

Reflective Essay

This photo book was submitted for a final project during Fall 2022. The assignment was to create a photo book surrounding a location that was chosen at the beginning of the semester. I enjoy making connections, so while I was enrolled in another course that was discussing a topic that related to the history of my location, Rancho Guajome Adobe, my photo book became historical and conceptual. This was also inspired by another assignment I completed where I researched an artist who used art and performance to be mindful of the history of subjugation on which her performance locations were built. I was then tasked with not just committing to researching the history of the area, but reflecting on the research I had done in the past as well. I was able to be mindful of the people that were in my the locations in the photo book both in the past and the future and how one designated location also connects to the rest of the state. The historical context of my photo book is settler colonialism. Since I expanded on this context and how my photos related to it in my photo book, I will maintain a focus on my research process. My previous knowledge of settler colonialism was thanks to many courses in Ethnic Studies that I had taken. I am grateful for this area of study because it has taught me to rely on a myriad of sources that aren't just academic. One interpretation of this is that Ethnic Studies was built on rebuilding education and pedagogies, meaning that I was provided information on the process of oppression and domination through sources that aren't academic as well, such as websites, literature, film, personal experiences, and even poetry. Another interpretation is that because this area of study is so heavily reliant on theory rather than empirical and analytical research alone, I had to relearn how to properly digest and interpret researched information existing on another level of complexity by relying on more than one source. As a student with a desire to succeed

and a scholar with a desire to learn and articulate my own theory, analyses, and experiences, research and analysis have become a practice and a process. For my previous knowledge on this topic, and the reflections on this topic within the submitted project, my most notable research repertoire is as follows.

To begin, I take full advantage of the material provided to me by my professors. Their expansive knowledge and experience have allowed me to consume the most enlightening content for which I will be eternally grateful. These are helpful, but when I have to do my own research, I can look forward to the variety of resources that are available within the bibliography and in-text citations, both on websites and in academic articles. As a developing student-scholar, I know that many studies are less likely to be completely exhaustive, and that there are endless perspectives, actors, and facets of reality being studied that also helped the scholar develop their own thesis. In many cases, I was able to rely on our database to search for these cited sources and find additional material that I could utilize. I also heavily depend on the recommended material next to a selected article which gave me much more specific results and more database options than the initial search through OneSearch. Through this variety of material, I also take note of relevant keywords and terms that can help me with my research in the library database as well as understand the topic that I am researching. The most important effect I feel from this strategy is feeling more confident in describing and understanding the topic. It's very exciting to be exposed to such profound and diverse theory since entering university, but even more so when these different perspectives come together and literally provide me with the words that I need to articulate something that I couldn't articulate before. Using the library and the materials that my

professors believed would be best for my education has been one of the most valuable university experiences, and I hope my understanding of my research is reflected in this creative project.

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