

WGST
50103
Fall 2018

Interview Feature Story: Project Directions

"I am a feminist because I worked for nine years as a psychotherapist and six of them as a counselor to violent men."

Craig Chalquist

Below, check out the basic requirements for this project, which is grounded in a number of principles of feminist knowledge-making and feminist interviewing, specifically, as an ethical research practice:

Feminist inquiry embraces collective agency as potentially transformative.

Feminist inquiry honors lived experience as a source of valuable knowledge.

Feminist inquiry affirms that everyday lives—our own and others'—are shaped by gender and other identity factors (such as race, social class, geographic setting, and more).

Feminist inquiry recognizes that our personal standpoints shape our understandings, so that research requires reflexivity, being mindful of our own perspectives and limitations.

Feminist interviewing, in particular, honors interviewees as partners in knowledge-making rather than objects of study, so that interviews and related reporting need to be collaborative and interactive.

Note: For related discussion of principles and practices undergirding this assignment, see readings on your syllabus and these reflective analyses by researchers:

Cotterill, Pamela and Gayle Letherby. "Weaving Stories: Personal Auto-Biographies in Feminist Research." *Sociology* 27.1 (February 1993): 67-79.

Falcón, Sylvanna M. "Transnational Feminism as a Paradigm for Decolonizing the Practice of Research: Identifying Feminist Principles and Methodology Criteria for US-Based Scholars." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 37.1 (2016): 174-194.

Undurraga, Rosario. "Interviewing women in Latin America: some reflections on feminist research practice." *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 31.5/6 (2012): 418-434.

Choosing an Interviewee, Crafting Questions, & Interviewing

Select a person to interview about his/her experiences of being (or aspiring to be) a feminist. Confirm that person's willingness to participate in your project within the time frame we are using for work on this assignment. As part of that negotiation, be sure to share a copy of this project description with your project partner. You'll then draft and refine a set of open-ended questions related to our course themes, being attentive about the "promising practices" for effective interviewing that are addressed in relevant readings on our syllabus as well as points we discuss in class. Get feedback on your questions to help you refine content and sequence. Consider closing your interview with a very open-ended and inviting question, such as "What else would you like to tell me?"

Set up and carry out the interview (using audio/video recording and/or note-taking). Transcribe the interview recording and/or notes, aiming to accurately capture all the parts of the conversation, including sections you think you may not use. Read through and check your notes several times.

“My own definition of feminist is a man or a woman who says, yes, there’s a problem with gender as it is today and we must fix it, we must do better. All of us, women and men, must do better.”

Chimamanda
Ngozi Adichie

Drafting Your Interview Story

Write a draft feature story drawing on the interview. Keep in mind that exploring the “feminist” aspirations and/or practices of your interviewee needs to be a key goal. The feature story should avoid simply presenting your transcribed notes in Q and A form in the order in which the interview originally occurred. Instead, consider one or a mix of these options:

- Weave commentary from your interviewee into an engaging narrative that presents an argument or theme which the material emerging from the interview can support, with the interviewee’s experiences and reflections guiding your argument.
- Present your material partly in Q-and-A form, accurately representing what you asked and what your interviewee said, but provide a framing overview and, when appropriate, framing commentaries and/or analyses between some of the Q-and-A material.
- Organize your feature story so that it’s about what you learned from the interview—i.e., with your own learning experience as (a part of) what you present.
- Report on the interview as a collaborative, shared conversation.
- Create a “profile” story of your interviewee that foregrounds not only particular things s/he said but also additional information about your project interviewee that you gleaned (e.g., from looking at their social media self-presentations, reading things they’ve written, talking with others who know them).

Your own writing voice and views should be a part of the finished text. Consider enhancing your presentation with photos and/or image design suitable to eventual online publication. Remember to use the permission form provided as part of this packet to secure “permission to publish” from your interviewee partner for the project if you do want to publish the piece.

Maximum length for the finished story will be 2000-2500 words.

Revising and Polishing Points

Consider your audience.

Remember that your project should be approached with an audience beyond our classroom—or at least beyond your teacher!—in mind and with a goal of engaging your readers in a story that will also illuminate their understanding of feminism through your portrayal of the person you interviewed.

Make effective use of visual rhetoric when presenting the story, which should be prepared in a WORD file (or similar processing program) that incorporates attention to design and that could be presented engagingly in a webspace.

EDIT your work, both to hone your style (e.g., word choice, sentence structure, tone) and to present a text that reflects attention to usage, punctuation, and other close textual editing points.

Reflecting (See #3 on the rubric below.)

Prepare a reflection where you describe your inquiry process in light of feminist principles and promising practices for ethical researching using an interview methodology. Characterize your personal take-aways.

RUBRIC for evaluating your Project

Name _____

Points earned

Points possible

_____ 1. Narrative content

__40__

Your content aligns effectively with the parameters for the assignment—telling a compelling story about your interview partner and (implicitly or explicitly, or somewhere in between) about yourself and your understanding of feminist identity and inquiry. You've organized your content to help your reader follow the narrative arc of your story and understand its underlying themes/points and/or implicit argument(s).

_____ 2. Documenting and Reflecting on Feminist Inquiry Principles

__20__

You include a first-person supplement to the feature story itself wherein you describe your efforts to enact feminist inquiry principles as outlined in the assignment, relevant course readings, and class discussion.

You reflect in that write-up on what you have learned from such efforts and how they may shape future research and/or activism.

NOTE: This part of the assignment should be turned in separately from the feature story itself and will not be evaluated for criteria 4 and 5 below.

_____ 4. Editing for style

__20__

You write in a distinctive and polished voice, paying attention to such points as maintaining an apt tone to match your content, varying your sentence structure, and polishing diction throughout.

You present your feature in ways that take advantage of visual design principles (e.g., including photos, setting up verbal presentation with section headers, attending to font and other design features).

_____ 5. Editing for publication conventions

__20__

You avoid usage errors and misspellings; you punctuate correctly; you structure your sentences smoothly.

_____ **Total**

__100__

Overall evaluation:

Permission to Share Material in Class and/or Publish

I am an interviewee for _____ (name of student writer), who is enrolled in a Feminist Inquiry seminar at TCU and preparing a feature story drawing on our conversation(s) together.

- I understand that, during the writing and revision process, members of the seminar and other educators and students interested in its content will be reading and responding to drafts.

I give permission for the writing that emerges from my conversation(s) with the student interviewer to be shared with others in the ways outlined above. I understand that the student and writing advisors s/he chooses to consult will be making decisions as to the feature story's final form (for instance, its length, content elements, and formatting). The student author may contact me to clarify particular details from our conversation(s).

The student will contact me to review an edited version of the story before any publication pathway is sought beyond its being shared with others in the classroom community. At that point, I may direct that the piece cannot be presented to any readers beyond the classroom community for the course and/or I may request certain adjustments in the story before it is shared with others beyond the classroom community. If I choose not to respond with any feedback at that point, the student may assume, after one week's time from sending a proposed "public" version, that s/he has permission to circulate (or publish) the piece to other audiences of her/his choice.

Any published version of the project would list both me and the student as co-authors.

[Please complete and sign three copies: one for your records, one for the student, and one for the course instructor. Thank you.]

Your name, printed: _____

Your signature: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Mailing address, including zip: