Neighborhood Case Study

CCSSC 387 Race, Space, and Inequality – Summer 2023

This assignment is an opportunity to get to know a specific neighborhood in Washington, DC. It's an opportunity to be curious. To pay attention and be willing to be surprised. It is an invitation to learn as much as you can about a place and in so doing to try to understand how that place has been shaped by the people who live and work there, how being there has shaped *their* lives, and how both the people and the place have been shaped by the forces that structure opportunity and inequality in our society.

To complete this assignment, you will be collecting a variety of types of data in order to tell a story about the neighborhood. Your story will be structured around answering three core questions:

1) *Whose place is this?* (social domain)

2) *How has this place changed over time?* (historical domain)

3) *How does money move through this place?* (economic domain)

Your project will be evaluated on the quality of the data and evidence you have gathered and how adequately you use that evidence to tell a story that answers the three core questions. For guidance about how to approach these core questions, there is a suggested list of more specific questions for each domain on p. 5 that you may find helpful.

Collecting the data / evidence to tell your story

It is up to you exactly what data you collect and what sources you use. Your project should draw significantly on participant observation—that is, what you learn about the place by spending time there (#1, below). In addition, you are expected to gather, engage with, and present in your case study data from at least three of the other categories of data listed below (#2-#6):

1) **Participant observation** (being physically present and recording your observations and experiences of a place using all of your senses; talking to people you meet; joining or observing an event, performance, shared use of public space, etc.)

2) **Audiovisual data** (photographs, audio recordings, video, etc.)

3) **Mapping** (gathering locational data and using maps to show spatial relationships)

4) **Quantitative demographic data** (quantitative data from the Census Bureau and other official sources, etc.)

5) **Public records** (tax assessment of property values, date and price of property sales, etc.)

6) **Documentary data** (written histories, historical documents, newspaper articles, books, blogs, websites of local organizations, etc.)

Submissions and due dates

The assignment involves three submissions:

1) **Progress report** – DUE: 6/29 (Week 4) by 11am (10%)

2) **Draft case study report** – DUE: 7/27 (Week 8) by 11am (10%)

3) **Final case study report and presentation** – DUE: 8/10 (Week 10) by 11am (30%)

Outline

Your paper should follow the following outline:

I.   **Introduction** – Frame the paper's purpose and preview your key takeaways. Introduce your reader to the neighborhood: where it's located, what it's known for, and why it's interesting.

II. **Methods** – Describe in detail the methods and data sources you used.

III. **Whose place is this?** – Tell the story of the neighborhood as a social space.

IV. **How has this place changed over time?** – Tell the story of the neighborhood's history.

V.   **How does money move through this place?** – Tell the story of the neighborhood as a site of investment, profit seeking, and economic activity.

VI. **Discussion** – Pull it all together and tell us what these stories mean and why they matter. Include, also, a first-person reflection on what it felt like to be in the neighborhood and how your experience of the neighborhood changed over the course of the project. Help your reader understand how this neighborhood fits within the city and the broader changes reshaping DC.

VII. **Conclusion** – Reiterate your purpose for writing the case study and review your key takeaways.

Required submissions and grading rubrics

1) **Progress report** - DUE: 6/29 (Week 4) by 11am (10%)

Your progress report should describe in detail the data that you have collected so far. Be specific about date and time of fieldwork and the types of data you collected. Identify all external data sources you have accessed. Then write 600 words describing (1) what you have learned so far, (2) why it matters, (3) what pieces of the story you still need to tell, and (4) your plans for collecting data that will allow you to do so.

Criteria	Points
Data collected thus far is described in detail, including dates/times of fieldwork and external data sources.	2
Assessment of what you have learned so far and why it matters.	3
Identification of pieces of the story you still need to tell and plans for collecting data to do so.	3
Progress report demonstrates care and effort, and the analysis meets the minimum word count.	2
Total	**10**

2) **Draft case study report** – DUE: 7/27 (Week 8) by 11am (10%)

Complete a draft of your case study report by Week 8, when we will use part of our class meeting for a peer writing workshop. Submit your draft on Moodle by 11am and bring two hard copies to class. Do not worry if there are parts of your report that are less complete. This is an exercise in receiving feedback before something is finished. Your draft should be at least 1,800 words. Be sure to properly cite all external sources.

Criteria	Points
Draft report of at least 1,800 words submitted on Moodle.	3
Report demonstrates diligent effort in data collection and thoughtful analysis.	3
Bring two hard copies to class (printed before class starts).	2
Participate in the peer writing workshop.	2
Total	**10**

3) **Final case study report and presentation** – DUE: 8/10 (Week 10) by 9am (30%)

Your final case study report should be at least 3,000 words. Your project will be evaluated on the quality of the data and evidence you have gathered and how adequately you use that evidence to tell a story that answers the three core questions. It should be written in a style appropriate for an academic context (though first person language is expected for this project), demonstrating a clear voice, command of grammar, and with minimal typographical errors. Be sure to properly cite all external sources. Relevant maps, photographs, and tables should be included in your paper as needed to support your description and analysis. Submit your final report on Moodle by 9am.

You will give an 8-10 minute presentation of your case study in the morning on August 10. At a minimum, tell the story of the neighborhood across social, historical, and economic domains. You are expected to use slides to support your presentation. This is your chance to share with the

rest of us—as compellingly as you can—what you learned and why it matters. Help us understand what's most important to know about this place and the people who live there. Be sure to include an integrative assessment of the neighborhood (draw on your discussion section) and reflections about your own experience being in the neighborhood. Submit your slides on Moodle or share a link by 9am.

Criteria	*Points*
Final case study report	
Introduction frames the paper's purpose and previews your key takeaways.	2
Methods section describes in detail the methods and data sources you used, including data from each of the six data types listed on page 1.	4
Social domain section tells the story of the neighborhood as a social space, drawing on data and evidence to answer the question *Whose neighborhood is this?*	4
Historical domain section tells the story of the neighborhood's history, drawing on data and evidence to answer the question *How has this place changed over time?*	4
Economic domain section tells the story of the neighborhood as an economic space, drawing on data and evidence to answer the question *How does money move through this place?*	4
Discussion section tells us what these stories mean and why they matter. Includes, a first-person reflection on what it felt like to be in the neighborhood and how your experience and perception of the neighborhood changed over the course of the project.	4
Conclusion reiterates your purpose for writing the case study and reviews key takeaways.	1
Writing style is appropriate for an academic context, demonstrating a clear voice, command of grammar, and with minimal typographical errors. Paper conforms to specified length of at least 3,000 words. Sources are properly cited.	2
Presentation	
Presentation is well organized and is supported by clear and attractive slides.	1
Presentation tells the story of the neighborhood across social, historical, and economic domains.	2
Presenter shares integrative assessment of the neighborhood, including reflections on what it felt like to them to be in the neighborhood.	2
Total	**30**

Questions that may be helpful in guiding your research

You are not required to specifically address each of these sub-questions in the story you tell. However, they may be helpful as you figure out what types of data to collect within the social, historical, and economic domains.

Social domain: *Whose place is this?*

1) Who lives and works here?

2) What ethnic, cultural, and linguistic traditions do they represent?

3) What is their quality of life?

4) How do people occupy and use public space?

5) Who belongs here?

Historical domain: *How has this place changed over time?*

1) Who lived here at different points in the past?

2) How and why has that changed over time?

3) In what other ways has the neighborhood changed?

4) Where does the neighborhood's current name come from?

5) In what ways have communities living here been significant to DC's history?

Economic domain: *How does money move through this place?*

1) What kinds of businesses operate here? How long have they been here? Who owns them?

2) Are new things being built? Are existing buildings and infrastructure being used? What condition are they in?

3) What is the condition of the housing stock? Are property values going up or down?

4) What consumers are investment and new businesses targeted to serve or attract?

5) Is the neighborhood perceived as a profitable site for investment and development?