

## Essay II: Inquiry into Place

### Collaborative Profile of Place with Visuals

**Length: 1,600-2,100 words (approx. 5-7 pages)**

**Rough Drafts Due: Sept. 22 & 29**

**Follow MLA Conventions\***

**Final Draft Due: October 2**

\*double-spaced with one-inch margins, in Times New Roman, 12 font. See sample paper on D2L.

*A profile is driven by a question: if I look closely at this [place], might I gain insight about people?*

---Bruce Ballenger

#### WHAT'S THE ASSIGNMENT?

In this assignment, you'll use writing to conduct inquiry into an unfamiliar place. Profiles of places are driven by curiosity--we study a place not only to understand what it is but also to understand the community and people connected to it. In Ballenger's words, we study places in order to understand "what this [place] say[s] about social situations, trends, or problems" (Ballenger 143). Thus, your profile essay will go beyond providing a factual depiction of a place to **express an idea about or an interpretation of the place**. You will incorporate at least two visuals (of your own creation) to help convey what makes this place valuable or important.

#### HOW DO I APPROACH THE ASSIGNMENT?

With a partner from class, you will choose a local place you want to study. Consider distinctive neighborhoods, restaurants, businesses, or landmarks (i.e.: [Cowgirl Museum](#), [Magnolia Avenue Restaurant Row](#), etc.) Together, you'll formulate a **research question**—what is interesting or surprising or hard to understand about this place? You'll use **multiple research strategies**: 1) observation (together and/or separately) with field notes and photos; 2) interview(s); and 3) published research on the history and/or current context of the place. Next, you'll examine your findings and **identify a focus or interpretation** that is supported by the research you've gathered, and then **draft and revise collaboratively**. (See the evaluation sheet for info about how you and your partner will be assessed for the assignment as a pair.)

#### *Concerns about Team Projects:*

Collaboration is an important component of this assignment for several reasons. Working collaboratively will give you a more complex understanding of the place you're studying. Doing research in teams also means you can gather more research, and you don't have to observe or interview by yourself. Another goal of this assignment is to help you learn to research and write as a team. When you submit your portfolio, you'll 1) **write a collaborative authors' note** detailing who did what work for the assignment and what you learned about writing collaboratively; 2) you'll also write **an individual reflection**, given separately to me, that explains how you and your partner worked together and reflects on what you learned in writing with a partner. Unless there are serious issues with collaboration and you've informed me before the assignment is due, you and your partner will receive the same grade for the portfolio

#### *Concerns about Interviews and Observation*

In class, we'll go over the process of setting up and conducting interviews, but you will want everyone you speak with to know who you are and why you are talking to them. You'll also need to get permission—in writing—to use their words in your paper, and you'll need to include the interview as a source that will appear on your Works Cited list. You'll also, of course, want to avoid putting yourself at any kind of risk in order to garner an interview.

**Final Draft: 1,600-2,100 words (approx. 5-7 pages), plus authors' notes, MLA works cited page, and two visuals.**