

ENG1121: English Composition 2
Unit 1: Discourse Community Analysis

So far, we've read (or will read) as *readers* the following short stories:

"This Blessed House," by Jhumpa Lahiri
"The Things They Carried," by Tim O'Brien

And we've read as *writers* the following pieces:

"Navigating Genres," by Kerry Dirk

We've discussed which discourse communities the characters belong to; some are part of a discourse community by choice, while others did not entirely choose their community. We have created interview questions for a select group of characters in order to find out the following:

1. What is this group's goal?
2. What are the **ways** this group communicate with each other?
3. How does this group primarily communicate with its **members**?
4. How does this group communicate with the **outside world**?
5. What is the "language" they use within their group?
6. What does a person need to know before they can join this group?

Now it's time to bring these ideas from the page to our own lives. Choose a discourse community that either **you** or a **friend/relative** are a part of. This could be a club here at City Tech, a cohort of students with the same major, a social/religious/athletic group (either organized or informal), etc. (Just because it's not listed here shouldn't keep you from choosing a group you have in mind—if you're unsure, talk to me about it!)

**You must identify at least two possible groups by X.
and decide on one by the end of class that day.**

Once you've chosen your group, it's time to gather the evidence (otherwise known as research). You'll research the group in the following ways:

1. Observe and take notes on what the group does. How do they communicate? Talk? Text? A variation of both?
2. Is there a way to tell if a member is a "full" member of the group? What is it?
3. Collect examples of anything written or read (with the members' permission) to use as evidence for the assignment. How does this evidence keep the group connected?
4. Interview at least two members of the group about their thoughts on the group. Tailor the questions we've constructed for the characters in the short stories for the interview questions. Answer these questions yourself, if you've chosen a group you're a part of.
5. These interviews can either be recorded or done the "old fashioned" way (pencil and paper).

Some items to consider as you're observing/interviewing (keep these handy, because they'll help you with the writing):

1. What immediately stands out to you? What surprises you?
2. Are there conflicts? How does the group deal with them?
3. What do the examples you've collected do to establish identity and maintain coherence as a group?
4. Who has authority? How was that decided?

Rough Draft due X

This assignment is not just for me to read and evaluate. It's for you to share with the class this group you (or a friend/family member) are a part of. *You* are the eyes into your world. Even if your classmates come from similar discourse communities, you see that world differently than they do. **With that in mind, let us know the following information as if you were writing an article for *Vox* (they explain the news) or a similar online news source:**

Introduction: Identify the discourse community and what it is and does. What makes it a discourse community? What were your initial assumptions about the discourse community?

In the Body (in any order you think is the best): Talk about how you **researched** this group (observation, interviewing, recording, gathering evidence, etc.). Discuss **what you learned** in the process. Include **evidence** that brings this group to life for the audience (texts, conversations, readings, etc.). **Answer any** (or all) of these questions: What makes this community unique? What things matter to the community? What do they value? How does one become a member? Is there a process, formal or informal? How do the members communicate?

Conclusion: A takeaway from the project. What did you learn about the group that surprised you? What confused you? What made you rethink the way you initially looked at the group?

On the day you present your Rough Draft, your peers will comment on strengths and give suggestions for improvement. Take these notes seriously for your Second Draft, which I will evaluate (aka grade).

The Second Draft is due X

Grading Criteria (each is on a scale from 1 to 20; 100 points possible)

Student shared the nature of the discourse community *clearly* and *informatively*

Student shared *how* they went about researching the discourse community

Student shared *what* they learned in the process

Student shared unique *insight* into either the process itself and/or the discourse community

Student summed up their *experience* with the project as a whole