

Water Culture Field Data Collection Project

HNR 280 Winter 2020

The Water Culture project is your chance to apply what you've been learning in HNR 280 to life beyond the classroom. With your group, you will engage in fieldwork and interviewing focused on water culture and the Muskegon River in Newaygo County.

The project has several phases:

PHASE 1 Project design: With your group, you will decide on some aspect of water culture to explore. The book you read in Fall 2019, *The Muskegon: The Majesty and Tragedy of Michigan's Rarest River*, provides you with background information about the area, while the readings from Winter 2020 provide you several topic areas to consider for investigation.

What do you want to explore? What questions will you ask? Who do you hope to interview? How do you want to record your interviews?

The project design should include at least ten interview questions.

PHASE 2 Data collection: The class will travel to Newaygo on Saturday, Feb. 15. If the weather cooperates and the ice is safe, we will participate in the 2020 Dam to Dam Ice Fishing Tournament. If not, we will spend time along the Muskegon River in Newaygo and Croton. In either case, we will spend most of the day outside—so dress accordingly.

Fieldnotes: Each individual in your group will write fieldnotes, recording through “thick description” the scenes being observed. Researchers do not rely on memory! Instead, descriptive notes written at the scene capture both the “big picture” and “little picture” of what’s happening. Imagine these notes will be used to introduce your roommate to a day in the life of Newaygo. Focus on the facts, including times, counts of people/shanties/etc, direct quotes, maps, sketches, detailed descriptions of what people are doing and saying, weather conditions, signage, vehicles, etc. Use all of your senses in documenting the scene, painting a vivid portrait of what’s going on. When you return home, you should immediately begin assembling your notes into a coherent form. This includes typing them. You are individually responsible for typing and submitting your notes. The typed notes are due no later than Thursday, Feb. 27.

Interviews: Each individual in your group should conduct at least two interviews. When you've found someone you'd like to interview, introduce yourself and the project, using the letter of consent [you should bring extra copies to leave with the person you are interviewing]. Ask if they agree to participate, if you may record them, and whether they want their identity attached.

Thank them and let them know that you're going to turn on your recorder. Begin recording. Say your name, the day/time, and ask them (again—now on recording) if they agree to participate. Ask (again) if it's okay if you record them. If they said they want their identities attached, ask them for their name.

Give them reassurance that there are no right/wrong answers, etc. Then, dive into your questions! Remember to use open-ended phrasing and to employ probes to keep the conversation moving.

As you are interviewing, one of your group members should be taking handwritten notes of the interview and the other person should be recording it. The person taking the notes should write their name at the top of the page, and also should indicate who is doing the interview and who is being interviewed. We will provide you a template for formatting the interview sheets.

The notes from the interview must be typed by the person who took the notes, using the recording as an additional source. The typed interview notes must be turned in no later than Thurs, March 19. The unedited audio/video recording must also be submitted at this time. Details on how to transfer the digital files will be discussed later.

PHASE 3 The Product: The goal of this project is to get hands-on experience with fieldwork and interviews as a way to understand local water culture. As such, you will draw on the conceptual frameworks introduced this semester in our readings, films, discussion, and lecture to analyze the ethnographic data you have collected. With your group you will choose one of the following ways to present your project:

- Poster/presentation at SSD (note: online registration required by Feb. 21)
- Video documentary of your interviews/results (under 15 minutes)
- Written report of your results (around 15 pages)

A *draft* version is due to us by Thurs, April 2.

The *final* version is due by Weds, April 9.

All of your group members will earn the same grade on your final product.

Important Dates

Feb. 6:	Begin project design
Feb. 15:	Data collection
Feb. 21:	Last day to register for SSD (www.gvsu.edu/ours/ssd/)
Feb. 27:	Typed fieldnotes due (individually submitted)
Mar. 19:	Typed interview notes and unedited digital files due (individually submitted)
April 2:	Draft product due (group submission)
April 8:	Final product due (group submission)
April 9/14:	Final presentations (group submission)