

Paper 1: September 11 Interview and Reflection -- 20%

- Due Friday, March 5
- Interview questions (.docx or pdf) + ~30-min interview transcript (.docx or .txt or pdf) + 1200-1500 word (~4-5 page) reflection (.docx or pdf)
 - You will need to name your interview subject as part of response paper 2, due Friday, Feb 19.
- MLA/Chicago citation style
- Turn in via the “Paper 1” portal on Blackboard Assignments page. You should turn in your interview questions, your interview transcript and your reflection paper via this portal.

The first unit of our course will focus on memory, trauma, and narrative as they relate to September 11, 2001 and the war on terror. Paper 1 asks you to incorporate (someone else’s) personal experience into your reflections on these concepts. For this assignment, you will interview someone who remembers the events of September 11, 2001 and then write a ~1200-1500-word reflection on the interview, connecting it explicitly to at least one text we have read or watched so far in class.

Conducting the interview

The first step is to interview someone who remembers the events of September 11, 2001. This can be an older relative or friend, a colleague, etc -- the only criteria is that they personally remember the events of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath (if you remember September 11, 2001, you should still find someone else to interview). You should aim to interview your subject for about 30 minutes. We will take some time during class on Monday, Feb 22 to brainstorm specific questions that you might ask your interviewee, but the main focus of your interview should be their memories of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath. If your interviewee would prefer to remain anonymous, that is ok (in this case, give them a pseudonym).

You should go into the interview having prepared a list of questions that you plan to ask. You will turn this in as part of your Paper 1 assignment. If you end up asking additional questions during your interview, or if you don’t get to all of the questions you planned, that’s ok. But you need to go in with a plan.

You will also need to submit a transcript of your interview when you turn in Paper 1. You may create this transcript however you choose, but the easiest way is probably to use Zoom’s automatic transcription feature. If you conduct your interview via Zoom and record it, you can elect to save an automatic transcription to the cloud. For instructions on how to do this, see this page:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115004794983-Using-audio-transcription-for-cloud-recordings->. To sign in to your University of Miami Zoom web portal, go here and click “Sign in”: <https://miami.zoom.us/>. **If you have never used this feature before, I STRONGLY recommend that you practice/conduct a 1-minute dry run of your interview with a friend, just to make sure you can get the feature to work correctly.** You do not want to go all the way through your interview only to discover the recording and/or transcription didn’t work.

Please note you that you should turn in a TRANSCRIPT of your interview, not the audio or video files themselves. After your interview is over, you can download the transcript as a .vtt file from the Zoom web portal, and then open this file in Word or Google docs (or a plain text editor) and save it in .docx/.txt/.pdf format for submission. If you use Zoom's automatic transcription feature, it will make some errors, but that's ok. You don't need to clean your transcript up before turning it in. If your subject would prefer that you not share certain parts of their interview, you may redact them, but you should clearly indicate in the transcript itself where sections have been redacted. And you should keep redactions to a minimum.

When you ask the person you want to interview if they will agree to be interviewed, it is important that you communicate with them about why you are conducting this interview and how you will use their responses. When you ask them if they agree to be interviewed, you should clearly communicate:

1. You are conducting this interview for a class assignment.
2. This will be a 30-minute interview.
3. How you will conduct the interview (over Zoom, etc) and how you will record it.
4. You will turn a transcript of the interview in to your instructor.
5. You will reflect on their responses in a written assignment.

Finally, I would really, really prefer that you interview someone other than me for this assignment. You will learn enough about what I think over the course of the semester. However, if you absolutely cannot find someone else to interview, I am your option of last resort (*absolutely last*).

You will name who you plan to interview as part of response paper 2, due Friday, Feb 19.

Writing your reflection

After conducting your interview, you will write a 1200-1500-word (~4-5 double-spaced pages) reflection on the interview and its relationship to at least one text from our course. You can organize this reflection however you wish, but it should include the following elements:

1. A brief summary/synthesis of the interview and/or the interviewee. Who did you interview (again, you may use a pseudonym if your subject prefers)? How old were they on September 11, 2001? Where were they living? Why did you elect to interview them? Etc. Anything you deem pertinent to contextualizing your interview should be included here. The idea is to provide your reader with basic facts about and/or a description of the interview and your interviewee. You should set the scene, as it were. This part of your reflection should be brief -- around ~1 page.
2. Analysis of your interview and its relationship to at least 1 text from our course ("text" means any course material, including TV episodes). For this part of your reflection, you should think of the interview you conducted as another example of a September 11 narrative -- like the ones we have read in class -- and you should compare/contrast it to at least 1 text from our class. To get you started on this part of your reflection, you might think about answering some of the following questions (this list is not exhaustive):
 - a. What did you find surprising or unexpected about the interview, based on what we have read and discussed so far in class?
 - b. As a September 11 narrative, how does the interview compare to at least one of the September 11 narratives we have read in class?
 - c. How does it depart from at least one of these narratives?

- d. How does the interview cause you to think differently about concepts we have discussed in class, including memory, trauma, war, fiction, and narrative? Or, what does the interview add to your understanding of these concepts?
- e. We have read/watched a variety of genres and types of materials in class so far: political speeches, a novel, scholarly articles, essays and news reports, episodes of a television show, a memoir/diary. How does an interview compare to/contrast with at least one of these genres/types of material? What can we learn from an interview that we can't from these other genres/types of materials? What does it help us to understand, as compared to these other genres/types of materials? Why is that important?

No matter what you write about in the second part of your reflection, you should:

- 1. Be specific -- the more specific the better. Resist the temptation to generalize.
- 2. Incorporate quotes from your interview and from the other course text(s) you are discussing. Again, specificity and precision matter. It is better to discuss 1 idea in detail than it is to discuss 3 or 4 ideas generally and in a hurried way.
- 3. Pay attention to the language your interviewee uses and to the language of the text(s) you are writing about. The words they use matter. Why do they use some words and not others? How does their language compare to the text(s) you are writing about? What does the language used in each text reveal, and what does it obscure?
- 4. Keep your eye on the overall point of your paper. The point is not to psychoanalyze your interviewee, but rather to contextualize their personal experiences within larger narratives and ideas about September 11. Your paper should be organized, conceptually coherent, and structured in a way that makes sense.