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THE ETHNOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Ethnographies are a collection of qualitative methods meant to explore a subculture from an insider perspective. A subculture is a group of people who have contact with one-another and share the same culture: an invisible web of behaviors, patterns, rituals, jargon, artifacts, rules, etc., often centered on a place, hobby, interest, and/or occupation. On top of broadening our horizons, awakening our capacity to care about people different from us, and helping us know how to converse with them in a respectful and informed manner, ethnographies are widely used in new product and program development and evaluation.

I. OBJECTIVES

- Develop an understanding of qualitative research design.
- Become proficient at analyzing qualitative data.
- Develop the ability to see beyond received understanding of how a certain process is supposed to work, what it is supposed to mean, and learn about the meaning that its participants ascribe to it.
- Use a variety of strategies to gather and organize information appropriate for the context and persuasive to the intended audience.
- Collect, analyze, and organize research information in verbally and visually compelling ways.
- Employ format, syntax, punctuation, and spelling in an appropriate and a stylistically sophisticated manner.

II. DESCRIPTION

In this paper, you will synthesize your fieldwork and integrate your research findings into an 8- to 12-page essay. This essay shall be written using all the writings and research you have completed during the term. You will attempt to answer your research questions, and in the process, you will speak to the questions that have guided your fieldwork, such as “What’s the story?” and “Where’s the culture?” You will reevaluate your fieldwork descriptions, interpretations, and analysis. You will represent the subculture in which you have become a participant-observer and the informants you have come to know. The Ethnographic Essay will assess any differences or similarities between reality and received understanding. Using information collected throughout the course, you will have the opportunity to suggest what might be causing differences of opinion about the subculture.

III. FORMAT

- Use APA style for in-text citation and references.
- Use Times New Roman 12.
- Leave 1" margins.
- Include a Cover Page (Running Head + Title + Name + Institution + Month & Year).
- Do not include an abstract
- Double space your paper
- Title your paper (use a creative and informative title)

IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA

CRITERIA	DETAILED CRITERIA	WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?	POINTS
WRITING	1. Voice	You need to show up in your paper; own your research; let your personality and your passion shine through.	30%
	2. Organization & Flow	Your fieldstudy should be a cohesive and comprehensive story of your subculture and of your fieldworking experience.	
	3. Style	What makes you different from all other student writers out there? Life! Spirit! Personality! Revise your whole paper to make sure that your thoughts are expressed in a lucid, clever, and persuasive way.	
	4. Grammar & Mechanics	Make sure your paper is error free (grammar, punctuation, etc.), and all your sources are well documented in-text and on your works-cited page.	
RESEARCH	1. Data	You need to demonstrate that you have used data from fieldnotes and from interviews.	30%
	2. Integrity	Take seriously your ethical responsibility to represent your participants with dignity; your integrity as a researcher is directly tied to your credibility.	
	3. Credibility	In your research, you are trying to establish credibility with your audience; if you take your research seriously, your audience will take you seriously.	
	4. Multiple Perspectives	Your data and analysis should represent multiple perspectives and/or voices from your fieldsite; triangulation.	
SELF	1. Positioning Yourself	Tell us about your relationship to this subculture, why you chose to study it, what subjectivities (assumptions) you held before beginning your project and how (if at all) your perspective had changed by the end of your research.	20%
	2. Reflection	Include some reflection on your experience as a fieldworker; how did the process of looking closely and analyzing human talk and behavior affect you?	
FINDINGS	1. Show, don't tell	Writing a fieldstudy is all about showing your audience specific characteristics of a subculture through thick description and analysis. You are crafting an argument for the significance of this subculture by making us care through a descriptive narrative.	20%
	2. Themes	You need to point directly to the specific areas of unity and tension in your research in order to illuminate the themes that emerged from your data.	
	3. Culture	Ultimately, this research goes back to the question of "What is culture?" When we talk about "culture," we are inquiring about the language and artifacts as well as the rituals and behaviors that help the group define its own culture. Be sure to discuss in your fieldstudy how understanding this subculture might reflect some larger implications about how we see all cultures.	
		TOTAL	100%