

ANTH 498 C / SOCI 498 D CYBERSPACE ETHNOGRAPHY BLOGGING GUIDELINES

Keeping a regularly updated course blog is, in nature, exactly the same as a course journal, except that it allows for discussion and revision. This is an important part of the course, replacing the normal types of assignments and exams, and thus carries great weight in the course.

Your completed blog is worth 25% of the total course grade.

The philosophy behind the blog is that “meaning is what you end up with”. Learning is about arguments, not right answers. The emphasis here is on the process rather than the product as such.

You should not try to reach closure too quickly. Allow yourself to imagine alternative answers. Explore. Raise questions. That is what inquiry is all about. What is the problem? What is the question you need to address?

The journal you will keep resembles more the “real world” of research and writing: multiple drafts, experimentation, notes in journals, extracts from readings, false starts, and so forth. A journal reflects the actual “behind the scenes” writing that occurs with real research. A journal is a seedbed for ideas. A journal has a scrapbook and diary quality to it, so I do not expect to see formal writing. Keeping such a journal is like writing memoranda to yourself. A journal connects data and readings to personal experiences; it is a space for your own personal reflections. The journal will provide you with the scaffolding for your final essay, some of which you will discard. The value of the journal is that it engages you in writing to clarify your thinking. One of the best things about the journal, from the teacher’s point of view, is that it gives me insight into how you learn, and your individuality as students.

As teachers, we are well acquainted with the negative aspects of student learning: plagiarism, doing assignments the night before they are due, and not doing the readings. A journal process is an effective check against plagiarism—it is too complex and individually unique to be copied from another student or downloaded from the web. Nor can a journal be prepared the night before I ask to see it.

A blog is, all at the same time, a reading log, an analysis drafting board, and a record doubts or possible alternative answers. Allow others to post comments on your blog.

Your blog should include notes from any reading you do, insights, preliminary analyses, short descriptions of online experiences (do not betray the identity of anyone concerned), short articles, first drafts of paragraphs you might use in your final paper.

This is not as much *extra* work as you think, as your research paper *should* be pulling together, synthesizing, refining and organizing what you already have on your blog.

By the start of the fourth week, you should be posting regularly every week, until you feel ready to begin producing your paper.