

Project-at-a-Glance

Rhetorical Purpose: To **synthesize, build on, and contribute** to a scholarly conversation about a social group to which you belong and a larger conversation about human behavior, perceptions, and attitudes.

Audience: Other scholars and particularly social scientists interested in in-groups and human behavior, attitudes, and perceptions, particularly ones about identity, belonging, and difference.

Pages: 7+ full pages or 1750 words, not including your References page or Writer's Memo.

Citation: A documentation style social scientists use is APA (Times New Roman 12 pt. font, black ink, one-inch margins, and APA citation, including page numbers, a cover page, a header, and a References page).

APA citation and style help is available through ZSR (<https://zsr.wfu.edu/research/citation>) and in *Easy Writer*. We'll also talk about APA style in class.

Total Possible Points:
Proof of research meeting with librarian: reading quiz points
Synthesis matrix: reading quiz points
Final draft: 200

Sources:
-- **At least six scholarly sources (academic book chapters or articles).** Very likely, these will be scholarly journal articles written by social scientists, so limit your searches with that in

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WRI 111 Writing Home Spring 2018

Unit 3: Adding to the Conversation

Project 3: Autoethnography of a Group

"Personal stories...are, of course, never just about individuals; such stories are also about the social worlds in which we live...our individual stories are always communal ones. Consequently, telling personal stories means not only looking inward but also turning the self outward and tracing the links and relationships that shape and define not only who we are as individuals but also the broader social worlds of which we are a part."

– Christine Walley

Project Overview

We've spent a lot of time this semester using the analogy of writing as conversation, a great lively chat going on that we can enter and build on. In this most complex project of the semester, **you'll critically examine and add to one of the conversations to which you belong**, namely, one of your social groups and identities.

As part of our identities, groups often define and shape us but can also restrict us. Think us v. them: groups can push us to grow, to conform, and sometimes to rebel. And every human—whether we like it or not—is part of at least a few groups. We see this all around us, particularly now, in college, as student groups, Greek life, teams, and clubs beckon for our attention while we often simultaneously try to stay in touch with home—or not. College is a crossroads and a transition. Some groups we chose. Some—our class, our family, our race, our ethnicity, our sexuality, our geography—chose us.

Groups play a significant role in our concept of home, or as we've been moving toward, a larger concept of identity, and how identity shapes our concepts of familiarity and difference. A greater awareness and analysis of our identity as we grow can help us understand who we (the collective "we") were as societies, who we are now, and who we are becoming within the conversation of life.

Our Learning Objectives

- **To practice synthesizing** multiple sources in a conversation to create a thorough and accurate snapshot of what we know about something (here, your in-group), and what we don't.
- **To practice (more) finding and working** with credible sources.
- **To practice (more) critical thinking, keen observation, precise analysis, and active reading.**
- **To practice (more) using textual evidence**, e.g. (quotations, paraphrases, and summary).
- **To practice (more) crafting an organized argument** for a scholarly audience and purpose with a beginning, middle, and end.
- **To practice (more) writing and research as process** through free writing, drafting, responding to other writers' drafts, processing constructive yet critical feedback, and revision.
- **To practice ownership and reflection about yourself as a writer, thinker, and human using specific textual evidence from your own work and potentially other texts, including class reading.**

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mind. One of your scholarly sources must be Gordon Allport's "Formation of In-Groups" (we'll be reading this together), but you'll be finding the others.

-- **Yourself and your experience in your in-group.**

-- **Optional:** an on-the-record interview with another member of your in-group.

As always, you're welcome to use additional credible sources to build your argument. Possible additional sources could come from our autoethnographic readings, including *Exit Zero*.

Note about workshoping in this project: We're moving toward more independent workshoping and will be doing it in class this round. **Full rough draft of autoethnography due** (shared in a Google Drive folder): **Thurs. April 5 at our class start time (9, 10, or 11 am).**

Our peer response workshops' logistics and expectations, i.e. your drafts, letters, and participation, will work the same as before with *one* exception: they will be in class Nov. 10, with Prof. G. floating from group to group. That's why we'll all have the same deadline this time. Bring your letters (one copy for your classmate and one for Prof. G to class Nov. 10). More info to come; keep an eye on our website's daily calendar.

Final draft due:
Wed. April 11

The Genre: Autoethnography

As we'll see from example readings (we always look example of a genre before tackling it, and particularly look to see where we can break and/or follow conventions), autoethnographies are formal social sciences writing that hold up a "**critical mirror**" to analyze the writer's own experiences, history, and identity. Deborah E. Reed-Danahay, an anthropologist, offers a definition of autoethnography as a mix of "(1) native anthropology,' in which people who were formerly the subjects of ethnography become the authors of studies of their own group, (2) 'ethnic autobiography,' personal narratives written by members of ethnic minority groups [and] (3) 'autobiographical ethnography,' in which anthropologists interject personal experience into ethnographic writing." An ethnography is the critical and formal analysis and observation of a group by social scientists in conversation with other social scientists; an *autoethnography*, then, is the analysis of the self in a similar conversation.

You don't have to be part of an ethnic minority to write an autoethnography, however—you just need to highlight a larger social in-group to which you belong in order for your experience to have larger relevance. In other words, there's a still lot of *they saying* and *I saying* going on here. Like other writers, these writers attempt **to build on** and **add to a conversation**, and here that is done usually through a synthesis of the current research conversation (the literature review) and the writer's additional evidence, or, how they add to the conversation.

On to deadlines and possible points...

As this is our most complex project of the semester, we'll break this project into manageable stages to help you accomplish it.

Keeping up with the steps of this process can make this project ultimately more successful and straightforward; conversely, falling behind may compound possible mistakes. Stay on track by noting and meeting these smaller goals during this busy time:

1. **Proof of personal research session with a librarian (a signed business card is fine).** Read the separate guide, linked on our website. **Due April 4. Points = reading quiz grade.**
2. **Literature review synthesis matrix with six scholarly sources.** **Due April 4. Points = reading quiz grade.**
3. **Autoethnography:** We'll be reading examples of these, too, to help you figure out what these look like as a general genre of writing. **Full rough draft Thurs. April 5 at our class start time (9, 10, or 11 am) before our in-class peer response workshop April 6 (bring your letters to peers that day, too). Final draft due April 11. Points = 200.**

Higher Order Concerns: Research, Evidence, & Organization (the Bigger Things)

Some of our earliest writing in this project will be discovery pre/freewriting to help you figure out potential groups as topics. I also encourage you to consider Projects 1 and 2 as stepping stones. You worked some important writing skills such as **summarizing, responding, deeply observing/seeing, and analyzing, drafting, and radically revising**. How can you build on these? While this assignment is personal in nature, an autoethnography is not just a narrative or story. You'll be listening to and joining (responding) to a current conversation about part of your social identity. You'll be taking step back and examine your group with a scholarly and analytical sociological eye ("making the familiar strange"). Your autoethnography will be a critical portrayal of what it is like to be a member of your social in-group, why you joined (and in some cases, you might not feel like you have had a choice), and how that group affects your identity and lifestyle. Is your group shaped by religion? Class? Race? Sexuality? Gender? Ethnicity? Geography?

Evidence and research as we'll see in examples of this kind of writing (like *Exit Zero*), may come from your 1. **own relevant experience** and 2. **six scholarly sources** (one of them must be Allport's "Formation of In-Groups," a scholarly psychology article we'll read together). These sources, primarily the scholarly sources, will help you build the literature review portion of this project, which shows the conversation as well as current holes where you may contribute and add to a discussion about human behavior. Optional evidence could come from an on-the-record **interview** with another member of your group.

Once you loosely settle on a group, you might start some freewriting/early research with some of these questions, which we may also address in class or through our journals:

- What does it mean to be a part of your in-group? How has belonging to this group influenced how you view yourself and the world, namely, people not part of this group?
- What are the customs, practices, rituals, mores (social behaviors), and traditions of this group?
- How do others perceive this group (this is where your interview—or additional one—as well as writings and scholarship will be helpful)?
- What stereotypes exist about your group? Where do you see evidence of this, including in popular media?
- To what extent your identification with a group has ever contributed to you being "othered"? "Othered" means when your group is excluded or separated or made to seem strange.
- What's bad about your group as well as good? In other words, how can you turn a critical mirror on it?

As this project requires the most external sources, you'll be required to meet with a librarian early in your process to help get you started on finding scholarly sources via Google Scholar and/or the library databases (this is worthwhile experience for future classes). **If you're still struggling after this research appointment, please seek out more help, either from the library again or from Prof. G. We write through projects because such experienced-based work is beneficial and lasting learning.** Your interview, personal experiences, and scholarly sources will help you learn more about your group/identity and provide evidence to form a working thesis about your in-group and your relationship to it. Your thesis, as usual, may change as you research and write. Think broadly and specifically in this research. If you're examining your connection to hip hop as a social group, Simon Frith's article "Why Music Matters" might help you explain general societal purposes of music while Virgil Taylor's "Hip Hop Is Now: An Evolving Youth Culture" would help you explore and explain connections between youth and hip hop.

Be patient, and try lots of searching using strategies you learn in class, from your research session, and from other help. Learning to do academic secondary research takes practice and adaptability. Keep in mind that you're not writing a report, but rather, **forming a new contribution to a conversation. You're looking for patterns in the current conversation but also gaps and how you may add to the conversation** (that's called synthesis, and we'll be working this skill in this unit).

Finally, as we'll be sharing writing as usual, I encourage you to pick an in-group/identity that challenges and

engages you as well as one that you're willing to share. This is a fair space, though, so be brave and curious. Think: what group of yours or part of your identity scares and pushes you a bit? What's risky? *Pick that one.*

Organization: Although this genre is likely new to you, as usual, in this unit we'll discuss and tease Higher Order Concerns of this kind of writing **that look similar and different than other genres we've worked in this semester**. For example, what does evidence look like in an autoethnography? How do these writers structure or organize their arguments? What does "beginning-middle-end" look like here, or what are some options? Do autoethnographies argue a central point with a thesis, or a "so what?," and what does that look like?

Building on the semester and all the writing we've done until now, ask yourself as we go through this unit how these writers balance they say and I say, building on and adding to a conversation about human behavior, attitudes, and groups (this is when we'll be begin talking about something called a literature review). How do the authors extend, pushing forward with implications, questions, problems, or research that might be done? How do they connect evidence back to their thesis? **Such critical questions will help you figure out how to work in this genre; you're ready for it as a more skilled and self-aware writer now** and such metacognition about writing will help you in all your future writing.

Lower Order Concerns (the Smaller Things)

Your audience in this assignment—social scientists and other academic writers and readers interested in your group—value clear, concise prose, documented evidence, and engagement in a conversation. Remember that your audience might not know about your in-group; your job, as a writer, is to be their guide so you may need to explain unfamiliar terms or ideas (again, "making the familiar strange and the strange familiar"). Strive for a formal but engaging and objective tone with attention to the grammatical and stylistic conventions of standard written English (look these up if you need to or ask for help). Finally, don't forget to proofread your work. A polished final draft will enhance your *ethos*, or credibility, with your audience.

WRI 111 pro tips!

Research & Library Help: Meeting with a librarian will be a mandatory part of this project and will help you provide a foundation for forwarding a conversation about your group. But I can't stress this enough: if you're struggling with research, schedule another trip or even meet with me. Six sources may not be enough. You can always find more, and if you're stuck on finding sources about your group, **broaden out or vary your search**, e.g. from "Catholics" to "Christians" or even "religious dominations." Remember: you're not writing a report, but forming an argument. **You're making connections, demonstrating patterns, and showing gaps.**

Drafts: As usual, drafting is expected for this project.

Writer's Memo: Also as usual. Instructions follow.

Late Work: If you're still not sure of the consequences of this, please see the course policies section of our syllabus on our website. As with all our major projects, you must complete this project to pass our course. **Need more help? You got it.** Come to office hours (you can sign up on the sheet on my door to ensure your time) or email Prof. G. Or remember: trips to the Writing Center are free, welcome, and wise as you accumulate to college writing. Register at <http://college.wfu.edu/writingcenter/appointments>. Fortune favors the brave! Show your drafts early and often. In this project in particular, you might want to meet with a librarian more *than once if you're struggling*.

Project 3 Writer's Memo Instructions

This memo will be the final step you make once your draft is complete and you're ready to assemble your project folder. Give yourself a little bit of time for this. This memo is not graded for content and is not attached to any assessment of your project. It is, however, worth 10 points, a significant portion of your final homework and participation grade—so it's not optional.

The idea here is that you take readers behind your Project 3 process with narrative and precise textual evidence from your writing.

This is a kind of writing called reflection writing and it is a way to work on becoming a more self-aware writer/general human being; really, research backs this up! This is similar to the writing we've been doing in our Writing Journals and the learning objective is the same: this self-reflection on your writing and process will help you grow as a self-aware thinker and writer, which is something we take seriously as part of your undergraduate education at Wake Forest. We like thinkers! We like question seekers. It's why we admitted you. And we want to prepare you for a lifetime of thoughtful living and learning.

Address your memo to me (it's like a letter). In that letter, please tell me your top HOC and/or what would you specifically like me to comment on as I read your final draft.

Additionally, consider the following questions (you don't have to answer all of them) as a guide for reflecting on your process. Use specific evidence (including feedback and workshops) from your experience to prove your argument. Answer critically, honestly, and true; **pretend you're holding a critically constructive mirror up to your writing process.**

- What, generally, was your process like? What did you learn about yourself as a writer, thinker, and human here? What drove your interest and curiosity (e.g. you uncovered something in a Writing Journal/free write, or you revised and expanded on something we talked through looking at an early draft)?
- As a writer, what part of this project works best to you? Why?
- What **radical revision** tactics/prompts did you try and why? What did you **specifically revise** between drafts? Why?
- What do you think still needs revision and what you work on if you had more time? Why?
- What were your challenges and mistakes? Why and how? How did you overcome them, if you did?
- What specific rhetorical choices did you make as a writer given your audience and purpose in this project? We're getting really meta here.

Sign and date the memo when you print it out and before you place it in your folder with your drafts, signed rubric, marked sources, and any other evidence you'd like to include to make an argument for your process as a writer.

See you in class!

Professor G

Suggested Process

You will likely move between these phases recursively (you may not even use all of them) and we'll be working on some of these in and out of class. At any stage, asking questions, taking a trip to the Writing Center and/or visiting with Professor Giovanelli are wise and welcome.

1. First, you might freewrite about the groups to which you think you belong. Does your class or gender or religion have a strong influence on you, or your education or ethnicity or race(s)? How do you push against these group dynamics and how do you conform to them? We'll do some of this pre-writing for homework and in class.
2. Then it's time **begin your library research**, including scheduling your research time with a ZSR librarian to track down scholarly sources. You might also plan your interview, and also begin to plan what you might need from home if you're looking for primary sources such as old diaries, journals, or even photos for additional evidence (and we'll talk about social sciences evidence in class). **If you need research help at any point, please don't wait. Ask a librarian or Professor G.**
3. **Read** and **annotate** your scholarly sources. Print them out. **Read critically and analytically**: note your reaction to it as you read, and jot it down in the margins. Highlight interesting points. Look up phrases or words you don't understand. Make notes. You might need to re-read your texts to fully understand them or flesh out a reaction; that's fine. At the same time, **read** examples of this (perhaps) new-to-you genre, autoethnographies. We'll be analyzing some together. As you read (or re-read), ask yourself, how are these authors paying attention to audience and purpose?
4. **Create a synthesis matrix of your scholarly sources** to help you build an understanding of what sources are saying about your group or similar groups and notice patterns as well as gaps; **this is the literature review portion of your project, and shows the conversation as well as current holes where you may contribute**. Your matrix will also be due in class, so check the calendar.
5. **Write your short proposal**. This will also be due as a Writing Journal, so check the calendar.
6. **Conduct your on-the-record interview if you're using one. Record/transcribe your interviews so you can directly quote from them**. You can do this with a laptop or a smart phone, or you can check out audio/video recorders from ZSR.
7. **Generate** a working thesis and rough plan for your response, perhaps even an outline.
8. **Begin drafting for workshop preparation**. Depending on the kind of writer that you are, you may have a lot to say at this point, or very little. Remember it's normal—and desirable—to return to research and alter your argument as you work! It's normal to have to return to **research** and **alter your thesis/argument** as you work, so return to any part of this process if you need to. Don't be fooled by this list; writing is not linear. Writing is process and often reiterative!
9. **Revise** using feedback from our workshops. **Rewrite** using critiques you receive from peers, friends, tutors, and Professor G on Higher Order Concerns first for substantive change (especially in our workshop). **Review** the rubric for guidance. And **seek out** more feedback if you feel you need it. **Seek out** more feedback and/or research if you feel you need it.
10. **Edit** and **proofread** your draft. Double-check formatting, textual evidence, and citations in APA format.
11. Using your writing journals and your experience, **write a 1-page Writer's Memo**, critically reflecting on your process, choices, and challenges in this project.
12. **Turn in** your final draft with your workshop draft, memo, and a signed copy of Project 3's rubric in a soft folder so I can see your process. Your process materials are part of your final grade.