

anthropology 605::fieldwork::missions

mission 6:write

Write a commentary of 1-2K words on another class-member's project. Write a commentary of 1-2K words on your project.

Due Date: Commentaries must be online by Dec 1.

The commentary you write on your own project should be the basis for your presentation—but it should not be in “presentation” form (that’s mission 7). Instead the commentaries should “stand on their own” to a certain extent. Because the commentary will be part of the wiki, it can (and should) be linked to the other documents (whereas the presentation will need to stand on its own for a totally naïve listener with no access to background materials).

What is a commentary?

Return to the 1st and 2nd missions. Refresh your memory of the issues we started with, and to the Jack Katz Articles. How does one get from description to explanation? What is the difference between a project, a site, an argument and a narrative?

Look at what you proposed to study, and try to remember what you told the class about why you thought it was interesting. What more do you know now than you knew then? Did you discover problems new problems, or generate nuanced hypotheses?

Remember that this is not a paper—perhaps it is a small part of a paper, or of a larger document. It should contain description and explanation, but the “argument” can be postponed for the purpose of this class. Use the presentation to propose a larger argument...

Also think about commentary as a *genre*: how does it differ from the article or the book, and how might it be related to both in the future. Return to Fabian and to the EPIT project. Is there a future for “commentary” that is related to the fact that all of this data and thinking is archived in new ways?

How do I write a commentary on someone else's project?!

Think of this as a control experiment: You have access to “data” but you were not present, and did not have the benefit of a full experience of the research project as an embodied research subject. If fieldwork is a “mode of subjectivation” then this should give you a chance to understand the difference between writing about existing material, someone else's descriptions and explanations and your own explanations based in “fieldwork”. To put it differently, your commentary on someone else's work should look and feel different than your commentary on your own work. Also, consider that this is supposed to be a *contribution* to the other person's work—they are expected to make use of your commentary in their final presentation as you are expected to make use of the commentary on your project. Thus your commentary can draw on

other sources and it can be critical of the project or approach or in support of it.

Round Robin for 2006:

Nikki --> Stacey

Annie --> Ala

Ala --> Maria

Lina --> Annie

Stacey --> Lina

Maria --> Nikki
