

IN-CLASS WRITING:
THINKING ABOUT YOUR OWN SUBCULTURES

(adapted from Slater, *Fieldworking*, Pp. 5-6.

Consider any self-identified group of people – one that shares language, stories, rituals, behaviors, and values – as a subculture.

Some subcultures define themselves by geography (Southerners, Texans, New Yorkers).

Others define themselves by ethnicity or language (Mexican, Irish, Flemish, Italian, Filipino, Ghanaian).

Others define themselves via shared rituals and behaviors (fraternity brothers, Girl Scouts, Masons, Daughters of the American Revolution, computer hackers).

You belong to many subcultures simultaneously. They may include your bowling league, your neighborhood pick-up basketball team, your community church, your school's foreign film club. Of course, your work and your family constitute sub-cultural domains as well.

1. List some of the subcultures to which you belong. For each one, jot down a few key details that distinguish the group: behaviors, insider phrases, rules, rituals, and the specific locations where these behaviors usually occur.
2. Share this list with the class. Together, let's decide on which of your subcultures we would most appreciate your taking the next ten minutes to discuss in a brief written document.
3. Write a short paragraph describing your chosen subculture, either seriously or satirically.
4. Add to your list any subcultures to which you have access. (Do you have an uncle who's a firefighter? A sister in a band or theater group? A friend who's a body builder? Do you know someone who works on the student paper?).
5. List any other subcultures that interest you, even if the sites seem "weird," inaccessible, beyond your reach.
6. Keep the lists and the writing you have generated today; they may be useful as reference points when we come to selecting field sites for our later work in the course.