English 1A Spring 2012 **Interview Essay: Writing About Culture**

**Overview:** This project is designed to give you a chance to think about your culture by interviewing someone from a different culture. It will also give you a chance to try a kind of research that might be new to you, the interview. The interview is a thriving form of writing that appears in many different forms. If you get good at it, you can do this for a living.

**Details:**

* **Topics**: A culture you don’t belong to but are curious about. We are defining “culture” either as a group you belong to automatically—nationality or ethnicity--or by choice: enthusiasts of a particular hobby, members of a religion, profession, or academic major, veterans of a particular experience (not just warfare). Problem topics: I’m sorry, but some topics are either too sensitive or too hackneyed (cliché-magnets), so I must forbid them. In the former category I’d include abortion, in the second fraternities/sororities. I also reserve the right to deny other topics if they seem problematic.
* **Audience**: Your choice, but it must be specific and appropriate for the topic.
* **Forum**: Again, you choose where this would be published, but it must be specific and appropriate to the audience and topic.
* **Methods**: Following the models we’ll look at in class, you should include a mix of the following: direct description, testimony from interviews, analysis, narrative, and (optional) ***properly cited*** information from research of written sources.
* **Format, Length**: MLA format, 1300 words.
* **Requirements**:Although “formal” research is optional, an interview with at least one person in or related to the subculture you are writing about is required, and at least one quote from that person is required. If you include material quoted from written sources (including the Web), you must include a bibliography and follow MLA guidelines for citing sources. Informal citation (as in a newspaper) is fine for quotes from the interview.

**Procedure:**

1) Topic Proposal: Briefly identify the group you will discuss, name at least one person you will interview and contact information for him/her (email, ideally, or a phone number). Also identify the audience you will address, and forum. **Due:**

2) Interview questions: I want to see the questions you will use, at least 10, typed. **Due:**

3) Peer Review You will bring TWO copies of the draft to class to get and give advice. **Due:**

4) Revise, Turnitin: You will take your draft and your peer’s advice home, consider what advice to use, maybe get my advice, as well; then revise. Print out the final draft AND submit it electronically to Turnitin.com. Staple the final draft pages together, then put that in a big envelope with the peer review sheet, rough draft, and interview notes, and hand it in at the BEGINNING of class on the day its due. Then you can relax and confer with your book clubs, maybe see a short movie. **Due:**

MORE on OTHER SIDE

**One place to find someone to interview**: **SJSU International House**

It is a bit challenging to investigate a culture you don’t already know much about. One way to do that is to take advantage of the SJSI International House meet some international students, maybe interview them for your paper. I will even give **extra credit** if you go to one of these events and write about it (approx. 1 page description/response with a souvenir) Check out their Web site: <http://www.sjsu.edu/ihouse/index.htm>

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Internationally Inspired Pancake Breakfast**   |  | | --- | | **Sat 14 October 9:30 am-1 pm** | | |

Open to all students, faculty, staff, alumni and local community, Pancake Breakfast features a buffet of food from across the globe!  
  
This semester's menu consists of breakfast items from Hong Kong (Curried Fish Balls), Portugal (Caldo Verde, a Portuguese soup), Japan (Okonomiyaki, Japanese seafood pancake), and Scotland (Scottish Shortbread).  
  
Residents of the International House will dress in traditional outfits from around the world and cook, serve, and perform for guests. Other student organizations will also be in attendance and showcasing their various talents as well!  
  
Cost:$5 Student ; $10 General ; $25 Family of Four

**COFFEE NIGHT** **Tuesdays** 8:30 – 10:30 pm I-House Dining Room All are welcome to attend!