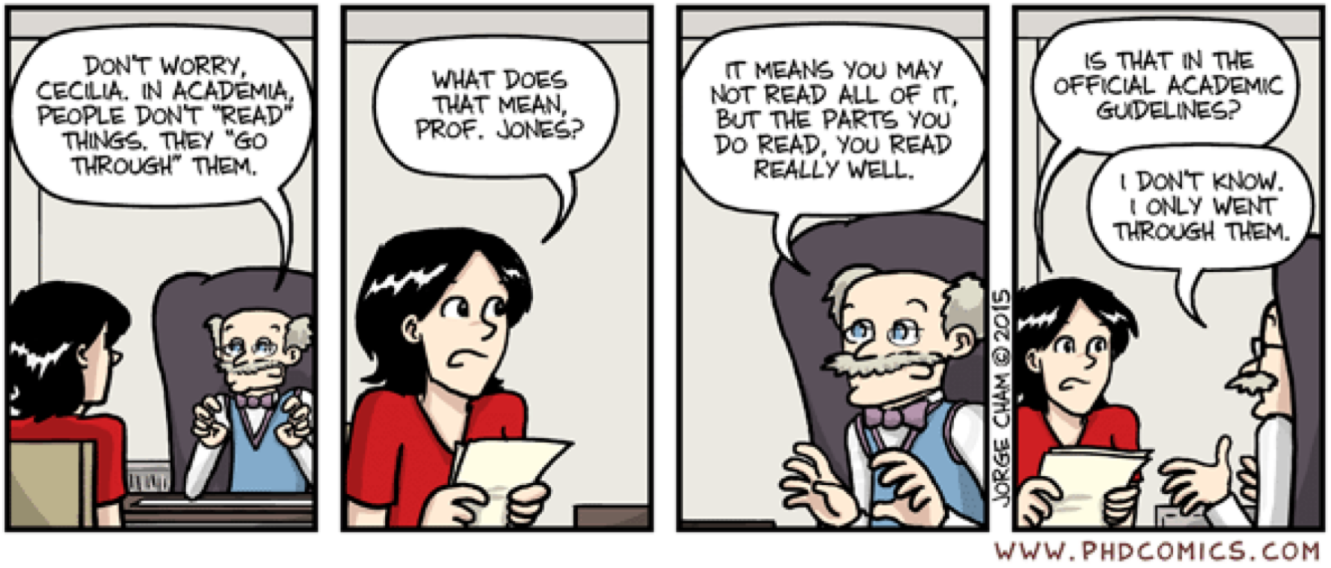
Your Rituals

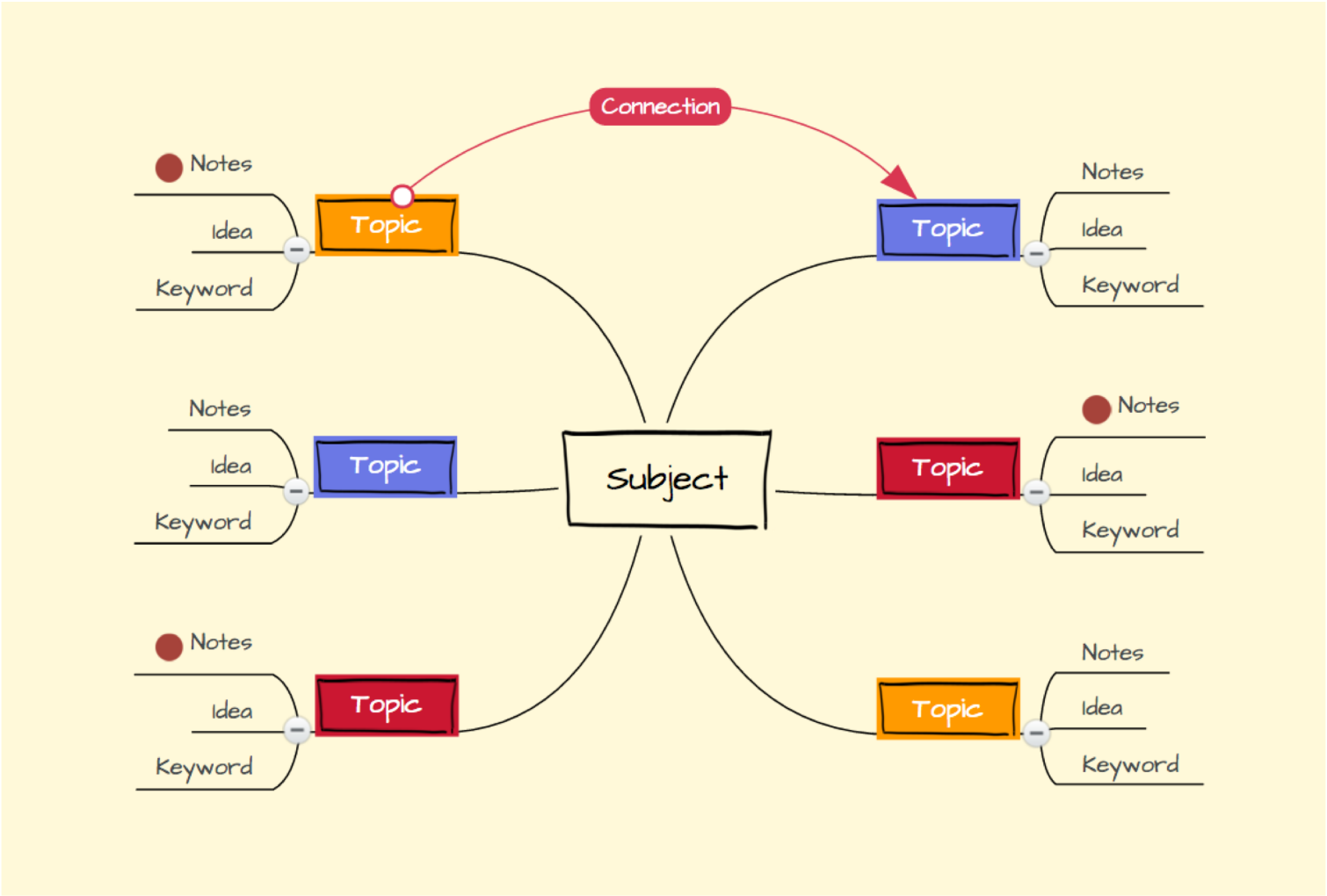
- Things you are already doing
- How can they become the beginning of a creative process?
- Identify one ritual that you currently follow. How can this feed your creative process?



Author Anne Lamott on how to approach the often overwhelming task of writing

"Thirty years ago my older brother, who was 10 years old at the time, was trying to get a report on birds written that he'd had three months to write. It was due the next day.... He was at the kitchen table close to tears, surrounded by binder paper and pencils and unopened books on birds, immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead. Then my father sat down beside him, put his arm around my brother's shoulder, and said, 'Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird.'"


DON'T WORRY, CECILIA. IN ACADEMIA, PEOPLE DON'T "READ" THINGS. THEY "GO THROUGH" THEM.
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN, PROF. JONES?
IT MEANS YOU MAY NOT READ ALL OF IT, BUT THE PARTS YOU DO READ, YOU READ REALLY WELL.
IS THAT IN THE OFFICIAL ACADEMIC GUIDELINES?
I DON'T KNOW. I ONLY WENT THROUGH THEM.
JORGE CHAM © 2015
WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM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