

WP2: Observing a New Space

In writing project two, you'll be asked to observe a new space for a significant amount of time while taking notes about what you observe. For this assignment:

- Choose a **new public space to observe**. This space must be:
 - Public, meaning that anyone can enter it.
 - New, meaning that it is not a space where you have already spent a significant amount of time.
 - Active, meaning that there is activity going on there for most of the day.
- This space may be online or offline. Good examples of an offline space might be somewhere like a restaurant or the MU on campus. Good examples of an online space might be somewhere like reddit.com, digg.com, canv.as, or an MMO (please remember this needs to be **new** so you cannot choose a website or game that you are already a member of). NOTE: If you choose an online space, please no NSFW spaces. Other students will have to view your data and might not be comfortable viewing overly sexual or violent content.
- You must then observe this space for a minimum of 4 hours. This time must be broken up into at least 3 different observing sessions at different times of the day. During this time, you should observe both the space itself (décor and design) and the people within the space (interactions, conversations, appearance).
- During your observations, you must take extensive notes. Do not rely on your memory. Write down your observations about the space. Bring these notes to class for us to discuss.
- You are encouraged to collect other forms of data in addition to notes: take pictures or screen captures, record sounds or conversations, conduct interviews with people in the space, provide links to important conversations if your space is online, and so forth.

After you have conducted all of your research about your space, you will need to write up a field report detailing what you have learned. This report will:

- Explain what you have learned about the space. How does it function? What is important to people on the site? What counts as meaningful interactions there?
- Make a **detailed claim about the space that is surprising or unique**. This claim helps your reader to “re-see” this space in a new way. What do you think you can say about this space now that you would not have thought to say when you first started observing it? What can you say as an “expert” on the space that someone just entering the space might not notice?
- **Back up your claim with evidence**: draw support from your notes, quote interesting posts or interactions, show screen shots of your website or pictures of your space, provide links, or show support for your points in other ways.

Minimum Length: First drafts must be at least 1,000 words; revised and final drafts must be at least **1,400 words**.

Audience: A person entering this space for the first time.

Additional requirements: All drafts must be typed, double-spaced, and in Times New Roman 12-point font. Please use 1-inch margins. All documents must be accessible through Microsoft Word (please use .doc or .docx format). Please name all attached files using your own name (i.e. RyanShepherdWP2.doc).

Your assignment will be graded on the following:

- **Clarity Depth of Claim:** The claim that you make about your space is clear, explicitly stated, and unique or surprising. The claim helps your reader to see your space in a new way.
- **Focus on Your Claim:** Your claim about the space is the clear focus of the paper. You do not go off on unrelated tangents or write about things that do not help support your central claim.
- **Adequate Support for Your Claim:** You have used evidence to support your central claim, be it in the form of support from your notes, quotes of interesting posts or interactions, screen shots of your website or pictures of the space, links, or other support.
- **Use of Observational Data:** The data you have collected while observing the space is used to help you make your claim. Your observations are clearly referenced within your paper.
- **Content Organization:** You have organized the content of your paper in a reasonable way. Your information is easy to understand, and your points are easy to follow. There is both an introduction and a conclusion. The paper clearly presents a central claim, and the content is organized around that claim. Paragraphs are ordered in such a way that they cannot be reordered at random, but instead provide logical transitions between ideas.
- **Attention to Assignment:** You adhere to the assignment as presented above, including main objectives, word count, attention to audience, and the additional requirements. You clearly understand what the assignment is asking you to do and are attempting to do it.
- **Manuscript preparation:** The writer has made changes between drafts that reflect attention to both instructor and peer comments. The writer has made an effort to improve his or her paper.

First round of notes are due on **Friday, July 15th** (At least 1 observations totaling 1 hour)

First drafts are due on **Friday, July 15th**

Second round of notes are due on **Tuesday, July 19th** (All 3 observations totaling 3 hours)

Revised drafts are due on **Tuesday, July 19th**

Final drafts are due on **Thursday, July 21st**