

JEP REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

SOCI 355: Immigrants in the US
Professor Jun
PA: Samantha
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As a JEP student, your work in the community is similar to that of a social scientist who conducts “participant-observer” research. Throughout the course of the semester, you will observe and participate in the daily activities of those you meet at your JEP site, and you will write about your experiences on a weekly basis. These JEP Reflective Questions (RQs) are designed to help you focus your observations and critically reflect on your experiences in relation to what you are learning about in your USC course.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS HINTS:

- **Read the questions first.** Reading the question before you go to your JEP site is required in order to answer many RQs and having the questions on your mind will when at your site will help focus your observations and improve your response to all RQS.
 - **Write as soon as possible.** As soon as possible after leaving your site, sketch out your answer to that week’s RQ. Even just taking a few notes with some difficult moments, things that surprised you or highlights will make writing later much easier and will provide the examples and observations you need to write an outstanding journal.
 - **Proof your work.** Like any college-level writing assignment, proof your work to make sure the writing is clear, error-free, and that you answer the question at hand.
 - **Read and respond to your PA's comments.** The questions are related to and build upon one other. So refer back to previous responses and to take seriously your PA’s feedback each week and respond to the feedback by following the PAs suggestions.
1. **Be respectful.** Show your respect by being mindful of the limits of your experience and knowledge. Avoid generalizations and stereotypical explanations of behavior; in other words, do not make arguments that assume you know how someone else thinks or feels or use these assumptions to explain the way people act or their circumstances.
 2. **Use examples.** Focus on writing detailed and concrete accounts of people, social settings and conversations (including direct quotes, when possible). Never make claims without evidence or examples!

YOUR ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS

The core parts of each assignment (which you need to focus on) are highlighted in **bold**. Use the additional questions to guide/supplement your answer. Please refer to the PA agreement you received in training for instructions regarding journal due dates and format requirements. *Note that some weeks require longer responses and are worth more points.*

ESSAY ONE - “Preflection”

(1 page, 10 points, due: 9/26)

Please respond to one of the following prompts. Question #2 is for returning students only.

#1: Over the next eight-weeks you will be taking your college education outside of the walls of the University. Based on what you know about JEP and what you know about your site, what do you imagine your JEP experience will be like? Make sure to explain why you think what you think and use examples from your experiences at USC and in the community to explain yourself. Make your imagined vision of your JEP experience specific by addressing these two questions: **Ideally, what would you like to learn from your experiences in JEP? When you think about JEP, what makes you the most nervous or concerned?**

#2: Think back to your last experience in JEP and think about how you can take what you've learned about JEP, USC and the surrounding neighborhood, or the organization or school you worked with and improve your experience this time around. **Now that you know something about how JEP works, what do you hope to learn from doing JEP again? What was the biggest obstacle you faced in your last JEP experience and how will you address that issue this time?** Make sure to use clear and detailed examples from your last JEP experience to explain your reasoning.

ESSAY TWO: Initial Experience

(1.5-2 pages, 15 points, due: 10/3)

Describe the social and physical context of your JEP site. Pay close attention to the people at your site. How many are there? What are the demographic characteristics of the group (e.g., age, sex, race, ethnicity, etc.), and how do they vary by subgroup (students, teachers, staff)? Walk or look around your site and take in the physical environment; observe the size, space, decor, noise level, smell, etc. of the classroom (or meeting room), the building(s) on the site, the grounds, and the neighborhood. What is the overall feel of the site and neighborhood? **How do you think the social and physical context affects the individuals who regularly spend time much of their time at the site (e.g., employees, “clients,” students)?** How might the social environment influence the experiences and perspectives of the individuals with whom you are working? **How might the physical environment help and/or hinder the organization you are working with from achieving its goals (e.g., teaching children, community outreach, etc.)?**

ONE-ON-ONE CHATS

(Scheduled with your PA, 10/10-10/14)

This week you will be meeting one-on-one with your Program Assistant to talk about your experiences in JEP. In place of a full-length essay this week, we ask that you take a few minutes to **jot down any questions, comments or concerns that you have about your JEP assignment so far.** For example, what are your tasks at the site and how are you adjusting to your new role? How are you relating to the people at your site? Are you having any problems with any of the logistical aspects of your assignment (e.g., schedule, transportation, Blackboard access, etc.)? *You do not need to submit these notes on Blackboard; rather, take them with you to your one-on-one chat with your PA so you are prepared and remember to talk about any issues that need to be addressed.*

ESSAY THREE: A Meaningful Event

(1.5-2 pages, 15 points, due: 10/17)

Describe a meaningful event or series of events (positive or negative) that made you think about issues related to immigration. Describe in detail the who, what, where, when, why, and how. Why does this event stand out as particularly important or meaningful to you? **How has it affected your relationship to others at the site, your role there, and/or your perspective about your JEP assignment?**

ESSAY FOUR: Data and the Neighborhood

(2 pages, 20 points, due: 10/24)

In order to understand the diversity and complexity in your JEP site's neighborhood, first you will need to find and analyze data on their composition.

Go to the Census Bureau website and take a look at census data about the area around your JEP site:

- Go to factfinder2.census.gov
- Click on the "street address" link in the lower right corner of the screen (it's the second box up from the bottom).
- Enter the street address for your JEP site in the "address search" pop-up box and click "Go."
- In the "Geography Results" that appear click the "Census Tract" link and it will appear in the upper left under "Your Selections"
- Click on the "Map" tab to see the census track so that you know the size and location of the area.
- Close the "Select Geographies" pop-up box by clicking the "x" in the upper right.
- Take a look at DP-1, QT-H3 and QT-P11 data sets (look for these in the "ID" column), and anything else you find interesting. Click "View."
- **In order to gain some insight into immigration in the census tract, do a search for "foreign born" and browse the results.** Make sure to take a look at QT-P15 (Region and Country or Area of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population) and note that this data is most often from the 2000 census. Take a look at the data for different Geographies for a comparison if there is anything you find interesting.

Take a look at the tables and describe the people who live in the neighborhood in which you are working. What interesting information do you find? **Use what you have learned in Sociology 335 to take what you find interesting and turn it into a hypothetical research question.** This research question should be both a paper you could imagine Professor Jun asking you to write about and something that you find interesting, curious, upsetting or otherwise engaging. **Write out your research question and explain why you think it is an important question to ask.** Explain what data inspired you ask the question and provide some context for why this is a question that needs to be asked. **Finally, talk about what sort of research you would need to perform in order to answer this question and how your experiences in JEP would help you answer the question.** That is, what do you need to know that is not in this data? How would you figure it out? Are there any resources from Sociology 335 that would be useful? Use at least one example of an experience you have had at JEP that provides context for the research question and/or could provide useful data for your hypothetical research.

BLACKBOARD DISCUSSION: Topic To Be Announced

(2 posts to Blackboard, 10 points, due: 10/31-11/4)

Instructions and topic will be posted on Blackboard.

Discussion purpose: Your weekly journals consistently reveal a wide range of interesting insights and abilities that result from your coursework and service-learning assignments. Since students participate in JEP from more than 100 different courses each semester, and rarely do all students in a particular class choose to enroll in JEP, we lack the opportunity to bring you together on a regular basis to learn from one another. As a result, the educational benefits of participating in JEP are limited mostly to your individual or small group experiences. This forum is designed to counter the relative isolation of JEP's service-learning assignments by providing an opportunity for you to share your insights with your peers.

ESSAY FIVE: Immigration Policy and CARECEN

(2 pages, 20 points, due: 11/7)

In SOCI 355 you have discussed some of the failures of the post-1986 US immigration system, with the specific goal of addressing diversity and the historical and contemporary policies that affect immigrants. Read about CARECEN's history at: http://www.carecen-la.org/Chrono_AboutUs.php (click the photo for 1983 and look at slides, especially for the 1980s and 1990s). **What is CARECEN's relation to US immigration policy?** What is the social context of those immigration policies (i.e., what relationships to places outside of the US, international, national, and local politics and laws, etc. affected the policy)? How do you think the work you are doing today at CARECEN is related to these global histories of immigration law?

If you are placed at CARECEN: **Take an example of a particular sort of task you have performed at CARECEN and explain some of the social, legal and economic reasons that may have created the need for CARECEN to provide these services. Then, using CARECEN's history and what you have learned in SOCI 355 to suggest some changes to US immigration policy that would help address the needs that CARECEN is seeking to serve.**

If you are placed in a school: **What is the relationship between the public education system and US immigration policy? Use examples from your experience in JEP to explain your answer. Using what you have learned from SOCI 355 and the examples provided by CARECEN's history, suggest some changes to the public education system, US immigration policy or both that would help address the needs that CARECEN is seeking to serve.**

ESSAY SIX: Global Cities and the Work of Education

(1.5-2 pages, 15 points, due: 11/14)

Global cities concentrate resources and one of the effects of this concentration is a demand for low-paid service workers. Sociologist Saskia Sassen argues that in global cities, immigrant women, who migrate under a variety of conditions organized by third parties, from human trafficking to government-run temporary work programs, play key roles in making global cities function on a day-to-day basis. These workers are incorporated into leading sectors of the economy, but "under conditions that render them invisible." Education is one of these leading sectors of the economy

through which global cities concentrate resources.

If you are placed in a school: **Where can you see low-wage, possibly immigrant, women doing work that supports the day-to-day functioning of the two sites of education you are engaged with through JEP: your JEP school and USC?** What work are they doing and how does it support education? Think about both direct and indirect work and make sure to use examples in your response. **What work can you imagine is being done by low-wage immigrant women that remains invisible to you?**

If you are placed at CARECEN: **What work does CARECEN do to address issues faced by low-wage immigrant women?** What are the issues faced? How does CARECEN address the complexities of such issues? **Does CARECEN work to change with the “conditions that render them invisible?”** What are these conditions? How can they be changed?

ESSAY SEVEN: Final Reflections

(2.5-3 pages, 25 points, due: 11/21)

In addition to potentially providing beneficial services for the communities in which it is implemented, service-learning is also credited with numerous benefits for the participating students. In particular:

- Young people gain access to the range of supports and opportunities (or developmental assets) they need to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. One study of youth civic activism found that these settings had particular strength in cultivating youth and community involvement (Lewis-Charp et al., 2003).
- Increased sense of self-efficacy as young people learn that they can impact real social challenges, problems, and needs.
- Higher academic achievement and interest in furthering their education.
- Enhanced problem-solving skills, ability to work in teams, and planning abilities.
- Enhanced civic engagement attitudes, skills and behaviors. Many leaders in public service today speak about how they were nurtured, inspired, and shaped in early experiences in community service or volunteering.

(Sources: Chung, 1997; Coe-Regan et al, in press; Lewis-Charp et al., 2003; Tannenbaum, S. C., 2007; and YMCA of the USA, 2004)

Consider these benefits and reflect on the various ways in which your JEP experience has impacted you this semester. **Based on your personal experience, do you believe that the above-mentioned benefits can come from participating in a service-learning program? Which outcomes seem most likely for service-learning students? Which seem least likely? Are there other benefits that you have experienced that are not listed above?** In answering these questions, make sure to explain your reasoning and use specific examples from your service-learning assignment and your course.