

## **Group Project: Civil Rights Tourism in the Mississippi Delta**

In order to better understand conditions in rural America, you will work on a practical research project this semester, in the Mississippi Delta region. The project will focus on the history of Civil Rights in the region, the Civil Rights Movement, and activities underway today to remember the Civil Rights struggle and story. In particular, you will focus on ways the Civil Rights story is used in community development and education, and in tourism as a source of revenue for Delta communities.

The project fits into a larger effort to develop a heritage area in the Mississippi Delta. Legislation recently introduced into Congress would create a national heritage area in the Delta, and efforts are underway through the Mississippi Development Authority, local chambers of commerce and convention and visitors bureaus, and through individual tourism sites (e.g. museums, festivals, conservation areas) to promote heritage tourism of various types. The development of a Civil Rights Trail is a new project that is currently under discussion by various people.

You will be studying these efforts by speaking with experts who know about and are involved in these projects, as well as community residents who can shed light on these issues.

You will work with one other student to carry out this project. The two of you should carry out data collection together, although you will carry out your own individual studies. For example, you can interview the same person together, and each use the results to address your own research question.

### **Steps:**

- (1) Choose a research question; each class member must have a question.
- (2) Select a partner; find someone with a similar research question.
- (3) Identify journal articles, book chapters, and other sources of information on your topic; find and read the sources and develop a literature review.
- (4) Develop an interview questionnaire; ask questions that address your research question and that provide a background to your interest.
- (5) Identify subjects to interview, based on their expertise or their potential to explain their perspective.
- (6) Set up appointments with subjects, visit them and conduct the interview.
- (7) Analyze interview data and develop hypotheses and a story.
- (8) Write your paper.

**Interviews:**

- (1) Prior to the interview, read the Institutional Review Board statement to the subjects, and have them sign a voluntary consent form.
- (2) You should arrange to record your interviews; there are two tape recorders available from the instructor, or you can use your own device.
- (3) Transcribe your recordings, and submit your transcriptions with your paper; the transcription is separate from the paper (i.e. it is not included in the page count).
- (4) You should do at least four interviews.

The paper should be 15 pages long, including a literature review, presentation of findings and evidence, and interpretation/discussion. Use APA format for citations. The paper is due in class on April 24.