

COMMUNITY RESEARCH PROJECT

overview

So how is this going to actually work?

Choose a Theme or Topic Area: read over all of the theme areas in this handout and combine and refine ideas and areas you're interested in to decide on a thematic area you would like to explore.

Develop Questions: Why are you interested in this theme/topic in the first place? What do you know? What do you want to know? What are you curious about, or have always wondered about your topic? These questions will drive the formation of your thesis, which we'll begin Week 6 in the library workshop.

Collect and Record Data: this will be an ongoing process, probably all the way up until you complete your paper. The evolution of your questions and writing will influence the type and quantity of information you collect as you go forward.

Use Data: You will go back and forth between collecting and using data throughout the project. Not everything you collect will be used—at times you'll discover that you collected the wrong type of information, or a new area opens up in your work that you need to explore.

Explain and format findings related to questions: You'll be interpreting, synthesizing, and writing about connections among the information you find that relate to your central questions/thesis.

DUE DATES:

Thursday, February 19th

Bring research sources and notes, along with several questions you've drafted to class .

Friday, February 20th

Thesis question due

Friday, February 27th

Thesis draft one due.

Friday, March 5th

Thesis draft two due. Final due with portfolio on the last day of class

Key concepts of the project:

- develop an understanding of the systems and processes underlying effective community action and change.
- understand the role of citizens in the development of community.
- use research and writing to present ideas and reflections in a clear manner.
- critically evaluate, analyze, and interpret various sources of information around a particular topic.
- develop research skills.
- develop expository writing process skills.

research methods

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Print, historical and statistical research

- What types of information do you need to gather from reading and other forms of library research (books, professional and academic journals, internet, demographic and economic statistics, newspaper archives, photography archives, etc.)?
- What print materials can you gather directly from an organization?
- How can you use research to verify information gathered?

Observation

- What types of information can you gather through observation?
- How can you verify data gathered through observation?

Interviews and conversation

- What types of information can you gather through interviews and conversation?
- How can you best decide who to speak with/interview to get a good sample of individuals involved with an organization?
- How can you verify data gathered through these means?

There are several required sources that you should plan on including in your research project:

- ☒ One text relating to your topic that helps provide context beyond the local level.
- ☒ At least 2 articles from academic journals or professional publications.
- ☒ Some form of Primary Source Documentation
 - Photographs
 - Maps
 - Artwork
 - Letters
 - Newspapers
 - Legal documents: court transcripts, legislation, court papers
 - Public Records: birth and death certificates, sale of property
- ☒ An interview with a local person involved in the issue you are researching, or information obtained from attending a meeting or event relating to the topic you are researching.

