

Interview Guide

Global Health & Medicine- ANT/STS 129 Spring 2019

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From syllabus:

- **Group Project (30%):** Your “midterm” will be a group project (conducted in groups of 4) that you work on throughout the quarter. Your group will investigate a local health outreach service (some examples include the student health center, acupuncture clinics, dentists, Planned Parenthood, rehabilitation services, massage, physical therapy, etc.)—feel free to be creative, but also run your idea by the TA to make sure it’s OK. **Your task is to figure out what assumptions this organization/clinic/service has about the underlying causes of what makes people ill and in need of the treatment they offer.** Since you do not have IRB (ethics board) clearance, please do not speak to patients. Instead, you can read the organization’s outreach materials (online, as well as the pamphlets, etc. in the waiting room) and conduct informal interviews with staff and healthcare providers (just tell them this is a class assignment). You should NOT ask them verbatim “what assumptions do you have?”. Instead, this is your chance to practice thinking like a medical anthropologist: gather information and interpret it. We will talk more about how to do this in class.
 - **Summary of Group Work and Initial Analysis (10%).** This is **due uploaded to Canvas before midnight (11:59pm) on Sunday, May 12.** Further instructions will be provided and reviewed during class. This is due early in the quarter so that all groups have a chance to get substantial feedback before their final presentations. Late assignments will be marked off 1 letter grade per day, starting 30 minutes after the deadline.
 - **Group In-Class Presentation (20%).** Your group will prepare a 12-15 minute presentation for the class about your findings and your analysis of this material. This presentation should engage substantially with class concepts. Detailed instructions and a grading rubric will be provided beforehand. **Groups will be assigned to present during one of the final 3 class periods (May 29, June 3, or June 5).** Attendance is mandatory during all sessions—please come ready to ask questions of your classmates and to engage with the work they’ve done!
- **Final Paper (25%):** A well-written final paper (1,800 words (or about 6 pages), double-spaced, Times 12pt font, 1” margins) in which you summarize your group’s work (noting what you personally contributed) and make an argument or analysis of what this revealed about the site’s assumptions regarding the causes of illness/disease. You may develop this argument/analysis in conversation with your group, but **the writing of your final paper must be 100% your own work.** In your analysis, you should cite at least 2 course readings

(minimum) and engage with class concepts. Make sure to strike the right balance between clearly summarizing the work your group did and some of the findings (about 50%), and then drawing from ideas and concepts you learned in this class (lecture and readings) in order to analyze that material (about 50%). We will devote significant class time to how to do this successfully, and you will receive more detailed instructions. This should be a formal paper—with intro, thesis statement, supporting body paragraphs, conclusion, and citations throughout. Include a bibliography for the works you cite (full citations are on the syllabus, so this should be easy!). Late papers will be marked off 1 letter grade per day, starting 30 minutes after the deadline. **Due uploaded to Canvas before midnight (11:59pm) on Monday, June 10.**

Interview Logistics:

- You will render the people you interview anonymous in your write-up in order to keep their identity confidential (not only in the paper; use pseudonyms in your notes too). You should let them know that this is your intention before starting the interview.
- Your interviewees must be 18 years old or older. For human subject issues, it is required that the person you interview is not a minor.
- If you are interviewing a family member or close friend, make sure that you make the conversation/interview slightly more formal than conversations you would normally have with them. The way you listen and ask questions is different when the purpose is to write about their experience, and understand it in a different way.
- You are encouraged to have 2 or 3 shorter meetings with each interviewee, rather than a single long one. Multiple meetings will allow you ask thoughtful follow-up questions.
- The total time of the interview/conversation with each interviewee should be at least 30 minutes to one hour.
- If you can tape or record it, that's great. If you can't, take good notes during and after.
- Not every group member needs to be present for every interview. You can divide up the work load however your group thinks best. However, you should be consistent about who interviews each of the interviewees, so that they can ask appropriate follow-up questions and also so they can build a rapport with the person.
- Conduct the interview at a location that is confidential and where the person feels most comfortable. You can ask them if they prefer a coffee shop (one which is not too loud or crowded and where you can sit a bit away from other customers for privacy) or their office or someplace else. Make sure that YOU also feel comfortable and safe at all times.

Interview Questions and Form:

- You can start by saying: "I am interested in learning more about the kind of treatment you provide at X clinic/site/service/etc."

- Another good question to ask would be what kinds of patients they normally see (let THEM be the ones to create types or categories of patients for you—like class, race, gender, age, and so on—rather than YOU asking about those things yourself. This helps you get at how they think about their clients without you biasing them upfront.) So, you can just ask, “what kind of patients do you typically treat here?” and then see what they say. Once they answer this, you can ask follow-up questions like “why do you think X kind of patients come here?”; “why do you think Y kind of patients do not come here?”; “what are the challenges you have faced in servicing this clientele?”; and so on....
- The interview should be more of a conversation, rather than a set of long questions that elicit short answers. Get the conversation going by asking open-ended questions, followed by requests to clarify, elaborate, or further explain something.
- You can follow up with probes like these: “And is there anything else you would like to tell me about X [something they have shared with you]?” - “And then what happened?” – “Is there a relationship between X and Y?” – “And what happened just before X?” – “How did you feel about X?” — “What made you think X meant Y?”
- These questions should keep the conversation open and going. You can repeat them over the course of the conversations. The idea is to learn about their experience in the context of their worldview using their stories, metaphors, memories, categories.
- Avoid asking questions that determine the answer. Avoid asking questions that imply the sort of answer you want.
- Try to capture their flavor of speech, their use of words and metaphors and particular idioms. Record not just data and facts, but thoughts, feelings, reactions, reflections (your own as well as those of your informant). An example: if a person is describing their work and says that they “feel like they are pushing a boulder up a hill”, ask them what they mean by this expression, and make sure to quote it in your paper.
- Explore how broadly or narrowly the services are conceptualized; whether or not the treatments they offer conform to or spill outside of biomedical categories of disease. You may want to explore the role social factors are thought to play in the patients’ illnesses; the other kinds of healers, doctors and medical institutions your interviewee thinks are available to treat that condition; the simple or multiple meanings that the individual assigns to the diseases/illnesses they treat, their causes, timing, differential outcomes, etc.

Evaluation:

For a high mark your paper will: (1) have a nuanced, sophisticated and creative argument, which is (2) supported with evidence from the interviews and at least one other source; (3) makes excellent use of material presented in class to support interpretations (including concepts from at least 2 course readings); (4) clearly answer the assignment prompt (“***what assumptions this organization/clinic/service has about the underlying causes of what makes people ill and in need of the treatment they offer***”), (5) be clear and well organized; (6) be free of spelling and grammatical errors; and (7) meet all format requirements.