

# RACE AND ORAL HISTORY

## ETHN 120D/HIUS 120D – Spring 2020

### Assignment: Interview Proposal and Questions Exercise

Due: Friday, 4/24, 11:59 p.m.

**1) Interview Proposal:** Please write 1 paragraph (5-7 sentences) that answers the following questions (and anything else that you'd like to add):

- What historical questions are driving your oral history? Why are they important? What contemporary concerns have led you to these questions?
- What do you want to accomplish with, or learn through, this oral history?
- Why is this work important to you and to the community? What is its projected impact?
- Have you identified whom you will interview? How did you select this person?
- What do you hope to learn from interviewing this person that you cannot learn from other sources?
- How do you plan to prepare yourself for this interview?

### 2) Proposed Interview Questions

Please follow the format outline below. You should have a total of at least 17 questions.

- **Start-up questions (2):** Begin with two start-up questions, such as brief biographical inquiries, to get your interviewee and yourself comfortable before you change to your topic list.
- **Main topics questions (5):** Organize your interview questions into at least **5 main topics**. Possible topics: family background; memories of home and significant others; migration experiences; gentrification of a neighborhood; perspective on relevant historical events; employment history; community life; experiences with racism, etc. Important: For this class, **one of your main topic questions will be on COVID-19**.
- **Subtopics questions (3 per main topics questions):** For each main topic, come up with 3 subtopics questions that ask for greater detail, more contextual data, person's values and feelings.

### Tips:

- Cover the material chronologically wherever possible, as this is the way most people best remember events.
- Start questions with:
  - Tell me about/can you describe ...
  - What do you remember/think/feel about . . .
  - What was it like...
  - Explain/Expand/Describe . . .
  - How have xxx events affected you ...
- Ask questions that encourage your interviewee to share not only what they did, but also what they thought and felt about what they did.
- Ask questions that encourage your interviewee to talk about their *own* experiences—to provide personal stories and memories that you will not find in standard histories.