English 1A Fall 2015 **Profile Essay/Site Visit: Writing About Culture**

**Overview:** This project is designed to give you a chance to think about your culture by interviewing someone from a different culture. It will also give you a chance to try a kind of research that might be new to you, the interview. The interview is a thriving form of writing that appears in many different forms. If you get good at it, you can do this for a living.

**Details:**

* **Good Topics**: Pick a culture that you don’t belong to but are curious about. We are defining “culture” either as a group people belong to automatically—such as a nationality or ethnicity--or by choice, such as members of a religion. You could also consider people who form a culture because of a disability, such as the blind/visually impaired.
* **Problem topics**: I’m sorry, but some topics are just too hackneyed (cliché-magnets) to work, so I must forbid them, fraternities & sororities, for instance. Also, since the idea is to learn something new from someone you don’t already know, family members, friends, neighbors are not acceptable topics. You’re on your honor here, really, but I hope you will, in fact, honor the concept that you learn the most when you explore the unknown.
* **Audience**: Your choice, but it must be specific and appropriate for the topic.
* **Forum**: Again, you choose where this would be published, but it must be specific and appropriate to the audience and topic.
* **Methods**: Following the models we’ll look at in class, you should include a mix of the following: direct description of a person and place, testimony from interviews, analysis, narrative, and (optional) ***properly cited*** information from research of written sources.
* **Format, Length**: ESSAY (not a transcript of the interview), MLA format, 1300 words.
* **Requirements**:Although “formal” research on the Web or in books is optional, an interview with at least one person who belongs to the culture you are writing about is required, and at least two quotes from that person is required.
* **Citing sources:** If you include material quoted from written sources (including the Web), you must give credit and include an MLA style works cited page. Within the essay itself, informal citation (as in a newspaper) is fine for quotes from the interview.

**Procedure:**

1) **Topic Proposal**: Briefly identify the culture you will discuss, name at least one person you will interview and contact information for him/her (email, ideally, or a phone number). Also identify the audience you will address, and forum. **Due:**

2) Interview questions: I want to see the questions you will use, at least 10, typed. **Due:**

3) Peer Review You will bring TWO copies of the draft and the interview transcript to class to get and give advice. **Due:**

4) Revise, Turnitin: You will take your draft and your peer’s advice home, consider what advice to use, maybe get my advice, as well; then revise. Print out the final draft AND submit it electronically to Turnitin.com. Staple the final draft pages together, then put that in a big

envelope with the peer review sheet, rough draft, and interview notes, and hand it in at the BEGINNING of class on the day its due. Then you can relax and confer with your film clubs, maybe see a short movie. **Due:**

**One place to find someone to interview**: **SJSU International House**

It can be challenging to investigate a culture you don’t already know much about. One way to do that is to take advantage of the SJSI International House to meet some international students, maybe find one you can interview for your paper. I will even give **extra credit** if you go to one of these events and write about it (approx. 1 page description/response with a souvenir) Check out their Web site: <http://www.sjsu.edu/ihouse/index.htm>

* **COFFEE NIGHT** **Tuesdays** 8:30 – 10:30 pm I-House Dining Room All are welcome to attend!
* They also hold a **PANCAKE BREAKFAST** at some point in each semester. The upcoming one will be announced on their site.

**Classmates:** You might also be able to find an interview subject right in this classroom, or in one of your other classrooms, or in the dorms.

**Clubs:** SJSU student organizations offer a vast array of opportunities to meet people from other countries and different religions, from the [Afghan Student Association](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1575&ClubID=ORG0000662&ClubName=Afghan%20Student%20Association) to the [Zen Buddhism Club of San Jose State University](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1149&ClubID=ORG0000236&ClubName=Zen%20Buddhism%20Club%20of%20San%20Jose%20State%20University). Below is a partial list of other relevant clubs.

* [Vietnamese Student Association, SJSU](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1145&ClubID=ORG0000232&ClubName=Vietnamese%20Student%20Association,%20SJSU)
* [Taiwanese Student Association](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1140&ClubID=ORG0000227&ClubName=Taiwanese%20Student%20Association)
* [Students for Justice in Palestine](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1562&ClubID=ORG0000649&ClubName=Students%20for%20Justice%20in%20Palestine)
* [Spartans for Israel at San Jose State University](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1250&ClubID=ORG0000337&ClubName=Spartans%20for%20Israel%20at%20San%20Jose%20State%20University)
* [South Asian Advocacy Group](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1535&ClubID=ORG0000622&ClubName=South%20Asian%20Advocacy%20Group)
* [Sikh Students Association](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1134&ClubID=ORG0000221&ClubName=Sikh%20Students%20Association)
* [Pakistani Student Association](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1691&ClubID=ORG0000778&ClubName=Pakistani%20Student%20Association)
* [Muslim Students Association](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1122&ClubID=ORG0000209&ClubName=Muslim%20Students%20Association)
* [Malaysian Student Association](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1637&ClubID=ORG0000724&ClubName=Malaysian%20Student%20Association)
* [Korean Entertainment Student Association](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1515&ClubID=ORG0000602&ClubName=Korean%20Entertainment%20Student%20Association)
* [Italian Club](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1629&ClubID=ORG0000716&ClubName=Italian%20Club)
* [International Youth Fellowship](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1117&ClubID=ORG0000204&ClubName=International%20Youth%20Fellowship)
* [Intervarsity Christian Fellowship](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1118&ClubID=ORG0000205&ClubName=Intervarsity%20Christian%20Fellowship)
* [Indian Students Organization](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1115&ClubID=ORG0000202&ClubName=Indian%20Students%20Organization)
* [Hindu Yuva](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1114&ClubID=ORG0000201&ClubName=Hindu%20Yuva)
* [Gente Unida](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1444&ClubID=ORG0000531&ClubName=Gente%20Unida)
* [Filipino Student Collaborative](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1410&ClubID=ORG0000497&ClubName=Filipino%20Student%20Collaborative)
* [Chinese Students Association](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1098&ClubID=ORG0000185&ClubName=Chinese%20Students%20Association)
* [Atheists and Skeptics for Knowledge](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1353&ClubID=ORG0000440&ClubName=Atheists%20and%20Skeptics%20for%20Knowledge)
* [Asian American & Pacific Islander Coalition (APIC)](https://vpsaweb2.sjsu.edu/greenlight/pages/public/ViewMemberList.php?recid=1559&ClubID=ORG0000646&ClubName=Asian%20American%20&%20Pacific%20Islander%20Coalition%20%28APIC%29)