

**Sarah Blazer, WAC – Research Paper Assignment,  
Before and After Collaboration with the Library**

**Assignment Before Collaboration with the Library**

**Research Paper Assignment**

Pick a community that you find curious or interesting—perhaps one of which you are a member, by choice or not, one that you plan to enter in the future, or one to which someone you know is connected. This community could be, for example, a workplace, a club, a volunteer organization, an after-school program, a religious or spiritual group, a sports team, a department or school at LIU, or a neighborhood...to name a few.

Your task is to look closely at both the appearance and the “reality” of this community. What does it look like from the outside *and* from the inside? In other words, how does the community *work* from both insider and outsider perspectives? Based on what you uncover, what do you infer its members need in order to survive and succeed in this community?

Think, too, about why there are these discrepancies between what this community *seems* like and what it *is* like. Why should we know both sides of this community?

For your research, you must:

- Use one or more pieces from the Core Seminar Anthology as a source or sources in your paper.
- Use a total of 8 sources, four of which must be from the LIU Library’s online databases, AND they must be articles or essays which include the writer’s references (sources).

For your research, you may:

- Use websites ONLY if I approve them. Any websites I do approve cannot be included in the 8 sources you are required to use.
- Use interviews.

Additionally, you must:

- Creatively integrate concepts we have discussed in class into your paper.
- Use MLA style to document all sources.
- Submit copies of all sources with each due date. (This includes your Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography as well as all drafts.)

**Assignment After Collaboration with the Library  
+ “Evaluating Sources” Handout**

**Research Paper Assignment**

Pick a community that you find curious or interesting—perhaps one of which you are a member, by choice or not, one that you plan to enter in the future, or one to which someone you know is connected. This community could be, for example, a workplace, a club, a volunteer organization, an after-school program, a religious or spiritual group, a sports team, a department or school at LIU, or a neighborhood...to name a few.

Your task is to think about the appearance and the “reality” of this community. Depending on your relationship to the community, what does it look like from the inside and/or from the outside? In

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other words, how does the community *work* from insider and/or outsider perspectives? Based on what you uncover, what do you infer its members need in order to “survive” in this community? Be sure to define the concept of survival in the context of your paper. Think, too, about why there may be discrepancies between what this community *seems* like and what it *is* like. Why should we know both sides of this community?

The tricky part here is picking a topic you can research sufficiently, given that you only have 8-10 weeks and you may not already know much about it. For this reason, I recommend coming up with more than one in case one proves unrealistic for our purposes. When you decide which community you want to explore, think carefully about which aspect of it you will research.

You should approach defining your research question in this way:

- 1-Which community, in general, am I interested in researching?
- 2-Since I must narrow my topic in order to develop realistic research aims, what about this community interests me? What aspect of it will I focus on?
- 3-Given the two frameworks presented above (“appearance vs. reality” and “survival”), what is the primary question to which I seek “answers”?
- 4-What other questions fall into the category of my primary research question? |

**Comment [SB1]:** Outlines process for students who are unclear at this point.

For example, if I am interested in looking more closely at the field of Nursing as a community, one which I hope to enter professionally, I could look at the way gender functions in this community. I want to know more about what to expect upon entering this community, and I’m guessing that because this field is dominated by women it is probably a supportive and nurturing one. But is this always the case? What do women need to know and be able to do, for example, in order to “survive” in this community? My inquiry could begin here. This is a topic I can research given our resources at LIU. I might focus my research efforts on the online databases we have where I can find articles written by professionals in this field. |

**Comment [SB2]:** Example 1

If I choose to research something smaller and more local, like LIU’s men’s basketball team, for example, I still need to think about *how* I want to look at this community. In this case, I may need to tap into research material which is not about LIU’s team, in particular, but about men’s basketball, in general, or even males and competition in sports. This material I would then apply to my discussion of the team at LIU. |

**Comment [SB3]:** Example 2

For your research, you must:

- Use at least one piece from the Core Seminar Anthology as a source in your paper. (You may *not* use “The U.N. Declaration of Human Rights” to satisfy this requirement.)
- Use 6-8 sources, which must include at least one scholarly article and one piece from the reader. The other sources could include books, newspapers, trade publications, magazines, government reports, encyclopedias, websites, and interviews. (Websites and interviews are particularly tricky, each for different reasons; you must speak with me if you want to use either of the two.) |
- Creatively integrate concepts we have discussed in class into your paper.
- Use MLA style to document all sources, in your text and in the Works Cited page.
- Submit copies of all sources with each due date. (This includes your Research Proposal and all drafts. For books and articles over 20 pages, you need only to submit the cover page (book) or abstract (article) and the specific pages cited.)

**Comment [SB4]:** A more detailed explanation of source requirements than the first version of this assignment offers.

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**Research Paper:  
Responsibly and Critically Evaluating Sources**

**Comment [SB5]:** Students must use this handout to evaluate each of the 6-8 sources they include in their paper. Doing this requires them to think about their sources and document their analyses of them in ways which are often unfamiliar to them.

Type of source:

(book, newspaper, magazine, journal, trade publication, government report, encyclopedia, website, etc.)

Name of source:

Author:

Date of publication:

Place of publication:

Page numbers, section:

Web address:

Database:

MLA bibliographic entry:

Topic or Subject:

Summarize the text. (Note the main points of the text and describe the sources the author uses (government documents, books, articles, websites, interviews, etc.))

Author's perspective/bias: (Describe how the writer feels about the topic and why. Also, describe how the author wants you to feel about the topic. Briefly, why is it important to think about the writer's perspective/bias?)

Describe how the issue raised in this text could or does affect the community you are researching.

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Which aspect(s) of the issue discussed could you use in your research paper, and why?

What questions do you still have after reading this text?

Additional Notes: