

TERMS AND CONCEPTS TO USE IN METHODS SECTION:

In your methods' section, you need to use certain *terms*, and you need to indicate that you understand what these concepts mean. The following is a list of common concepts that you should describe in detail in your methods section:

Selection Criteria:

This section explains why you selected the group to observe and how you think it is the best sample in which to address your research topic or thesis. First, you have research criteria – *you must observe a public event in NYC during the first weeks of class*. **You must state this** in your paper. Then explain why you choose this group – do you have a personal interest in this group? Does this group address your research interests (themes from course)?

Though you will describe this group in great detail in your observation description, you should give a brief general description. Example: The group mainly consisted of older women (ages 65-90) from a Hungarian Immigrant community in Queens.

- Community in NYC during 1st weeks of class
- Research interest (themes from course: ritual, identity, community, symbols, myth etc.)
- How did you find the group you wanted to study?
- Personal interest
- Very brief general description

Procedures:

Fieldwork: Anthropologists conduct fieldwork meaning we go to the places we study and talk to the people we study. **THIS IS NOT INFORMATION GATHERED FROM THE INTERNET.**

Fieldjottings:

- These are very rough quick notes to help you remember what to write in your fieldnotes.
- Explain how you wrote fieldjottings during your research. (Did you use the worksheet I gave you, did you write jottings on your cell phone or napkin? Etc.)

Fieldnotes:

- Even if you did not write fieldjottings, you all are writing detailed fieldnotes (this is your 5-page observation description).
- Explain how you wrote your fieldnotes. These are written at home after your observation. What topics did you focus on? Etc.

Technology used to record information:

- What did you use to document the information you observed while you were in the field? (Pen & paper, cell phone, camera, audio equipment, etc.)
- You must explain in your methods paper how you recorded the information.

Participant Observer:

- Anthropologists spend a great deal of time with the people they study by living in the field, in the same area as the people we are studying. We “participate” in the same activities as the people we “observe.”
- Are you a part of the community that you are studying? Then you too can be a participant observer and you need to explain in your paper what is a participant observer and how you are one. How many

years have you been part of this group? How did you participate in the same activities as the group you are studying? Etc.

Interview techniques: This is optional, but if you do conduct interviews you need to describe how you did this in detail. A number of you might be doing “informal interviews” but you need to explain what this is, how you did it, what kind of people you talked to, etc. Look up tips for best conducting interviews such as:

<http://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/resources/InterviewingTips.html>

Informal Interview:

- This is an unplanned perhaps chance meeting with someone where you ask questions.
- You still need to explain who the person is (Age, gender, etc.).
- Though this might be a spontaneous encounter you still need to roughly explain the type of questions you asked.
- How did you document these responses (recorded, wrote down later from memory, etc.)?
- If you use this method in your paper, you **MUST** describe the above either in your own words or citations if you copy the language (Pope Fischer 2018: 2)
- Explain why this method worked best for your research interests and goals.

Unstructured Interview:

- This is a planned interview in which you have set up a time and place to meet.
- You have **NOT** prepared any questions or topics.
- If you use this method in your paper, you **MUST** describe the above either in your own words or citations if you copy the language (Pope Fischer 2018:2).
- **Explain** why this method worked best for your research interests and goals.

Semi-structured interview:

- This is a planned interview in which you have set up a time and place to meet.
- You have a list of possible questions or topics but you don't have to use everyone.
- Describe the questions and topics you prepared but **DO NOT** put your Questions and Responses in the body of the methodology but rather attach it to the back of your paper. State in the methods sections to refer to the attached questions and responses. You may use select quotations from your interview in the body of your paper but **DO NOT INCLUDE THE Q & A** -- only put the complete interview attached in the back.
- This technique allows for more flexibility in the interview.
- If you use this method in your paper, you **MUST** describe the above either in your own words or citations if you copy the language (Pope Fischer 2018: 2).
- **Explain** why this method worked best for your research interests and goals.

Structured Interview:

- This is a planned interview in which you have set up a time and place to meet.
- You have a list of questions or topics and everyone you interview must respond to each question.
- Describe the questions and topics you prepared but **DO NOT** put your Questions and Responses in the body of the methodology but rather attach it to the back of your paper. State in the methods sections to refer to the attached questions and responses. You may use select quotations from your interview in the body of your paper but **DO NOT INCLUDE THE Q & A** -- only put the complete interview attached in the back.

- This technique does not allow for flexibility in the interview but you can compare responses. For example, 50% of the interview responses preferred chocolate ice cream over Strawberry.
- If you use this method in your paper, you **MUST** describe the above either in your own words or citations if you copy the language (Pope Fischer 2018: 3).
- **Explain** why this method worked best for your research interests and goals.

Ethics Sections:

Informed Consent:

- Ask them in a safe private place so they don't feel pressured into participating in your project.
- The subject must be able to understand what you are asking, therefore ask in a language that can be understood by the subject.
- The subject should have time to consider whether they want to participate or not.
- The researcher gains the consent of the research subject with the understanding that they have the right not to participate, and the right not to answer questions without punishment. Their responses are voluntary.
- **DO NOT** simply state that you got their "permission," as this is only one part of "informed consent." Did you "inform" the subject what the project is about, that they have rights, etc.?
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Pseudonym: A pseudonym is a fake name used to protect the identity of the informant. Did you let the informant know that their responses would be protected? You need to state in your methods section that you used "pseudonyms," and why this is important. Explain what a pseudonym means and why you used it.

Benefits/Harm:

Any research project may have potential benefits or harm to the research subjects. You need to state in what way your project might benefit the group and/or potentially harm them. This shows that you thought through how your project might impact the people you study.

- how does my project help or benefit the people I observed?
- how does my project potentially harm the people I observed?

If you use quotations from this handout you must use quotation marks and put a reference in your bibliography:

Pope Fischer, Lisa "Terms for Methodology Section" *Anthropology 1102*, Fall 2018, pp. 1-3.