

anthropology 605::fieldwork::missions

mission 3.5: gather

Now that you've chosen an event, and begun to observe, you must come to terms with the inevitable fact that someone else will have been there before you and will have said something about "your" project. Different kinds of writing exist. There may be a Definitive Scholarly Work On Your Phenomenon. There may be various kinds of research from other disciplines: from economics, education, political science, marketing and business, etc. There may also be popular books and articles (e.g. the *New Yorker* article as an alternate exemplar of anthropological research).

In addition, different kinds of writing will precede you in the field and they may be better understood as ethnographic objects than as explanations, such as journalism, websites, blogs, mailing lists; community/organization/company newsletters or publications. There might also be a number of different kinds of documents that are not narrative reporting (i.e. legal documents, protocols, reports etc).

1. Think up a system for collecting and keeping track of this material: think about how you will classify, sort, and prioritize what to read.
2. Make use of Fondren's resources to find at least three sources you consider to be sympathetic and/or useful to your approach (anthropology? science studies? area studies?).
3. Make use of Fondren's resources to find at least three sources you consider to be related, but perhaps alien or not necessarily useful to you (economics? psychology? architecture?).
4. Collect at least three kinds of written sources from "the field" that you think are relevant to your observations. Make sure you collect information about context: where, why you collected it, what relevance you think it has. Treat this like archaeology. What documents are people using, how and why? Can you get copies of them, why or why not?
5. Keep a running annotated bibliography describing each of these sources (keep doing this after the class and you'll have one of your major papers half done.)

Due date: rolling. To be included with observations, commentary and presentation.

Issues: dealing with information overload (or underload); crossing disciplinary boundaries; using and re-using other research; the role and meaning of writing and analysis as part of the field of observation; collecting documents in the field: treating them like archaeological objects (as much detail about context as possible!); data and metadata.

Skills: organization of materials; meaningful techniques for picking what to read; reading as part of observation; time management and document management.

Tools: Folders and files. Backing up your stuff. scanning documents. library databases; the interswamp; keeping track of dynamic resources (email, mailing lists, news articles (NY Times as example)). Text files for easy searching. introduction to the hell of data formats.