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Spring 2018

Unexpected Homelands Video

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Recommended Citation

Alba Newmann Holmes. (2018). "Unexpected Homelands Video". *Visual Rhetorics And Multimodal Writing*. DOI: 10.24968/2476-2458.dhgrants.23
<https://works.swarthmore.edu/dev-dhgrants/23>



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English 2V
Alba Newmann Holmes

Project 2: Qualitative Research/Video Essay project: Unexpected Homelands

You will complete this project in stages:

2/12 Project 2 Group Proposal Due (two paragraphs plus four citations)

2/14 Interview Questions for Project 2 Due

2/15-2/25 Gather interviews and preliminary imagery

2/26 Video editing workshop

2/27-3/6 Group Meetings with HIST1W and Dance 022

3/1 Storyboard due

3/8 Rough edit due

3/19 Final edit due

3/22 Display of Videos at Reception in LPAC lobby 6:30 pm (followed by Pohaku performance)

For this project, you will work with a team of your peers to design an interview-based research project. You will collect interviews, analyze the data you collect, and create a video essay that reflects on important patterns or themes from your research. (Final videos will be 3-5 minutes long.)

There are numerous reasons people study other people: to challenge assumptions about groups, communities, or social environments; to make connections between groups or behaviors; to support proposals for change or preservation. In the case of our course, your project will focus on some aspect of the idea of homeland, place of origin, or the connection between identity and place, for instance. This project draws upon methods used by ethnographers and oral historians.

The initial impetus for this project came from conversations with students reflecting on the spaces of their own upbringing—Guam, Palestine, New Jersey (among many others)—and on the assumptions outsiders have expressed about their homelands. Responses to those assumptions ranged from bemusement to distress. In “Diversity as Topography” Kathryn Valentine and Mónica F. Torres explain, “genuine interaction among diverse populations invokes a much messier, more complicated notion of diversity [than “structural diversity”]. It goes beyond the sheer presence of diverse students to include diverse human beings in relationship to and with each other” (199).

The goal of this assignment is to bring students into conversation with one another about some of the complexities of their experiences and assumptions about one another’s homelands. Also, the assignment explores questions of representation—what does it mean to literally capture other people’s voices and repurpose or weave these into compositions of our own? How does pattern seeking—looking for shared experiences—amplify the experiences of the individual? In what cases might it erase or elide the particularity of experience to present it as part of a larger “data set” of experience? Finally, how do organizational strategies in video composition compare to those in a traditional “IMRaD” (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion) structure, which would be the more conventional way to present this kind of work? Videos will be exhibited at a public opening in LPAC.

Process

The writing for this project will be broken into several stages, and I will give you specific instructions for each stage:

Stage 1: Write a Proposal

- Form a group
- Determine your research question(s) or focus.
- Collect textual research that relates to your area of interest. This could include scholarly as well as popular sources that can help contextualize your research question(s).
- Explain the research questions or hypothesis you hope to explore in this project and why you think it could produce knowledge or perspectives that could be useful to readers.
- Carefully describe the methods you will use to gather your interview data.

Stage 2: Collect Interviews and Analyze Findings, by putting your discoveries in conversation with prior research

- After receiving feedback on your interview design, collect your interviews (approximately five 20-minute interviews).
- Analyze your observations/interview data, with the help of the prior research you collected

Stage 3: Produce a 3-5 minute video that frames one or more discoveries from your project

- As a group, decide which themes or patterns emerged from your research that you wish to share with audience members
- Collect visual resources that complement your interview data for use in your video composition.
- Create a storyboard that connects visual imagery to narrative excerpts from your interviews
- Edit video footage
- Videos will be placed on public display in the LPAC lobby as part of interdisciplinary collaboration between our class, Dance, and History classes.