

Argument Research Paper Project

Ethnographic Observation

Ethnography = Ethno _____ Graph(y) _____

QUALITATIVE v. QUANTATIVE research

Objective: Student researchers will conduct an ethnographic study to produce an argumentative research paper about a topic of their choice based on findings of field research. The research question comes from what you observe. Students will work closely with the instructor and their peers during the assignment so students can develop the argument effectively from research findings. (Follow the model paper provided as a guide.) Length: At least 7-9 pages. Weight: 30% of the course grade. You will write in APA or MLA format based on your intended college major per SSC guidelines for programs of study / majors. (Papers written in APA must include an **ABSTRACT** for this assignment. The majority of students will write in APA for this project based on past experience.)

MULTI-MODAL presentation: Upon completion of the research paper, students will present a 25-30minute, multi-modal project with a presentation component incorporating paper findings and scholarly research. Weight: 20%. Grading: Rubric provided as separate attachment. (Must pass multi-modal project / presentation with D or better to pass ENG231)

Overview: For this project, you will choose a location where the activities of your community (the subculture) occur. At this location, as a researcher, you could answer one of the questions you have about that community. Other members of the community will care about the answer to your question – you are adding to an existing body of scholarly research. Simply put, you're a community member, you have questions about what goes on in that community, you can observe the community in action which might help you better understand how the question could be answered, and why other members of the community would care. You'll be drawing some conclusions and acknowledging the other side in the final result paper. As you observe, you may even find an additional or new question you want to explore! **Your research question should come from a preconception you have - or - from your observation at the site.**

1. You belong to a community (what do you already know about your community subculture?)
2. You question something meaningful in the community
3. Other community members would care – **debatable, plausible, consequential** – meets research filters
4. You observe (2 times minimum for at least 30 minutes per time) (maintain anonymity of your sources – especially children and youth age 0-17)
5. You must find scholarly data (articles / support) to help you find an answer and frame the question in context – 1-2 scholarly articles; maximum of two popular sources; 1-2 primary sources (people). **FIVE SOURCES TOTAL MINIMUM.**
6. You analyze your data from your observations, **interviews**, and sources – make meaning (You must conduct at least one interview with a primary source)
** You may conduct a survey of the community if you need to. Please see the instructor if you are going to.
7. You write an essay (7-9) pages with your findings **ARGUING** that your **interpretative claim** is strongest or true
8. You produce and present a multimodal project that visually expresses the findings after the paper is completed.
9. **To be clear.** You are NOT writing a research paper about the PLACE. **EXAMPLE:** If your subculture is **diners at Chipotle**. You are NOT writing about Chipotle. Instead, you are only researching your question. *How can consumers waste less food when dining out? How does cafeteria-style dining reduce food waste?* Yes, you will describe Chipotle in your paper, but you will NOT write only about Chipotle. You **MUST** include research about the experience of cafeteria-style dining as a valuable food service choice for customers that leads to less food waste. **Your claim (after your research) might be “Dining at a cafeteria-style restaurant causes less food waste than at traditional sit-down restaurants.”**

Assignment components and due dates:

Planning Days / Initial Research / Observing – Feb. 1 - 28, 2017–Finding an expert (can be used for Individual Essay #2)

A sketch is a brief, 1-2 page writing – list or paragraphs. All partners should participate in the writing of the sketches.

ADVICE: Complete these Sketches AHEAD of the due date. They will help you write your paper. Keep docs in Bearworks folder so each member can read and write in them.

Sketch 1 – Positioning Yourself as a Researcher (All descriptions on one-two pages) how YOU fit into the subculture/community. Write as an individual. You can use separate paragraphs. Due not later than March 6-10, 2017

Sketch 2 – Insider Language and Interview of expert not later than March 6-10, 2017

Sketch 3 – Field notes and “thick” description – does place matter? – typed - not later than March 6-10, 2017 Type your observation and your thoughts – make two columns SAW/HEARD and INITIAL THOUGHTS – just like our practice.

Sketch 4 - Working References or Works Cited page – APA / MLA (works you will cite in your paper including the interviews) March 11, 2017– ongoing - is the best way to keep your scholarly articles organized links and sources organized. You will work in APA or MLA based on your college major. You will commit to APA or MLA with the instructor.

Sketch 5 – Introduction of paper (the beginning setting up context and the thesis) and paper subheadings. Due not later than March 6-11, 2010 INCLUDING THESIS if you have it.

Instructor Conferences - as needed by appointment – check in with your instructor with questions, ideas, challenges during Period 1 and Period 8 or before school or after school or during class lab days. Students are responsible for initiating communication with the instructor.

Peer Review 1 – March 15, 2017

Peer Review 2 - March 20, 2017

Revision – In-class meeting and collaboration on the feedback you received. See March Calendar

Final Submission of Paper - March 24, 2017 (Before Spring Break)

MultiModal Project Work Days – April 4-7

Presentation of the Multimodal Project April, 2017 (TBD depending on how many groups in each class)

Sketch1: Positioning Yourself as a Researcher – EACH member MUST write his or her own paragraph for this sketch – just label your paragraph in the sketch with your name.

Consider your relationship to your chosen community. Are you an insider who must “step out” to see it with clarity? Or are you an outsider who must manage the task of “stepping in” to your community? If you are an outsider, how did you gain entry? Did an insider help you? If you are an insider, examine what makes you fit in. How did you become “initiated” into the community subculture? What kinds of preconceptions did you (or other people) have about your culture? Have your attitudes changed as you’ve gotten to know the people in your community/subculture better? Do you feel close to or distant from the people you’re studying? How might your age, gender, socioeconomic status, and political views matter? (If you can’t see why these factors might matter, imagine what difference it would make if someone radically different from you did the research: for example, a 50-year-old African-American, liberal, middle-class male professor)

What do you already know about your community subculture? Consider these categories:

- Values and beliefs
- Social structure of the group
- Insider status – what is it and how do you get it?
- Spoken and unspoken rules

(J. Bean, 2012)

Sketch 2: Insider Language and Interview

This exercise has two main parts: 1) a glossary of insider terms and 2) an interview with an insider. In the glossary, you should list and define specialized language and the definitions used by insiders in the community subculture. You might need to ask an insider to help you define the terms. For the interview, prepare open-ended questions that will yield more than a yes/no answer. Plan questions that begin with what, where, when, why, and how. Try to get your

informant to talk more than you do. Encourage your informant to be specific with comments like, “Tell me more about...” or “What makes a good ____?” or “Describe a typical day...” Your goal should be to find out what it takes to be an insider in this community. You should consider recording the interview and transcribing the best parts. If you don’t have a recorder, take detailed notes that include exact quotes.
(J. Bean, 2012)

Sketch 3: First-hand Experience – field notes

Visit your site at least two times and take careful notes. Be sure to write down lots and lots of details – even silly stuff that you don’t think you’ll need, like what people are wearing, what kinds of things are on the wall, people’s facial expressions and body language. Don’t just work from memory: **YOU MUST HAVE FIELDNOTES** in the “T” Chart Form. Once you have 4-5 pages of notes, write a “thick” essay-like description of your field site. A “Think” description has vivid, concrete details that allow the reader to hear, see, smell, taste the things associated with the community subculture. Describe age, gender, ethnicity, hairstyles, attitudes, and language of the people in your subculture. The description will matter to your final assertion – your interpretative claim must be tied to your experience. Some aspects of the THICK description may matter for your paper.

(J. Bean, 2012)

REFLECTION after you type your field notes: (Does **not** need to be answered by typing out but should be discussed with your group.)

1. I am contributing to “the conversation” in this way ...
Who else is in the conversation? What does your research add?
2. Categories.
I’ve noticed patterns of behaviors, interactions, language use, etc., and some categories I’ve come up with are ...
3. If I had to write this as an essay, these would be my three main points...

Sketch 4: Working Bibliography – Works Cited or References page. Keep a running list of your sources for your paper. Begin formatting the page accurately for the citations as necessary.

Sketch 5: Developing a thesis and writing an introduction

As you develop your field research into an essay, you need to begin to develop categories and theories about the community subculture you’re studying. Consider these questions as you are working out your thesis:

- What is the social structure of the group? How do they categorize themselves and make distinctions within the group? How do they determine who’s “in” and who’s “out”? How do members of this community explain and interpret their day-to-day activities? What values and beliefs are implicit in the things you describe? What of the unspoken rules of the subculture? What roles are men and women supposed to play? What happens if someone violates rules for behavior?
- Think about what role this subculture plays in the larger culture. Does it provide a safe haven for members? Does it serve as an alternate family? Does it provide opportunities for escape or adventure or rebellion? What needs do members have that the subculture meets? Why would a subculture like this form in our society?
- Use your sketches as you draft your essay, but don’t just slap them together. You should use subheadings to break your analysis and description into chunks. One good way of organizing your essay is to “walk” the reader through your research process describing how you entered the community subculture and what you found.

Advice for Writing Fieldnotes Observe for a MINIMUM of 30 minutes – ALL Members MUST OBSERVE at the location at least two times !! USE “T” Chart Method to help organize your thoughts.

What I write in the field, the bare minimum:

Date & Time Who and Where (LOCATION – be specific)

Note where people are placed in relation to each other/main objects (furniture, chalkboard, etc.)

Make bullet points of main topics of discussion/event flows/observations

Record verbatim any key quotes

Record any questions the situation raises for you that require later clarification or follow up.

Record any ideas/creative zaps/insights you have while on-site (place is *powerful*)

*Some situations allow you to write more freely (copiously) than others. Some research sites are used to people with notebooks, writing furiously. If you’re fortunate to be in such a situation, go for it. Otherwise, jot main points.