Write your Name:_____

SCAFFOLD EXERCISE/IN CLASS ACTIVITY: Thesis and Topic Sentences

This exercise will help you to write and use a topic sentence. I will ask for a volunteer so we can brainstorm ideas related to developing a thesis statement, and then show how topic sentences connect to the thesis. I will then divide you into your writing groups so that you can continue to work on filling in the worksheet. I will check in with each group and collect the worksheets at the end of class.

Argument Driven Analysis. Your paper should be argument driven as you will present evidence (from your observations) to prove your thesis. This means every single paragraph in your results/discussion section needs these 3 things: one topic sentence, your evidence, and an explanation:

   a. _*Topic Sentence_ (What is the main point of the paragraph? Connect the main point of the paragraph to the thesis). Let's say you want to discuss "language" in order to prove the Haitian mass is ritual that reflects worldview and bonds the community. Your topic sentence should be: the evidence/main point of the paragraph + the thesis. For example: _The use of multiple languages at the Haitian mass symbolically reaffirms cultural values and bonds the immigration community together._ This is one sentence, and it is the first sentence of the paragraph.
   b. _Presentation of evidence to prove thesis._ Now describe your observations that prove the topic sentence you just presented. Describe the multiple languages (in songs, in sermon, in doctrine, etc.). Describe an illustrative example or anecdote. This is the content of the paragraph.
   c. _Explain how your evidence proves your thesis_ Now that you have presented the evidence; explain to the reader why and how this proves your thesis. _Multiple languages at the sermon join both the new immigrant who only speaks Creole, to others who speak English. Using the native language reaffirms their culture and bonds the community together. It teaches the younger children their culture and reflects the values of the older generation. Etc._

   I.   For this class your research question should relate to American culture. Think about belief systems in America. How is the West Indian Parade a ritual that shows American-West Indian culture? How is Football a model of and model for American worldview? How does a religious mass symbolically create "communitas" and why is this important in American society? How does a liminal space symbolically unite a group of people into a place that is betwixt and between and what does this say about American culture? Etc. (In your paper you will define the term you select using the articles from the course – ritual, worldview, communitas, liminal space, etc.)
        "How to Write a Research Question" (Scribbr) 3 minutes https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-questions/

WRITE down your research question in one sentence here:

II. Your thesis statement is the answer to your research question. Think of the themes we have been discussing in class. Your thesis should be something debatable as the point of your essay is to argue or to prove that your thesis is correct.

What is the thesis? (Should include thesis statement in introductory paragraph)

Develop a thesis:

With any paper that you write you need to develop an argument. Think about how your topic is important, or unusual. You need to set up a position. You will present evidence to support your perspective.

Your thesis should include three parts: What, How, and Why.

1) WHAT is your objective?
(What will you argue, describe, critique, compare, contrast, etc.?) Your objective for this assignment is to observe a public event, and then explain what it reveals about culture in America.)

2) HOW will you prove WHAT you said?
The thesis tells the reader how you intend to prove your point -- you will be drawing your conclusions from the data you collected from your observations (and perhaps long term participant observation). YOU SHOULD NOT LOOK UP INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET AS YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT FOR IT. You also need to discuss summarize the theories, arguments, and concepts from at least 3 articles listed on our course syllabus.

3) WHY are you writing this paper? (What will I show, prove, challenge, etc.?)
By doing WHAT you are supposed to do (gain an understanding of American culture), and HOW you are going to do this (by presenting evidence from the data you gathered in your life history interviews), you will show, prove, challenge "X".
Ask yourself: ***So what?*** Why are your results important?

For example:

1.What is the objective/ American culture: What does my fieldwork data of a Haitian church tell me about American society? Being an immigrant can be difficult.

2.How you will prove/ your observation data: Haitian church observation (from your 5 page description/fieldnotes)

3.Why/your main point: ritual reflects worldview that bonds people together

4.Thesis statement: My observation of a Haitian Church in New York shows how a ritual can symbolically reflect a Haitian worldview that serves to bond an isolated immigrant community together.

My observation of _____ shows/proves/explains _____ (draw on a concept from

the course such as ritual, symbol, worldview, etc.) and this is important because_____.

"How to Write a thesis Statement" (Scribbr) 4 minutes

https://www.scribbr.com/academic-essay/thesis-statement/

WRITE down your thesis sentence(s) here:

III. Your paper should have an introduction that states the research question and thesis statement. This section is followed by 2-3 pages of methodology. After the methods section you present your data analysis (6 or more pages). In the data analysis section, you prove your thesis by using evidence you gathered from your observations. Every paragraph in this section of the paper must have a ***topic sentence*** (See exercise below):

"How to Write a Topic Sentence" (Scribbr) 2 minutes

"Topics" refers to the evidence you will use to prove your thesis. When you did your observation, I asked you to pay special attention to:

1) The temporal and spatial environment. (Use of time and space)
2) Language or discourse (Incl. songs, chants, ritual statements, etc.) What did you hear?
3) Gestures or body language (Incl. dance, movement, etc.)
4) Clothes or body ornaments (Incl. costumes, formal v. regular attire, makeup, etc.)
5) Colors
6) Material objects including food.
7) Emotions (happy, sad, scared, etc.) How did you feel? How did the participants appear to be feeling?
8) Describe microcultural factors such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, etc.
9) Describe explicit or implicit rules and norms.
10) If you can, try to identify possible symbols but save your analysis for your final paper.

The above might be "topics" you can use to prove your thesis. Once you have a list of topics you can write a *topic sentence*. The topic sentence is the topic (the evidence) that proves the thesis argument.

*Please note: *You must use a topic sentence even when you are discussing an article.* For example: *The concept of "communitas" illustrates the way in which the Haitian mass symbolically unites the immigrants together.* Now discuss Victor Turner's article and his concept of "communitas". Explain how it connects to your observation data.

Topics: Topic Sentence

Write one key word below to indicate the *topics* you will use to prove your paper. Each of these topics will be a separate paragraph in your paper. HAITIAN MASS	A *topic sentence* is the first sentence of each paragraph. It connects the topic of the paragraph to the thesis. Below write a sentence using the topic to the central concern of the thesis you wrote above. For reference, write the keyword or brief description of your thesis here: REFLECTS WORLDVIEW AND CREATES COMMUNITY BONDS
1. COMMUNITAS	1. COMMUNITAS SHOWS HOW THE MASS REFLECTS WORLDVIEW AND CREATES COMMUNITY BONDS
2. MULTIPLE LANGUAGES	2. MULTIPLE LANGUAGES REFLECT WORLDVIEW AND CREATE COMMUNITY BONDS
3. CULTURAL FOOD	3.CULTURAL FOOD REFLECTS WORLDVIEW AND CREATE COMMUNITY BONDS *The above are draft topic sentences. You would need to rewrite them so that it is not so repetitive (try using a thesaurus to pick alternative words that have the same meaning). For this exercise the above is fine. Do the best you can.

Topics:	Topic Sentence
Write one key word below to indicate the **topics** you will use to prove your paper. Each of these topics will be a separate paragraph in your paper. WRITE <mark>ONE WORD</mark> that best summarizes the topic /content of the paragraph, the evidence you will present to prove your paper (i.e. language, colors, clothing, food, etc.)	A **topic sentence** is the first sentence of each paragraph. It connects the topic of the paragraph to the thesis. Below write a sentence using the topic to the central concern of the thesis you wrote above. For reference, WRITE the one keyword or core idea of your thesis here: In the column below connect the core of your thesis (above) to the one word (on the left) that represents the evidence you will present in the paragraph. Do not include your discussion of your evidence. <mark>This will be one sentence, the first sentence of the paragraph that introduces what the paragraph will be about.</mark>
1. (article 1-concept/term)	1.
2. (article 2-concept/term)	2.
3.(article 3-concept/term)	3.
4.(Evidence 1- from your observation)	4.
5.(Evidence 2 from your observation)	5.
6.Evidence 3 from your observation)	6.

The above would be very rough versions of your topic sentences. Use a thesaurus to find words to rephrase them so they are not so repetitive. Again, this is only the first sentence of the paragraph.

V. Your **conclusion** acts as a "book end" to your introduction. It should mirror the introduction where you stated what you wanted to prove but in the conclusion you should restate and summarize how you proved your thesis. Look at your topic sentences as a guide to this summary. WRITE a brief summary below – Explain how you proved your thesis and perhaps discuss the implications of your work:

In sum, I want:

1) Your thesis sentence:

2) Your 6 topic sentences (1 sentence per paragraph —–this includes 3 articles, 1 paragraph discussion per article, and at least 3 paragraphs that present your evidence you will use to prove your thesis.).

Introduction (1PAGE) – Research Purpose – the thesis is clearly stated in introduction	
Research question & developed thesis statement. What does your research tell us about American belief systems and why is this important? (Refer to argument driven analysis /*thesis worksheet*) Tie to themes of the course (religion, symbolism, myth, ritual/rite of passage (communitas), worldview, religious identity, logic of magic, taboo, spirits, religious practitioners, etc.) A. What is your research study about? B. What is the purpose of the research? C. What is the research problem? What is your research question? D. What is the significance of your research study? Why is it important? E. State your thesis statement clearly. (What, How, Why) (This is what you will prove in your data analysis.)	15 points
Application of thesis and topic sentences in Data analysis section	
*Use a topic sentence for each paragraph (refer to article driven analysis /*topic sentence worksheet*) Apply your thesis to every paragraph.	10 points
Use of your raw data to support your thesis argument Overall sound & developed analysis	10 points