Final Project, Writing Workshop, WRPR 0100B, Fall, 2013 (Catharine Wright)

This project includes research and several genres/forms of writing. It includes all the writing you will do in this class from now until the end of the semester. There will be limited readings from here on out, other than your research and some peer review. You will have choices pertaining to your project but will also be expected to follow guidelines.

1) **Choose a writing topic/research area** that connects to one of the 3-4 social science articles we have read:
   - sex and/or gender identity/performance
   - the institution of marriage and/or deinstitutionalization of marriage
   - the complexity of identity

2) **Write a 2-3 page informal exploratory narrative** (a rough draft) that applies the theory of the article to some aspect of your own experience. For example, I might write about being white. I would use Tatum’s theory of dominant social categories to examine my experience of growing up white in Vermont. I might bring in my gender and/or sexuality to examine the intersection of dominant and subordinate categories in my own development. This narrative can be informal and rough—its process work. But do quote and/or cite the article that you’re using.

3) Having examined in narrative form some aspect of identity or identity performance or participation (or not) in a family structure, **develop a research question** that pertains to that topic. For example, while writing my narrative, I might think about the term “native Vermonter,” a term I was raised to use to describe myself. That might lead me to conduct research on racial history in Vermont. Are white people native to Vermont? What does it mean to be native? Do social scientists or Vermonters themselves debate use of the term? Or, I might research conceptions of the “Vermonter” identity in relation to gender—how is gender portrayed in Vermont humor, Vermont products, or Vermont history books? What do “typical” male Vermonters do, and typical female Vermonters?

4) After developing your research question (revising it as needed) I want you to find 4-5 sources that speak to your topic. You won’t have time to do extensive research, but see what you can find that offers some range of perspective. You should find:
   - 2-3 popular sources
   - 2-3 academic sources

5) Now, in **2-4 sentences**, I’d like you to **propose a formal paper/an argument**. This could take the form of a working thesis statement or a very short abstract. Tell your audience your topic, any debate you are entering into, or line of inquiry you are pursuing, and what you’re drawing upon for evidence and discussion (your personal experience as well as your research). Attached to this proposal should be an **annotated bibliography** of your selected sources. This means that you will write a
few sentences describing each source and assessing its value to your project. Be sure to identify if the source is popular or academic. Use APA style format to create the bibliographic reference to your source. Altogether your proposal and annotated bibliography should fit on one page.

Your final product will be a short 3-4 page paper that explores/discusses/argues whatever topic you have narrowed down to. For example, in the end, I might write a 3-4 page paper that explores my dilemma in identifying with the term “native” Vermonter. On the one hand, my family has lived here for many generations, and I celebrate my identification with the place and its people. There is a lot of humor that surrounds the term that I was raised with and identify with and enjoy. But at the same time, there is a lot that I was never taught, at school or home, about the original Vermonters, the Abenaki, some of whose descendants still live here. Being a white person, I was not raised to be aware of their experience, though they were aware of mine (Tatum’s theory of dominant categories applies to my experience). On further investigation, I feel as though the term native should be reserved for them. Further complications arise for me with the gendered image of the “native Vermonter,” who is celebrated in videos (“Rusty” and “Fred Tuttle”) and jokes and comics. I like that scrappy lumberjack image and I celebrate Rusty and Fred. Yet I am not a man or a lumberjack and am not expected to behave like one. So if I claim the term, my participation in it is rather marginal (if I perform my female role) or subject to criticism (if I resist my female role), and is simultaneously privileged (by my whiteness). And if I reject the term, I am denying something that is a source of pride for many working class Vermonters. It’s all very well and good for me as a college faculty member to critique the term, but what about the people who do not have access to all of the conversations that I have access to, or have time to debate these things. In my short paper I would draw on my own personal narrative, on Tatum, on the Rusty or Tuttle video, and on the book The Original Vermonters. I would also look for an academic article. I might include some advertisements or jokes, depending on time and space.

Note: you don’t have to use all 4-5 sources in your paper. As long as you have done your annotated bibliography, you can just draw on 1-3 additional sources beyond the article you use to theorize your experience.

Due Dates/Project Timeline:

Steps 1-3 are due on Tuesday, Nov. 19th.

Steps 4-5 are due Tuesday, Nov. 26th (before Thanksgiving break)

The Final paper is due in draft form for writing workshops or conferences (dates TBD) and in final draft form in your final portfolio on Dec. 12.