Group Research Projects

Overview

In this seminar groups of 4-5 students will conduct collaborative research based on a single topic or area relating to American race riots. The four areas to be covered are the Watts Riots of 1965, the MLK riots of 1968, the 1992 LA uprising, and the flurry of mass actions springing from the national #BlackLivesMatter movement. Each research group will be responsible for doing research on their designated area/topic, assigning class readings relating to that area/topic, and leading the seminar on the day their area/topic is scheduled to be covered (i.e. Week 7, 8, 9, or 10). Research groups will also be responsible for writing a final group paper and various task sheets as part of their research project.

Objectives

- Allow students the opportunity to learn how to work collaboratively and engage in group research

- Allow students the opportunity to conduct college-level interdisciplinary scholarly research using primary and secondary sources, critical inquiry, and personal life experiences

- Allow students the opportunity to take an active role in determining the content and context of their learning, while establishing their individual learning process and ability to share and disseminate knowledge.

Requirements

Document everything. You will be turning in all aspects of your research process. This includes the following things:

Meeting Minutes

When you meet as a group, take attendance of who’s present. Document the action items and highlights of discussion. Document any delegated activities. Write down next steps. All meetings should end with concrete plans of actions or next steps. What was decided in the meeting, and what is going to happen next is crucial. This is how you stay organized and on-point for the duration of your project.

Critical Reflection Papers

At the end of the project, each individual will write a summary of what they did individually as part of the group project. Often when working in groups roles and duties are delegated to certain people. In other instances all members of the group do the
exact same work. It’s important to pay attention to the culture your group creates (often unconsciously), how it is structured and how it functions. The structure of the group, roles, duties, etc. are all going to be specific to each group and determined by each group. I need to know how your group functions and how you function within it. In other words be self-reflexive and self-reflective throughout the process.

Annotated Bibliography

It should come as no surprise that you will need to do a good amount of reading as part of this group research project. Each member of the group will be responsible for turning in Annotated Bibliographies for at least 5 selected texts. They may be Annotated Bibilos from books, articles, essays, chapters in edited volumes, pamphlets, various primary resource materials, videos, documentaries, movies, albums, or any other material which might be constituted as a “text” serving as a source for your research.

Annotated Biblios are different than your standard, garden-variety bibliography. On one hand they are substantial summaries of the selected text. On the other, they are critical reflections on that selected text, including how the text fits in (or doesn't) with other material from your research, how it’s applicable (or not) to other ideas we’ve discussed in class, etc. An Annotated Biblio is a summary PLUS critical reflection PLUS analysis of its utility for your research project.

Assigning Reading

Each group will be responsible for discovering and selecting texts for the week they are responsible for covering. They will generally select 2-5 appropriate texts, somewhere in the ballpark of 50-150 pages in length total, and then email me the texts so that I can upload them to the class website for the rest of the students in class. This needs to be done no later than 7 days prior to their designated class (i.e. groups presenting on Thursday May 14 will need to send me the texts for uploading no later than May 7). Students in the class will then post their reading responses as usual.

Lesson Plan

Each group will lead the class on the day their area/topic is scheduled. The group will need to create a lesson plan for how they want to teach/manager/lead the class. This may take the form of a discussion, an activity, a presentation, or any hybrid or wholly-new invented forms of classroom pedagogy. The class is yours, the material is yours, the topic is yours. Feel free to structure the class time however you see fit. BUT, you should have a clear agenda, learning objectives, desired outcomes, and probably outcomes. Your lesson plan will need to be turned in on the day of the class.