



Assignment 4: Oral History

Background:

Like Assignment 3, this exercise is inspired by work I am not deeply versed in yet. As we've read, oral histories and other forms of interviewing can empower storytelling in interesting and unexpected ways that connect thoughts, emotions and even the body.

Learning Objective(s):

- Gain introduction oral history and interview methods
- Gain practice with active, deep listening
- Practice generating a summary document from an oral history/interview

Core concepts/terms:

- Oral history
- Interviewing
- Storytelling

Evaluation Criteria: You will be graded based on your demonstration of your ability to:

- Try and make connections that are not necessarily obvious.
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Your task is to do a pilot of oral history project. The following guidance is provided, but since I am new to this method myself, I'm leaving the instructions fairly open. Have fun!

Check out these principles and guidelines from the Oral History Association:

<https://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices-revised-2009/> After reading, you may have a couple of questions, which I will try to answer in advance:

- For this assignment, we are not aiming to record oral histories to preserve for posterity. It's an experimental assignment.
- For your narrator, you should work with a classmate. All of you have relevant experience – even if only in the last few weeks – of thinking about climate change, emotions, and Lawrence/Douglas County.
- The interviews should be at least 20 to 30 minutes. But no need to go for an hour or more!
- In the pre-interview phases listed on the OHA webpage, you do not need to do items 1 and 2; items 3, 4 and 5 are mostly done already; and you can focus on items 6, 7 and 8.
- In the interview phases listed on the OHA webpage, you do not need to do item 5; focus instead on items 1 through 4.
- In the post-interview phases listed on the OHA webpage, focus on items 2 and 8, you do not need to focus on items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Thematic-wise:

Aim to focus on core themes of the semester:

- Climate change
- Lawrence/Douglas County
- Compassion and emotions

Product-wise:

Aim to produce the following:

- A pre-interview outline of topics and the agreements made about the interview. This can be material from email correspondence simply copied into a text file (with some sort of header and documentation about the email exchange). Items 5, 6 and 8 in the pre-interview phase.
- An audio digital file and a digital transcript of the interview. There are some really handy apps that can be used to record with your phone and generate a transcript. I've found Otter to be an easy to use app, including over the phone.
- A text file that serves as meta-data summarizing the interview – the narrator, the circumstance, perhaps some key words, and perhaps a summary paragraph or two. Items 2 and 8 on the post-interview phase.

PS: each student must turn in their own unique assignment, but you clearly will need to work pairs or groups to take photos/videos, talk through your ideas and feelings, and share tips on how to organize your product.