

## Cross-Cultural Interviews

### Preparation

- ❖ Research the culture and the history of the interviewee
- ❖ Plan a list of topics to discuss
- ❖ Select a location that will ensure quiet and privacy
- ❖ Examine your own biases about the culture of the interviewee

### Introductions

- ❖ Take the time to explain your objective, methods, and outcomes
- ❖ Set clear expectations regarding sample topics and the time commitment involved
- ❖ Recognize that oral histories might invite suspicion, and address those concern directly
- ❖ Foster the atmosphere of a conversation, not an interrogation
- ❖ Allow a space for the interviewee to ask questions

### Conducting the interview

- ❖ Use active listening to show respect and interest in your interviewee's story
- ❖ Show the person you are engaged with their story through your body language and tone
- ❖ Ask engaged follow up questions
- ❖ Recognize that conversation styles vary and follow the lead of the interviewee
- ❖ Pay attention to the context, the interviewee's tone, and body language
- ❖ Take cues about which topics might be sensitive

### Negotiating difference

- ❖ Check your own assumptions about ideas like culture, family, and money
- ❖ Avoid judgments about the interviewee's story, situation, and choices
- ❖ People are hybrid and complicated, and no one perfectly encompasses another culture
- ❖ Be aware of different experiences of oppression and injustice
- ❖ Build a rapport through shared interests, such as food, children, hobbies, Ithaca
- ❖ Acknowledge difference directly through your questions
  - "How do you define your culture? How do you define family?"
  - "What are your goals? What are your values?"
  - "What are moments where you felt different from the majority?"
  - "How do you cultivate a sense of belonging in Ithaca/America?"

### Working with translators

- ❖ People best express themselves in their native language
- ❖ Make sure the interviewee is comfortable with the translator- consider gender and age
- ❖ Avoid situations in which the translator answers your questions instead of the interviewee
- ❖ Keep questions succinct and avoid complicated multi-part questions
- ❖ Slow down and take it one idea at a time