

Research Project – Sociology 20, WINTER - 2020

GROUP RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

- **Group Size: 3 People**
 - **1.5 spaced; 12 point font; Times New Roman**
 - **Paper = 5-7 pages;**
 - **5 Interview summaries = 5 pages**
 - **3 Observation summaries = 3 pages**
- TOTAL PAGES = 13-15**

Exploring Ethnography – Understanding an Extracurricular Activity/Hobby Community (Due 3/13/20):

Overview: This group project will introduce students to qualitative research methods, such as ethnography. Ethnography seeks to gain a detailed understanding about a specific population, event, group or activity. For this project, your task is to learn details about a specific hobby or extracurricular activity, and those who participate in this activity. Your ethnography will incorporate two qualitative methodological approaches: interviewing and observation. Together, these methods will help give you a more comprehensive understanding of the people that participate in the particular hobby or extracurricular activity you have selected.

Instructions: Your goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the following two issues:

- (1) Understand the demographics of the hobby/extracurricular activity
 - a. Who practices this hobby in the setting you are observing? Describe those who participate.
 - b. Where is the activity conducted? Describe the setting.
- (2) Understand the culture of the hobby/extracurricular activity
 - a. What is the culture of the hobby like? What language, artifacts make your hobby unique?
 - b. What is it that people do while doing this hobby? Make note of interactions, gestures, emotions, how communication takes place – styles and patterns. How is the activity conducted? What occurs?
 - c. What do participants do before and after they participate in the hobby?
 - d. Make note of commonalities/differences across observation sessions and interviews. Notice the bigger themes or trends that have emerged across the observations and interviews.
 - e. Is there anything that surprised you? Something you didn't expect? Does previous literature on your hobby/activity mention this? If so, how? If not, why do you think there are no mentions in previous literature?

This project has 3 main components:

(1) **Interviews** (30%: include 5 sets of detailed and thoughtful interview notes): Your group is required to conduct 5 interviews with people situated within the hobby/activity community that you select. Create an interview guide of approximately 10 questions. These questions should be general. Narrow questions will result in limited scope of research. You will go over example interview guides in class and/or discussion section. Immediately after conducting the interview, write your *draft* interview notes. Detail the time, place, length, and atmosphere of the interview. Write down key themes discussed by the participants as well as how you felt

throughout the course of the interaction. Detail any non-verbal communication cues that you observed. When preparing your summary **Interview** notes, you can order them chronologically (easiest!), detailing what happened in the interview in time order. However, I suggest you prepare your **Interview** notes thematically, which is more challenging, but will help you in writing up the FINAL paper. See Below: ***Tips to Keep you On Track!***

(2) **Observation** (20%: include 3 sets of detailed and thoughtful observation notes): You are required to observe your hobby/activity at least 3 separate times. Each observation should last at least 30 minutes. Try not to interfere with the activity or the group that you are observing. Immediately after each observation, write a set of draft observation notes. What did you learn about your hobby/extracurricular activity? When preparing your summary **Observation** notes, you can order them chronologically (easiest!), detailing what happened and what you observed in time order. However, I suggest you prepare your **Observation** notes thematically, which is more challenging, but will help you in writing up the FINAL paper. See Below: ***Tips to Keep you On Track!***

(3) **Analysis / Report** (50%: Paper with all research paper components): The final paper requires you to synthesize all of the information that you have learned, and write it up into a paper with standard research manuscript sections:

- **Abstract**: Brief Summary of Research Question, methodological approach, thematic findings, conclusions, implication. (2%)
- **Introduction**: Introduce your research project. Frame the sport community and identify the main questions that you are answering. What are your main research questions? Has anyone done systematic research on your sport? How does your research fit into the larger dialogue about sport and culture? How does your research fit into previous work addressing your specific sport? (10%)
- **Methodology**: Discuss how you went about conducting your research. What are your methods? Describe your observation steps and approach. Who did you observe? When did you observe them? Who did you interview? Describe your sampling approach. What questions did you ask? Remember to incorporate relevant concepts from class (15%).
- **Results/Analysis**: Offer a detailed analysis of your sport. Present your main findings. What did you learn about the culture of your hobby/extracurricular activity? What did you learn about the demographics? What did you learn in your interviews and observations, respectively? What key themes and general patterns emerged from your data - observations and interviews? (15%)
- **Conclusion/Discussion**: Tell us how your findings contribute to a larger dialogue about hobbies/extracurricular activities. How does your work tie back into your research question, previous research in this area, etc. What are the implications of your findings? What future questions are left unanswered? (8%)

- Appendix: Attach your interview guide, detailed observation notes, and interview notes.
- References: Cite the literature that grounded your study.

Possible page breakdowns:

- (1) **Interviews**: (5 pages Interview Notes; 1 page, minimum, per interview)
- (2) **Observation**: (3 pages Observation Notes; 1 page per observation)
- (3) **Report** (5-7 pages)
 - Abstract: 1 paragraph
 - Introduction: 1-2 pages
 - Methodology: 1-2 page
 - Results/Analysis: 2-3 pages
 - Conclusion/Discussion: 1 page
- (4) **Interview Guide** (1 page)

Tips to Keep you on Track!

The group should *collectively*:

- Decide on your hobby/extracurricular activity and site/s for observation;
- Ensure you have access to a hobby / extracurricular activity field site and access to those who participate;
- Devise main research questions, following the suggestions from the instructions above;
- Identify and review at least 3 peer-reviewed articles that discuss your topic, specifically, or the culture of your hobby/activity, generally;
- Design an interview guide.

Then, *collectively* or *individually*, the group should:

- Begin observing and interviewing. Interviews and observations *may* be done collectively or *individually*. However, if done *individually*, each person in the group should do AT LEAST one interview AND one observations session.
- Each interview and observation session should be documented with at one page of detailed summary notes that include when/where/whom was observed/interviewed. You should maintain the anonymity of your participants/interviewees. Pseudonyms can be used, if appropriate.
- For every observation and interview activity, I need: (a) name of group member/s doing observation/interview; (b) location of where activity occurred; (c) date/time of activity; (d) length of time of activity. Although this is a group project and produces a group grade, we need to see active involvement and participation by all group members.
- Detailed notes should be taken during/immediately after the activity. Your initial notes will be drafts. However, what you submit should be cleaned up and organized. This Research Project is an exercise in data analysis and synthesis as well as data reporting. Your **Observation** and **Interview** notes will help you to write the **Results** section of your final Report. You will be narrowing down 8-10 pages of notes into 2-3 pages of the Results section of your final report. The **Observation** and **Interview** notes you will submit is a chance for you to reduce, organize, and synthesize all the information you gathered.

- Although it is more work on the front-end, organizing your notes thematically (identifying patterns, commonalities, and themes across your various data points) will make writing the Final Report easier on the back-end. It will help you move from a mere descriptive observation that is chronologically ordered to something that is ordered more analytically, and will better support the Results section of your paper.
- Be sure to note ACTIONS, BEHAVIORS, WORDS, COMMENTS, QUOTES, ETC because they are your data, and will be used in your Results section.
- Detailed summary notes should be circulated and read by all group members since they will be integrated into the paper, and are a critical component of your final package of materials.