

COMM361: Organizing Difference

Experience: Group observation of organization serving marginalized population

Reflection Assignment:

Paper: Identify in Practice at Organizational Sites

Over the semester we have focused attention on encountering the discourses that shape working lives at the intersection of ethics and identity politics. From transgendered White House aides to stigmatized Transportation Security Officers the influence of discourse in both the public (policy) and private (personal, organizational) realms permeates the possibilities and probabilities of work and living a meaningful life in the U.S. for members of certain social identity groups.

Group Portion of Paper 2: Write a group argument that reflects your collective observations and analysis of social identity and difference at your selected organizational site. You will use theories covered in the course to connect to your observations (evidence). The evidence to support your claim may include: observations from your site visit(s), notes from conversations with employees or clients and organizational documents or materials. In writing this paper I expect you to draw on good argument form by including: introduction to catch reader's attention, a position statement/claim, reasons and evidence, transitions, and a satisfying conclusion.

Use the following format for your group paper:

1. Introduction: Grabs reader's attention, explains the issue clearly, and shows why the issue addressed by the organization is grounded in identity politics OR how identity politics form the organization.
2. Context: Describe the industry of the organization (use sources) and the space where the organization exists. What is the primary goal of the organization? Who works there? Who goes there and why? What is the discourse of the organization?
3. Analysis of the Identity Issue: Explain three or more aspects of the issue strongly supported with information from three or more sources and illustrated with observations from your site visit and/or organizational materials. You might consider some of the following questions:
 - a. Whose interests are emphasized? Marginalized?
 - b. How does the discourse in the organization reproduce power? Promote social change?
 - c. What alternatives are available?
 - d. What ethics shape organizational form?
4. Opportunity for change: What argument could you create to influence an agent (individual, organization, government) to take action or change their mind, guidelines, or policies about the issues you observed?
5. Conclusion: Clearly summarizes the analysis, and gives reader something to think. May include #4 above.

Nuts and bolts: The group essay should be at least five pages long, typed and double-spaced with standard font and margins. Be sure to include material from course sources and consider using outside sources that may offer more depth in your area of focus. Please include at least five academic sources. Quotations and a reference page should appear in APA form. All group members receive the same grade on this portion of the paper.

Personal Reflection Portion of Paper 2: Write an argument that reflects your thinking about the social identity group observed in your site visit. In writing this reflection, your evidence might include: concepts from course readings, personal examples, discussions in class, observations from your site visit, or information from the presentations posted on our blog.

Consider the following

1. What tensions emerged when encountering different (or perhaps same) voices and how did you notice them? For example, tensions could be of the personal nature (remorse, compassion, guilt), community or organizational (lack of resources, awareness or care), or policy (how the government deals with the issues, policies, definitions, etc.) Tensions might also exist between your interpretation of the experience versus other group members.
2. To what extent has your own environment (i.e. work experience, parents' experience, career goals, race, social class, political frame) influenced your opinion of this social identity and what actions might be necessary (if any)?
3. How does this issue affect you? What are the possibilities for change?

Nuts and bolts: Your reflection should be at least one page long, typed and double-spaced with standard font and margins. You may wish to include material from course sources and if you do use APA form.