English 1B Spring 2015 **Primary Research Field Trip/Interview** Exercise

**Overview**: Primary research means you get information directly from the world, rather than from printed material. Two important types of primary research are interviewing and making direct observations. Field research is a hugely important activity in many professions: marketing, zoology, psychology, botany, and sociology, to name a few. Most of you will be able to incorporate field research into your research project, but many of you can’t, so I’ve decided to just make it a separate assignment. Feel free to incorporate the information and insights it yields into any other project it relates to.

**Requirements:**

1. Data: Report on where you went and what you saw, in as much detail as you can. Organize the data into sections that make sense for your topic. Include physical details of the setting, describe people who were there, their behavior, and what they said, if you asked them anything.
2. Analysis: What conclusions did you draw from what you saw? What insights into our society’s food culture did you get? Did it confirm or contradict anything we have read about in class?
3. Length & Format: 500-600 words, MLA format
4. Souvenir: Please attach a menu, a photo (email it to me), or some other memento I can use next semester.

**Due Dates:** Topic Proposal: Just write a line on your research paper topic proposal that tells me what site you will visit. If you know whom you will interview there, add that. If not, tell me later. Final draft: due MW classes 4/8, TTh classes 4/2

**Options**: Choose one of the options below, or pitch me another idea. Really anywhere food is offered in public is fair game, though obviously I want to encourage you to be adventurous.

* **Farmers’ Market**: Visit a farmers’ market and report on what you see, both what is offered for sale and how people behave, plus anything else that strikes you: the prices, the live entertainment, etc.
* **Ethnic food:** Visit an “ethnic” grocery store. How does it cater to its niche market? Consider not only the food offered but also things like what languages the workers speak, whether there is a bulletin board or newsletter for people in this ethnic/cultural group. Observe who is shopping there, how much they are buying, how they interact with each other and the workers. Observe the prices and products. What does this place offer that other local stores don’t. Consider interviewing a shopper and/or worker.
* **Independents vs. chains:** Visit a coffee shop that ISN’T a big chain (e.g. not a Starbuck’s, Peet’s, or Seattle’s Best). Describe its distinctive features. How is it different from the big guys? Note: a small chain is OK, e.g. Phil’s, Coffee Society.
* **Stadium Food:** Check out the food offerings at a sports stadium that you know. Note what is offered, prices, what people are buying and how/where they’re eating it.
* **Street Food**: Food trucks or carts are not as common in San Jose as in some big cities, but see what you can find, maybe in a big park or some kind of fair or festival. What is offered? Prices?
* **Farm workers at work**: If you can get access to fields were crops are being tended by people (not just one person on a tractor), report on what you see. “Pick your own” places count, too.
* **Urban Farms**: Ardenwood Historic Farm in Freemont offers a look at an old-fashioned farm. Full Circle Farm in Sunnyvale is an active urban farm operation. UC Santa Cruz has one, too. Veggielution is one of many community gardens you can visit, as well.
* **Homeless Garden Project** in Santa Cruz is designed to both raise food for the hungry and to give homeless people marketable skills. Open to the public.
* **Institutional Food**: Aside from the food available on campus (which is too easy), what other institutional food settings do you have access to? The cafeteria where your little brother goes to school, the Elder Care home where your grandma lives, the cafeteria at the hospital where your dad works, the company restaurant at Google, if you know someone who is lucky enough to work there, etc. Describe the food, the setting, etc.
* **Charity Food**:Visit a soup kitchen, food pantry, church food giveaway project, or some other organization that offers free food for low-income people.
* **School Garden**:These are getting more common, both as teaching laboratories and as sources of healthy food for school children of all ages. Find one nearby on the Edible Schoolyard site: <http://edibleschoolyard.org/network?text=Program+Name&city_zip=san+jose%2C+ca&sm_province=&sm_country>=
* **Food labels:** Curious about GMO labeling? Visit a store and see how many food items you can find that say “No GMOs.” You could do the same with other kinds of labels: organic, grass fed, fair trade, ocean safe, no BST (on dairy products). Obviously, you’re going to find more of this at a store catering to tree-hugger types or health enthusiasts. You might also see what kind of price difference the specially labeled foods have over the unlabeled foods.
* **Butcher Shop:** Yes, they still have these, though most people get meat at the grocery store. Notice that some of these local ones stock meat from Niman Ranch, owned by the writer of “Carnivore’s Dilemma” and her husband. For one that is close to campus: Willow Glen Meats and Smokehouse [885 Delmas Ave.](http://www.willowglenmeats.com/contact.htm)San Jose, CA 95125 (408) 279-4009
* **Other ideas, in brief:** a cooking school, a food business incubator (try the La Cochina website), an ethnic food festival, craft brewery, a good nursery—not just the plant part of a Home Depot (try Yamagami’s in Cupertino or Common Ground in Palo Alto).