

## **PROJECT DESIGN STATEMENT ASSIGNMENT**

*Progress Report required but not graded*

The Project Design Statement (PDS) will help you organize the multiple components of an oral history project. This document will create the framework for your interview and all the additional steps of your project.

### **Instructions**

Adapt the Project Design Statement template to organize the multiple aspects of your oral history project. Write the PDS as a formal document that you could submit to a funding agency or administrators in a large organization. Writing should be clear, concise, accurate, and to the point. In addition, the PDS will be kept in the project's permanent files to refer back to throughout the project.

Use example PDSs, the project design lecture, and the *Oral History Project* overview to guide your work. I've included several examples from previous classes that illustrate various approaches to completing the PDS. You can adapt the template to best describe your project, but be sure to include the *Required* sections marked with two asterisks (\*\*) on the template and indicated in these instructions below. There is no optimum length, but 2-4 pages should suffice for a project like ours. (The PDS for a larger project could be many times this length and include many more sections)

### **Progress Report**

The required progress report is your opportunity to get feedback before you finalize the project statement, and my opportunity to know you are in the right track.

Send me an informal document describing your topic and plan for selecting a narrator. Include questions or concerns about the project. Fine to send a draft Project Design Statement if you have gotten this far, but this is not necessary. Mention any special challenges or stumbling blocks. The more you send me the better I can comment.

### **Details**

- *Project title.* (Required) Create a title that is descriptive and easy to remember. A project title is more important than it seems. Not only does it bring to the project to life with a unique identity, but the project title will be important in written publicity, in cataloging and metadata, in search engines, and in outreach.
- *Short description.* (Required). Describe the project in one or two sentences.
- *Expanded description* (Required). In a few paragraphs describe the content and the cultural or historical context for the project. Write the statement in such a way that it could be reused in publicity, a letter of introduction to potential narrators, or a grant proposal.
- *Goals.* (Required) Explain what you want to accomplish by doing this project. Goals could include community engagement, historical documentation, introducing a new point of view to a previously documented topic, intergenerational or intercultural understanding.
- *Audience* (Required). Who will be most interested in these interviews? Consider various general, scholarly, and specialized audiences; local or universal communities; and audiences of both the present and the future.
- *Administrative Requirements.* State briefly what is needed in terms of recording or computer equipment, office space, funding, and so forth.
- *Relevance.* (Required) Explain why your project is important to your intended audience

and/or to greater world. How does it fill gaps in the existing public record? How does it describe a fresh perspective on a topic? This is the place to pitch your project.

- *Scope.* State the chronological and geographic boundaries of the project, e.g. “this project will interview farmers living in the state of Kansas who farmed actively between 1950 and 1990.”
- *Topics.* (Required) Identify about five broad topics and themes that support your goals and address the historical question.
- *Sources for background research.* (Required) List general sources for historical research, such as local and national newspapers, census data, historical photographs, books on economic history. Later on you will refine this list and develop a true bibliography; at this point you need only to include *kinds of* historical sources.
- *Duration.* Determine a reasonable duration for your hypothetical project. For most small projects like ours, 6-12 months is a reasonable length. Though some projects are ongoing and do not have a target ending date, but this can cause problems and is not recommended.
- *Number of Narrators.* Our class project should include ten narrators.
- *Method for Selecting Narrators.* Determine a method for recruiting and selecting narrators. (This is hypothetical, since you will only be conducting one interview).
- *Recording Plan.* (Required) Use a digital audio recorder, as required for this assignment.
- *Resources.* Briefly state the resources available, as you envision your oral history project. This could include volunteers to transcribe, library school intern to catalog, loan of equipment from local high school, or a financial gift from a local philanthropist.
- *Archiving Plan.* (Required) What is the most appropriate kind of repository for your project? Your local public library? A digital repository? State or local historical society? University library or special academic institution? Here you may suggest one or more types or repositories that would be good candidate for your project, or you may name a specific repository.
- *Online Access for Interviews.* Describe if and how you envision online access for your oral history project based on the topic, narrators, and available resources described in this design statement. What would that online access look like?