

FYS: Nature, Environments, and Place in American Thought

Documentary Film

Part 1. ON-SITE INTERVIEWS (April 10–16)

1. On Site Interview Preparatory Notes: Based on the material I've sent you about your interviewee and relevant website links, put together a short 'dossier' describing the main organizations your interviewee works with, his/her interests and particular projects he/she has been involved in. Also, include short summary notes from the websites of the organizations listed. Most importantly, prepare customized questions that are appropriate given the background information you have reviewed. Your notes and questions will both help prepare you for the taping session, and refresh your memory about material that you have prepped.
2. On Site List of questions (tailored to the person you are interviewing): Review your interviewee's background so that you can tailor questions. **Send the list of questions to your interviewee on APRIL 8.** They need time to think and prepare as well.
3. On Site Interview: Remember to use the questions as a guide for you, and to let most of the meeting be a dialogue, NOT an interview. The more you can be informal and can allow a conversation to unfold in front of the recorder, the more engaging and informative the results will be in giving insight into the background, history, motivations, and passions of your guest. You want the interviewee to talk as much as possible about what *they* believe is important about what they do.

The goals of this assignment are to accomplish the following:

- Build rapport with your community partners. Find out about them: their interests, background, reason for getting involved in their work, accomplishments in this area, current work and initiatives, hopes and dreams, and frustrations. It is also an opportunity to share something of yourself and your own experiences and interests, particularly related to the environment.
- Tape record the session with our field recorder, including (if you are outdoors, sounds to accompany the narrative, such as sounds in nature, sounds of walking, etc.). Be sure to record the interview in a quiet setting and don't be afraid to stop the interviewee and ask them to repeat themselves in the case of disruptive noises. You want the highest quality audio possible.
- Let the conversation unfold, pursuing the interests of your interviewee. Pursue topics of interest to him/her with follow-up questions. Find out where your interviewee's passions about the environment and about local concerns lie.
- Take photographs for use in the documentary film.

Part 2. FOLLOW-UP

Post-interview follow up with your interviewees: You should have email addresses for each of your interviewees. Each team must follow up with a thank you note and questions to your interviewee following the interview. The questions should ask for additional information that you would like to know to help you write up your team's own extended biographical sketch of the interviewee and your own individual essay. Consult with your teammates and send ONE email message from all of you with your thank you note and questions.

Part 3. CREATE DOCUMENTARY FILM (April 15 & 17) for class Omeka exhibit

This multimedia presentation should be 2 ½ to 3 minutes long (max 3 minutes). Edit down the most important points and moving moments from your taped dialogue. Consider the story you want to tell through the presentation. Who is this person? What drives him/her? What is this person's special perspective on the environment, and how does it relate to his/her work? Think about constructing a narrative based on the pieces you have to work with from the field recording and the studio session. How can you make it personal? How can you make your edited presentation share with the viewers the person you got to know through your meetings? When you view the presentation in its entirety, be sure that it tells a complete story.

Keep in mind these goals for the documentary film:

- Tell your interviewee's story effectively.
- Make the end product really engaging, so that it captures the imagination of anyone viewing it.
- Take time to slow down at points in the narration. For example, with two or three of your best photos selected, use the Ken Burns effect to accompany your key long quotes of approx. 10–45 seconds.
- The film together like an excellent composition or mini-documentary.

Materials for presentation: Be sure to interweave and use audio material from our field recorder from the site visits April 10-16, (including background sounds collected when applicable) and also include photos taken in the field, along with others supplied to us by the interviewee.

Part 4. CLASS (April 24) AND HUMANITIES INSTITUTE (April 25) PRESENTATIONS

On April 24th we will discuss the project experience and how it relates to the objectives of the course. We will also conduct a practice presentation for the Humanities Institute event. On April 25th from 3–5PM in Reynolda 301, one representative from each group will present their contributions to the class website to a university-wide audience. Everyone is welcome, and you may invite your interviewee to attend as well.