Mini-Ethnography

Ethnography involves studying and writing about a particular group, community, or subculture. Your role in this assignment is that of a primary researcher. The point of ethnography is to watch, to try to understand what’s going on, and to ask questions to test your observations. You will become an expert on the community and how it works.

We’ll tackle this in steps. Please note that you will not be able to complete the work the night before it is due. You are responsible for budgeting your time in advance. You are required to work with your community, and around their meeting times and rules. You should not change anything about the community for the benefit of this assignment.

Here are the steps and assignments associated with this paper:

1. **Tell me what community you are researching by 9/24.**

   Here are some examples to generate ideas:

   - Barber shops, nursing homes, firefighters, church groups, self-help groups, emergency medical squads, athletic teams, day care centers, businesses of all sorts (fast food restaurants, stores, bars), farmers and farm families, hang-outs with regulars(coffee houses, etc.), fraternities, sororities, clubs, internet forums, exercise groups, fringe groups (punk rockers, hipsters, etc.), theatre troupes

   The most important factor in your choice should be access to the community to complete your observations and interviews (i.e. ability to complete the assignment on time).

   On that day in class we will do an exercise to determine your thoughts/feelings/expectations about this group. This will be the draft for part one of your paper.

2. **Turn in a two part plan-of-action by 9/29:**

   - Part 1: Your plan for observing this group. When and where you will observe them and how.
   - Part 2: A formal version of what you worked on last class. This should include why you are interested in this group, what you know about them already (before observing), and what your expectations are.

3. **Observe your group for 2 hours (1 hour at a time or 2 at once) and collect field notes and turn them in by 10/6.**

   As you observe, write down everything you see (you will have to turn in your notes with your final draft). While you may not recognize something as important when you first see it, your observation may reveal more as you revisit your notes.

   Your job is to do the following:
- Notice what is interesting about this community and the way community members interact with each other
- Attempt to understand how the people you’re observing view their world. This means you must observe closely, take profuse notes, and distance yourself from the site you’re observing. Remember: you are an observer, not a participant.

4. **As you visit your community, interview at least one participant of the group, taking notes throughout. You will turn in these notes by 10/6**

*As a rule, individuals being observed or interviewed should be kept anonymous in your writing.*

5. Write a report (a paper) of what you have found using the following three sections:
   - Positioning yourself as the researcher: Why did you choose this site and culture? How did you feel about it going in according to your own history (age, race, gender, background, etc.)? What assumptions did you make about this culture?
   - What goes on here: What can you say about this subgroup? This section is the bulk of your paper. Drawing from your fieldnotes, tell us what you saw and heard. Talk about your artifacts, interviews, and the patterns and rituals you observed. What are the “rules” of this place? Which way is the right way to behave? How do you know who is an outsider? Here you are creating a picture of your culture, so don’t forget about dialogue, descriptions, etc.
   - Reflections: What have you learned about yourself in the process of studying this subculture? For example, if you researched a comic book store, do you now understand what aspects of the store surprised you or intrigued you? What have you learned about the group you studied or society as a whole? This section, along with your positioning section, is the place where you return to your thesis and make sure you’ve proven it.

Instead of giving a comprehensive overview, you should concentrate on specific points. You should not only restate what others have told you, but should develop your own conclusions from your observations. However, all of these conclusions must be supported by observation or other research. *Detailed descriptions and quotes must be included for your Ethnography to be complete.*

**You will need to have a full rough draft done by 10/8 in order to have a peer review session with one of your classmates.** You must email evidence of this peer review session to me by the end of class time on 10/8. The easiest way to do this would likely be to use the review feature on Microsoft Word for each other’s’ papers.

6. You will revise your paper using what you learned from your peer review session and **will turn in a copy to me by 5:00 PM Saturday October 10th.**

7. **We will then meet to discuss your paper individually during the week of October 13th.**

8. **A final draft of the paper will be due by 5:00 PM Saturday October 17th.**
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| T 9/22 | Introduce Paper 2  
Discuss Culture and People                                                   | *Guide* Ch 9 pg 307-319                                                     |
| R 9/24 | Work on part 1 of your paper  
Discuss writing process                                                                 | Email name of community you will be studying before class (*apine2@gsu.edu*) |
| T 9/29 | Thesis Statement discussion  
Develop interview questions  
Talk about taking field notes                                                   | 2 part plan of action due before class  
*Guide Ch 4: pg 109-144*                                                      |
| R 10/1 | Discuss peer editing  
Choose pairs for peer editing  
Sign up for one-on-one conferences  
Discuss requirements for final paper (rubric)                                 | Read *Guide Ch 6: pg 185-196*                                               |
| T 10/6 | NO CLASS: Take class time to make sure you have completed research and interview and have typed up your notes. | Observation notes and Interview notes due before 5:00 PM (email this to *apine2@gsu.edu*) |
| R 10/8 | NO CLASS: Peer review session with your partner in the library during class time | First draft and your partner’s review due before 5:00 PM (email this to *apine2@gsu.edu*) |
| Sa 10/10 |                                                                                   | Revised draft of paper due to me (*apine2@gsu.edu*) before 5:00 PM          |
| T 10/13 | NO CLASS: one-on-one conferences                                                   | Work on final draft                                                         |
| R 10/15 | NO CLASS: one-on-one conferences                                                   | Work on final draft                                                         |
| Sa 10/17 |                                                                                   | Final draft due by 5:00 PM (email to *apine2@gsu.edu*)                       |