

ORAL HISTORY TECHNIQUES

Manchester College
Department of History and Political Science
Hist 240 1-3 credits
Oral History Techniques

Spring 2006

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Office hours: 2-3 Monday and Wednesday; 3:30-5 Tuesday and Thursday and by appointment

Meeting time 12:30 Tuesdays

Step 1–Methodology and techniques

You will be responsible for reading and discussing a series of articles provide by me which cover a variety of historiographical, methodological, and technical aspects of the field of oral history. You will be evaluated on your preparation and on the understanding of this material that you demonstrate in discussion. (15%)

Step 2–Interview preparation

After completing the necessary background reading that we decide that you need to prepare your project, you will be required submit for critique a list of questions as well as a copy of the introduction letter you will provide to your subject(s) when requesting an interview. You will also turn in the biographical background sheet you will fill out for each interviewee. After the critique, you must also provide a final list of questions and an interview outline that you will follow. (20%)

Before you do your official interview, you will conduct brief (15-20 minute) trial interview with a volunteer. A 2-page critique of your own performance based on listening to the interview tape is due one week after. (5%)

Step 3–Interviewing

You will conduct the interviews of your subject(s) after the practice interview is completed and reviewed. For 1 credit you must complete 1 interview. For 3 credits, you are required to complete 4-5 interviews. The interviews must be completed by April 17. Tapes of these interviews with appropriate labels and legal forms will be provided to me as a part of the finished project.

Step 4–Indexing and transcribing

You will provide a time-referenced subject index of your interview tape(s) and will transcribe approximately 10 minutes worth of interview material from each interview tape. (40%)

Step 5–Reflection and Conclusions

You will write a 2-5 page paper in which you reflect upon your experiences as an interviewer and analyze the results of your interviews. In it you should also discusses the historical conclusions which can be drawn from your interviews and describe the kinds of further interviews which would best address further issues relevant to your project topic. (20%) Final draft due May 13th.