**Master’s International Students defining their research while in the field**

(prepared by J.R. Mihelcic, August, 2013)

How do I figure out how if my research is worthy of a thesis? It is very important that you develop clear research questions and objectives. This is important to define first because your methods and data collection depend on that. It is good for you to think about the following questions (provided by Dr. Jeffrey Cunningham) to frame your research.

1. My research is about…

2. Something we don’t know is…..

3. That is important because …..

4. The objective of my research is …..

Then you should develop a couple page document that starts with some significance/motivation, reviews some relevant literature (so we can see how your idea fits with what others have done), then states some clear objective(s) and/or hypothesis(es). This document is traded back and forth with your advisor(s), then after it is finalized you can start on your methods and data collection. You should also be reviewing theses that located on our web site. Over time, your couple page document should grow and ideally before you return home you would have your introduction, literature review, and methods written up.