SOCL 2211: Guide for Photo-based Project

This is a brief overview; further guidance will be offered in class (as well as lectures on qualitative research). Please also see the description on the class webpage for other details.

As the name implies, *qualitative* research describes the qualities of things. It is important to provide "thick" (detailed) descriptions of the people and things being studied. <u>Crucially</u>, the main goal of qualitative research goes beyond describing the group being studied. Qualitative research should try to discover or document significant things with regards to the group being studied or the topic being investigated. <u>Photo projects must include interpretation that goes beyond explanation.</u> For example, if I were studying a sports team I could describe the various members of the team and the relationships between them. But perhaps after analyzing my observations, interviews with players, and photos, I interpret that rivalry between star players creates cliques and drives players into competition within the team.

Fieldwork. Students choose a subject to study; something with a unified theme (e.g., a club or team, an organization, a culture, a practice, "presentation-of-self"). Students will conduct fieldwork where they collect data on the chosen topic. Types of data:

- Photos
- Observations (things you were not able to photograph but are still important. Handwritten notes can be useful.).
- Interviews (highly recommended. Provides a lot of good data to analyze and write about. Recording interviews with a phone will be helpful and you can easily get some useful quotes).

Data analysis. By "coding" their data, students will develop "themes" and categories. Themes, categories, and coding are all related terms that suggest how to break down raw qualitative data into a form we can analyze. This process will help with developing ideas about your topic. Students will process their photos, observations, and interviews making categories based on what they determine is important. Again using the sports team example, below is a simple example of something you might make to help with your analysis:

Themes	Major categories	Minor categories
Rivalry between star players	Intra-group competition	Negative comments about rivals in interviews
		Not passing to rival teammates
	Cliques	Matt, Joe, Bob
		John, Jack, Frank

**you should have more themes, and major and minor categories.

The final paper.
As mentioned above, it is crucial that students have gathered enough data and spent enough time analyzing it to say something about their topic that goes beyond thick description. This is emphasized in the Discussion section of the rubric.

Grading Rubric	
20%	Photos & fieldwork
10%	Introduction (introduce and outline your paper)
10%	Methodology (describe sample, data collection, methods of analysis & process of developing themes)
30%	Results (Analysis of photos, interviews, observations)
20%	Discussion (An argument or interpretation that is informed by your results)
10%	Conclusion (perhaps suggest how results relate to wider society, expand on your ideas, limitations of the study, future work)
	Potential extra Credit for going above and beyond our expectations!

**for additional help see the example papers on the class website.