

INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT*15 grade points***Overview**

The recorded interview is the primary and most immediate purpose of an oral history project, and for most of us, the most satisfying step. In this assignment you will conduct an audio interview of about 60 minutes and have the narrator sign the Informed Consent Form. Turn in the sound file according to the instructions below.

Details***Informed Consent Agreement***

We use Informed Consent Agreement in this class to give you practice discussing ethical issues of oral history with the narrator and getting the narrator's written consent. The agreement explains the nature of the project, assures that the narrator is participating voluntarily, and states what will happen to the interview. The agreement should be signed and filled out by the narrator at the time of the interview, either before or after.

You will scan the signed Informed Consent Agreement and submit it with the interview (though I will accept this up to the last day of class, in case there are unavoidable delays in getting it signed.)

Recorded Introduction

Every oral history interview should begin with a recorded introduction. This has two purposes:

a) marks the transition from an informal conversation with the narrator to the beginning of the more formal, recorded interview, and b) it contains important information about the interview to identify the speakers in case the Interview Summary is lost over time. The introduction should include the following:

- Interviewer's name
- Narrator's name
- Date of interview (including year)
- Location of interview (institution, city, state). Do not record the narrator's home street address
- Recording device used
- Special circumstances of the interview (such as another person present or whether this is part of a series of interviews)

A recorded introduction is required for our class interview. Use this script for our class project:

"This is [your name] interviewing [narrator's name] for a San Jose State University School of Information student project. Today is [date, including year], and we are [location: city, state at (include institution but not home address)]. This interview is recorded on a [name/model of digital recorder and microphone]. Shall we get started?"

Best Practices for Interviewing***General***

Arrive on time

Don't rush the process. Allow time for chatting and answering questions before and after

Take cues from the narrator as to the tone of the meeting

Use your questions as a guide not a script

Ask neutral questions; don't make assumptions

Ask follow-up questions based on the narrator's answers

What to bring to the interview

What to bring to the interview

- Directions to interview location and narrator's phone number
- Recording kit: digital recorder (some students bring a backup recorder as well), microphone if used, extension cord and batteries ((unless you have surveyed the interview site, don't assume easy electrical outlets or even availability of electricity)
- Interview questions
- Informed Consent form
- Camera to take a photograph of the narrator (optional)
- Pencil and pad for jotting down notes

At the interview

- Relax. The narrator will naturally take cues from your emotional state. Let the narrator know that he is always in control and that you are seriously interested in what he has to say
- Survey the site to take note of any extraneous sources of noise or interruptions (such as phones ringing, other people in the house). Try to minimize these sounds or distractions
- If appropriate, get the Informed Consent Agreement signed at this time
- Take time to select the best spot for the interview and to set up the recording equipment
- Do a sound check with the recorder (and microphone)
- Before beginning the recording, check in with the narrator to make sure he is ready

General structure of the interview

- Begin with a recorded introduction
- Ask for a brief personal background
- Ask about narrator's connection to the subject
- Ask narrator's opinion of the subject
- If time has passed since the subject at hand, ask for a reflection about it years later
- Ask if the narrator has additional information that you have forgotten to ask about

After the interview

- Don't rush off unless the narrator appears to be in a hurry. Accept hospitality (including food or drink) if offered.
- Take cues from narrator to answer questions, listen more or discuss the interview.
- Get the Informed Consent Agreement signed if you haven't already
- Explain the next steps
- Pack up recording equipment
- ASAP after you leave the narrator, take some time to record notes and first impressions.
- Make notes about things you need to follow up on. You can use the Interview Summary form as a template.

Save the Digital File

- Copy the sound file to your computer. This will be your master copy. Name it as follows: [narrator's last name].MASTER. Keep this file safe for the remainder of the semester and do not alter it.
- Make another copy which will be your working copy, and preferably save it on another storage device. Give it a name such as [narrator's lastname].WORKING. You can use this, or a copy of it for transcribing, sending to the narrator, and preparing to submit to me for the assignment. This is the minimum number of copies required for the class. You may make additional copies on CDs, DVDs, or other digital storage devices, and a copy for the narrator.
- Prepare to submit interview to me for credit.
 - Make yet another copy of the sound file.
 - Rename it to [your last name, first name]. *This file must have your name (not the narrator's)* so I can identify it and give you credit.
 - Save the audio file in formats provided in separate instructions.

4. Upload the file according to the instructions on Canvas

Submitting the Assignment

Step 1. Upload the sound file according to the instructions posted separately.

Step 2. In the assignment dropbox comments section, tell me your file is ready for me to access.

Step 3. Include the informed consent agreement, in the assignment dropbox