Week 4 and 5 Workshop -- Brainstorm keywords, artifacts, and sources

Before beginning this activity, make sure you've visited the customized library course guide (see Course Content>Week 4 Module>Visit the library).

Choose your top one or two picks from your identity brainstorm, for example, Daneen picked "female college professor".

Next, explore the customized library course guide and the Internet for some potential sources of popular culture artifacts (primary sources) that portray that identity. For instance, Daneen found youtube videos of college professors -- some actual instructional videos, some clips from movies, and others that were parodies. She considers comparing the different types of videos (actual instructors vs. portrayals of instructors).

She also did a quick internet search of female college professors in movies. She has a couple of ideas based on what she found: watching two from two different decades and comparing them, or three from three different genres (rom com, drama, sci fi) to look for patterns.

By Thursday, Week 4 (Jan. 29)

Post your list of keywords you'll use to search, as well as a list of at least five research questions, as well as some possible ideas of artifacts or sources for finding artifacts. Post them by Thursday at midnight.

Here are some example research questions Daneen might pose:

* How often are women college professors portrayed in movies compared to male college professors?

* In the movies with female college professors, are they generally leads or minor characters?

* What genre do these movies tend to be from?

* What is the target audience of these movies?

(Save your notes from this activity to share in your "real-time/synchronous" chat. You'll get the chance to get more feedback from students outside your workshop group, too!)

By Thursday, Week 5 (Feb. 5)

Read your group member's ideas. Ask them questions. Brainstorm different keywords and types of media they might use as primary sources. Where have you seen this identity represented and how? Where else might they look for artifacts? What other research questions might they pose?

By Sunday, Week 5 (Feb. 8)

Post follow up responses as appropriate.
Workshop Objective: By the end of this workshop you should have good ideas about where to look for primary sources (popular culture artifacts) and a list of good keywords and research questions to help you find them.

Week 6 and 7 Workshop -- Analysis and Secondary Source Summary

Actions for Week 6 and 7 Workshop -- Analysis and Secondary Source Summary

By now you should have read some potential secondary sources for your Mirror Essay. These could be articles, essays, or studies that address the identity or types of artifacts you’re analyzing.

For instance, if I were writing an essay about female college professors in Youtube parody videos, my secondary sources might include a scholarly essay about stereotypes of academic women in films or comedy. Or I might find a critical essay about the influence of YouTube parodies on our sense of comedy. I might also have looked up some statistics about the percentage of professors who are women and information about what disciplines they teach in.

In your initial comment for this workshop please post the following:

* Summarize the most interesting/promising findings from your research analysis worksheet.

* Summarize one of the secondary sources you might use for your essay. Tell your group:
  1. what it is, who wrote it, and its purpose (who it was written for, the point it is trying to make)
  2. how the information in your source relates to your own findings in your research analysis
  3. how you might use it in your essay to position your own argument (to support, to pick an argument with it, to provide context, etc.).

By Thursday, Week 6 (Feb. 12)

Post your summary of a secondary source and any preliminary ideas you have about your thesis for your essay.

By Thursday, Week 7 (Feb. 19)

Reply to your group members with comments, questions, and/or suggestions. Offer suggestions of ways to frame and angle their topics (see Course Content>Week 7> Course Texts).

By Sunday, Week 7 (Feb. 22)

Follow up on replies with questions, comments, and clarifications.

Workshop Objective: By the end of this workshop, you should have developed a tentative thesis or clarified your ideas for framing your topic in your Mirror Essay.
Sign Up for Real Time Discussions in Collaborate

In week eight we will have another online discussions in real time, using Collaborate. This activity is optional and worth 20 extra credit points.

Here, I want to break us up into three groups depending on availability. I've offered three time slots. Please leave a comment on the thread of the time slot that works best for you. As we will be pairing up during our meetings it is okay if there are more than 6 people in each meeting.

If none of the slots work for you, sign up in the last group - where I will post the alternate activity.

Activity Description

For this activity, the objective is to address the fact that theses are in constant development as we continue to work on our arguments. In this activity you will be required to look at your working thesis with a partner to discuss its strength as the core argument of your paper.

You will do this in two ways. First you will look at the structure of your thesis making sure it has three elements:

- Context (give context to what you're talking about it. In this case you're talking about your identity and pop culture)
- Argument (make sure you're arguing something that is arguable, if 100% of the people in the class agree, you don't have an argument)
- Support (make sure you're not just arguing something, you have to know WHY you believe this to be the case).

Once discussing these elements of your thesis with your partner, you will almost definitely need to edit and adapt your thesis, a process for which your partner(s) will likely be a great help. For the second part of the activity, your partner's job is to play devil's advocate and think of ALL the reasons your argument could be wrong. Your job is to support your argument to the death with the evidence you have found in your research. If your partner can find holes in your argument, you might need to find even more supporting evidence. Take turns challenging your partner's thesis and defending your own.

After 20-30 minutes we'll check in to see if everyone is done. Then we will have 10-20 minutes to discuss any issues that came up in a larger group. This may include having a wider audience look at your thesis.

The goal of these activities is to make sure you are developing a strong thesis statement that gives the reader a clear idea of what you're arguing and why they should believe you.

Actions for Week 2 Values Affirmation Activity

This activity is based on a practice briefly outlined in this blog post. It takes about fifteen minutes.

By THURSDAY, Jan. 15 at midnight:
Make a list of values that matter most to you. Look back at your list and pick one that you think is most important or central to your life. Perhaps it's your close relationship with your family or your skill with a camera. Write about it in depth for about ten minutes.

Post a short summary about what you chose, wrote, and/or discovered as a result of this activity. Share only what you feel comfortable sharing.

By Sunday, Jan. 18, at midnight.

Reply to at least two of your group members' posts.