Designing Doctoral Futures

Graduate Students as Architects of Humanities Training

Participant worksheet packet | Fall 2026

Name: _____

Instead of asking, “What’s the one right path?” odyssey planning asks, “What are three paths that could all be great?” Today you will apply that to doctoral education itself. These are prototypes, not commitments. Work quickly, follow what interests you, and resist the urge to make any one plan “right.”

Guidelines for your three plans

Your three plans should be three distinct versions of doctoral education, as different from one another as possible. Variations on the same plan do not count. Go broad.

Elements of each plan

- A visual five-year timeline (a list, diagram, or sketch is fine)
- A six-word descriptive title: the essence of the plan in a quick phrase
- 1 to 2 questions the plan raises for you: what do you want to test or explore?

THE BLUEPRINT

Doctoral education as you experience it today. What is it made of, who is part of it, where does it lead?

THE REINVENTION

Suppose the current model were not an option. What takes its place?

THE DREAMSCAPE

No limits on resources, money, or expectations. What would you build?

In this packet

Pages 2 to 4 Your three odyssey plans on five-year timelines
Page 5 Group share notes

The University of Texas at Austin
Graduate Office of Career and Life Design
Career Success

Odyssey plan format adapted from Burnett & Evans (2016), Designing Your Life

6 WORD DESCRIPTIVE TITLE: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

word 1 word 2 word 3 word 4 word 5 word 6

PLAN 1: THE BLUEPRINT

Prompt: Doctoral education as you experience it today. What is it made of, who is part of it, where does it lead?

For each year, jot down what happens, who is involved, and where it leads. A list, diagram, or sketch is fine.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5



RESOURCES **I LIKE IT** **CONFIDENCE** **COHERENCE***

Draw a needle on each dial to rate this plan.

*Coherence: how well this plan fits together with who you are and what you value, including how well it prepares humanities scholars for a wider range of careers.

QUESTIONS I STILL HAVE ABOUT THIS PLAN:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Adapted from Burnett & Evans (2016), Designing Your Life

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6 WORD DESCRIPTIVE TITLE:

word 1 | word 2 | word 3 | word 4 | word 5 | word 6

PLAN 2: THE REINVENTION

Prompt: Suppose the current model were not an option. What takes its place?

For each year, jot down what happens, who is involved, and where it leads. A list, diagram, or sketch is fine.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5



RESOURCES | **I LIKE IT** | **CONFIDENCE** | **COHERENCE***

Draw a needle on each dial to rate this plan.

*Coherence: how well this plan fits together with who you are and what you value, including how well it prepares humanities scholars for a wider range of careers.

QUESTIONS I STILL HAVE ABOUT THIS PLAN:

1.
2.
3.

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6 WORD DESCRIPTIVE TITLE: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

word 1 word 2 word 3 word 4 word 5 word 6

PLAN 3: THE DREAMSCAPE

Prompt: No limits on resources, money, or expectations. What would you build?

For each year, jot down what happens, who is involved, and where it leads. A list, diagram, or sketch is fine.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5



RESOURCES **I LIKE IT** **CONFIDENCE** **COHERENCE***

Draw a needle on each dial to rate this plan.

*Coherence: how well this plan fits together with who you are and what you value, including how well it prepares humanities scholars for a wider range of careers.

QUESTIONS I STILL HAVE ABOUT THIS PLAN:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Group Share Notes

Each round is about four minutes: the presenter shares for about two minutes, then listeners give generative feedback for about two minutes.

WHEN IT IS MY TURN TO SHARE

Circle the plan that felt most energizing:

Blueprint Reinvention Dreamscape

Why I chose its title:

One thing I noticed while making it:

What I want to hold on to:

You may keep personal details private.

WHEN I AM LISTENING: JOT DOWN WHAT YOU NOTICE

Presenter: _____

I noticed... _____

You seemed most energized when... _____

A theme I heard was... _____

Tell me more about... _____

Presenter: _____

I noticed... _____

You seemed most energized when... _____

A theme I heard was... _____

Tell me more about... _____

Presenter: _____

I noticed... _____

You seemed most energized when... _____

A theme I heard was... _____

Tell me more about... _____

Listeners: do not critique, evaluate, or advise. Notice energy, themes, and curiosity.