**Discourse Community Inquiry (Weeks 1-8)**

For this assignment, you will select a discourse community—a group of people who use the same language and share common interests, knowledge and vocabulary related to your intended major field of study. Perhaps you will study a workplace setting related to your field, a department or major on campus, a student organization on campus, or a professional organization in the community. Once you have decided on a community, you will write a **research proposal (+/- 700 words)** that outlines your proposed study, includes a project timeline, and articulates some guiding questions that will inform your data collection and analysis in that community.

You will then gather 5 (five) textual artifacts from this discourse community (using library and/or archival research methods) and use textual or discourse analysis to understand the ways that language functions to construct this community. These artifacts could be anything from recorded lectures, popular magazine articles, newsletter articles, trade journal articles, scholarly journal articles, recorded conversations between members, online communities, organizational web pages, member blogs, interviews, training manuals, employee handbooks, Twitter hastags conversations, list-servs messages, email conversations, memos, syllabi, etc.

For each of the five artifacts, you will, with the help of Porter’s Forum Analysis Heuristic, consider audience, purpose, context, medium, strategies, and arrangements in complex and thoughtful ways, working to understand the following:

* what topics, issues, interests, values, and inquiries matter in the community
* what forums and genres matter in the community and why
* how is knowledge made in the community
* how does the community constructs its boundaries and define membership
* how does language position people as insiders, outsiders, and anywhere in between
* how do narratives function in the community to construct an internal identity and external image
* how do members come to voice and participate in the community

Once you have considered what these artifacts say about the ways your community uses language, you will write up a **preliminary analysis of your data (+/-1000 words)** that proposes a thesis and supports your interpretations with textual/ discourse analysis.

Next, you will work to situate and triangulate your interpretation with primary and secondary research. You will conduct two personal interviews with insiders in your community to test your thesis and interpretations, and you will find three (3) scholarly research articles that address the communicative practices in your community, field, or major to consider how your research supports, conflicts with, or provides new knowledge about communication in your community. You will document this research in an **annotated bibliography (+/-1500 words)**.

You will then produce a **research publication** for your English 2201 classmates that describes your community, your research processes, challenges & opportunities, your data analysis, the ways your understandings evolved through triangulating data, and informs the class of your findings and what those findings mean for people who want to join those communities.

Your **research publication** for this project might take the following form:

* A Research Poster
* An Interactive Website
* An Infographic
* A Research Abstract
* A Lightning Talk
* A YouTube Video

You will have multiple opportunities over the course of the project to engage peer review and receive formative feedback from your instructor. You will curate the proposal, preliminary analysis, annotated bibliography, and research publication in your mid-semester portfolio and reflect on both your writing processes and products.

**Selected Class Readings**Swales “The Concept of Discourse Communities”  
Gee, “Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics”  
Porter “Forum Analysis” from *Audience and Rhetoric*  
Wardle “Identity, Authority, and Learning to Write in New Workspaces”  
Branick "Coaches Can Read, Too: An Ethnographic Study of a Football Coaching Discourse Community”