

Iowa Narratives Project

Due Dates:

Proposal and collaboration agreement:
Conduct and record interviews:
Composition plan (outline that includes tasks):
Draft workshop:
Final drafts and presentations:
Turn in process log:
Reflection and group participation evaluation:

Tasks:

Working in groups, create an audio essay, also called a podcast, paired with images (*minimum* of five; more would be better; 12-20 is best) that showcase an under-recognized narrative connected to a local public space. Your narrative could feature anything from a local museum to a public square to a nearby park or public memorial to a business. In the podcast, make an argument that the narrative you've uncovered is important and deserves wider acknowledgement. Each group member should have a speaking part in the recorded podcast, and the narrative should include voices from the community, too.

Purposes:

By completing this assignment, you have the opportunity to learn and practice skills such as:

- Rhetorical approaches that persuade a broad audience
- Constructing a multimedia text for a real-world set of contexts
- Engaging in an effective collaborative process including working as a group and partnering with a community organization
- Using your skills of spoken communication to advocate

Discussion:

This assignment invites you to be publicly engaged by identifying a story that needs more recognition and showcasing that story for an audience. In assigned groups, you will use all of the rhetorical principles we have studied so far in order to create a podcast that features a compelling story from the community and the voices of each of your group members. Use any variety of recorded sound you wish to make your podcast as rhetorically effective as possible (including ambient sound, royalty free music, and sound effects). Keep in mind that you **MUST OBEY COPYRIGHT LAW**. You must also provide proper citation for any text you do not create as a group.

It is up to you and your group to determine an appropriate focus and approach for the assignment. Your primary goals are to (1) relate a story that is not often heard and (2) convince us (your classmates), in a presentation at the end of the semester, to listen to your podcast.

IDEAL:

Review and get ideas from other students' Iowa Narratives Projects on IDEAL's Iowa Narratives Project series on the University of Iowa's institutional repository, Iowa Research Online (http://ir.uiowa.edu/ideal_inp/). Think about what is done well and what you can do better. Keep in mind that each instructor assigns this project with a slightly different focus. Avoid topics other students have covered.

Requirements:

Rhetorical quality

- Your argument that the story you are featuring deserves wider attention should be convincing to your target audience
- Your target audience for this presentation is the public, broadly construed
- Be engaging in order to help your audience become engaged
- Use rhetorical appeals with an understanding of their effect in multiple contexts
- Use formality and informality as appropriate
- Apply your rhetorical studies from previous weeks to make a clear and convincing argument

Composition

- Feature yourself and all group members prominently
- Display confidence in your claims and your abilities
- Work with the assumption that this presentation will be seen by everyone you know and by thousands you don't know
- Honor the community members you feature by composing a podcast that sounds pleasing and is both honest and empathetic in its portrayal of others
- Images should be captured in high resolution and should be original (i.e. you take them) or cited within a caption
- Many of your images should feature people and action if at all possible
- A variety of images will hold your audience's attention, but be sure that the images have evident connections to the podcast's narrative

Process

- Compose a plan for group collaboration, define roles, and write up a group agreement
- Keep notes regarding your tasks and progress in a group process log
- Schedule group meetings outside of class time
 - Phone, text messages, Google Drive, and email are all great tools
- Revise (i.e. edit and re-edit, mix and re-mix) extensively between first and final drafts
- Re-read this assignment prompt many times and ask me if you have questions
- Participate fully in class workshopping activities

Grading Criteria:

Instructor note: Fill in language here about our grading expectations. A sample follows.

Presentations satisfying the requirements and fulfilling the purposes listed above will receive a satisfactory grade of between C- and B. Presentations that do not satisfy the criteria above will receive an unsatisfactory grade of D or lower. Presentations that demonstrate mastery of the criteria above will earn a grade of B+ or higher. All grades will be assigned on the percentage scale outlined in the course syllabus. You will be graded as a group for 50% of your grade and individually for 50% of your grade. Your individual grade will be determined by how well you execute your collaborative role in the project.

Formatting and Other Minutia:

- Present the final draft in class on the due date
- Presentations should be between 12 and 15 minutes long, as a rough guideline
- Include the names of your group members in the presentation
- Turn in a group collaborative plan and group participation evaluation (described in a handout to follow)

Process steps:

Process Log and Visual Bibliography:

Throughout this project, you and your groupmates must keep track of your research through the creation of a visual bibliography using [Coggle](#). You must also keep track of your activities by keeping a process log. The process log will serve as a documentation of your group's work. Every activity done in service to this project, including group activities and individual activities, should be recorded in the log. The log should specify which members of the group completed each activity. Include details about research, interviews, writing, editing, and etc., and update your visual bibliography accordingly. These documents will show, at the end of the project, what each group member contributed, and bolster the group's credibility as a whole.

Proposal assignment

Compose a proposal that describes your narrative project. In about a page of typed text each, describe:

1. The narrative you plan to feature
2. The questions that will guide your inquiry into the details of the narrative
3. A thesis statement that argues why this narrative deserves wider attention

Collaborative agreement

As a group, compose a document that describes the collaborative roles of the group. Define your collaborative process. Write this in the form of an agreement that describes how you want to work together to make decisions, when and where you will meet, how you will schedule meetings, when you will complete tasks, and how you will address concerns and disagreements. If you already have such an agreement, revise it as needed.

Composition plan

Write a storyboard or outline for your presentation that includes all of the important parts of the narrative. This will help you think about the structure of your narrative.

Compose a very detailed timeline for your group's work. List deadlines for tasks as well as descriptions of each task for each group member.

Conduct and record interviews

The format and formality of your interviews will depend on your focus. Work together as a group to write out some questions you might want to ask. Use the [INP Library Guide](#) as a research tool to help construct informed interview questions. But be sure you don't depend on a script. An open conversation that sometimes touches upon your interview questions will allow your interviewee space to add their own perspectives. You must inform the people you interview about your project. Ask them to sign the interviewee release form. If they do not wish to sign the form, then don't include their voice in your podcast. **Be sure to bring release forms with you when you conduct interviews.**

When recording interviews, make a few practice recordings to be sure that you know how to use your equipment as well as how to position the recording device in order to capture a strong recording of your interviewee. Remember that a noisy space is not a good space for recording interviews.

Record sounds that will help create the soundscape for your narrative. For instance, if your interviewee mentions a choir they enjoy, and if that statement is important in your podcast, try to get some recorded sound of the choir in a performance or practice. You will then be able to have choral singing in the background of your podcast.

Compose your podcast

Use the audio editing software of your choice (IDEAL recommends Audacity which is free, open-source software available for Mac, Windows, and Linux. You can download it at <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>). Import the audio files you want to work with. Make cuts and position your tracks in order to compose a smooth, 5-8 minute podcast narrative. There are many online tutorials (mostly video tutorials) that will help you use Audacity, Garage Band, or another application to edit your audio. Excellent tutorials are available through The University of Iowa's subscription to Lynda. To access those tutorials, go to <http://lynda.uiowa.edu/> and sign in with your HawkID.

In a nutshell, composing with audio tracks is just like cutting, copying, and pasting in a Microsoft word document. You select and move around bits of audio you want to use, and you cut out any bits you don't want to use. As a group, you will record narration to include in your podcast around the interviews and other sounds you collected while on location. Pay close attention to the organization of your project to ensure a cohesive and engaging podcast.

Draft workshop (in class)

Pair up with another group to workshop your multimedia presentation in progress. Bring a list of questions and concerns about your presentation to the workshop.

Presentations

The presentation's organization will revolve around how the group decides to walk the audience through the constructed podcast.

The presentation should do the following:

1. Introduce yourselves and your topic to your audience.
2. Argue convincingly that the narrative you have chosen as your focus is deserving of wider attention.

Remember, you are trying to persuade your audience to agree with you. A confident tone, good eye contact, merited and tactful appeals to emotion may all be used in convincing your audience to side with your argument.

Just as important, you will want conclude your presentation with a clear and persuasive appeal. Do not simply slip into silence. Go beyond merely stating, "this narrative is important because it hasn't been told before" by providing compelling evidence through concrete examples. Assert the validity of your argument and the need for understanding this space and the telling of stories.

Discussion of Rhetorical Techniques

In addition to the podcast and the presentation, you will compose an 800-word explanation of the rhetorical techniques you employ in the project. You are encouraged to draw from course readings in making your case for the efficacy of the techniques you used. Paraphrase and use quotes from the readings, and be sure to cite accordingly.

Reflection on group collaboration

As individuals, write a 400-word reflection that addresses the following prompts:

- Compose a few paragraphs that describe how well you as an individual have met the expectations of your group's agreement, what you invested in the assignment and what you gained from that investment, and how you could have improved your work in any way.
- Write about how effectively your group-mates met the expectations of your collaborative agreement. Mention each group member by name and assess their efforts to work together as a team in order to meet this assignments' expectations.
- Reflect on the skills and knowledge you worked to gain in this assignment. How did you challenge yourself to learn something new? What do you know now that you didn't before starting the assignment?

Upload your project (optional, though encouraged)

Your group can elect to feature your podcast and images on the University of Iowa's institutional repository, Iowa Research Online: ir.uiowa.edu/. Students' work will be included in IDEAL's [Iowa Narratives Project series](#) and featured alongside other responses to the assignment.

To share your work, each member of your group must submit a project release form (linked to IDEAL's project page: <http://ideal.uiowa.edu/projects/>) and have a signed release from each person you interviewed who is featured in the podcast (interviewee release provided by your instructor).

The project release form and instructions for uploading your project are provided on the Iowa Narratives Project page on the IDEAL site: <http://ideal.uiowa.edu/projects/#iowa-narratives-project>

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