Teaching and Learning Guide

*Oktoberfest in Brazil: Domestic Tourism, Sensescapes, and German Brazilian Identity*

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University of Alabama Press (2023)

**Introduction**

These sample learning activities that accompany each chapter can be adapted and integrated into a variety of introductory and upper-division courses as in-class or out-of-class exercises.

- The activities associated with each chapter can be used independently and do not require the completion of the previous chapter’s activities.

- Some of the chapters feature two activity options. Option 1 involves discussion activities and Option 2 includes a fieldwork component.

- Collectively the chapter activities, particularly Option 2, build critical thinking, data collection, and analysis skills related to the ethnographic project associated with chapter 4 and model a process through which to carry it out (e.g., participant observation, reflexivity, social media analysis, mapping a space, informal interviews, and library research).
Topics Covered:

This book intersects with various topics, including:

- Identities in Brazil
  - transnationalism
  - ethnicity
  - national imaginaries
  - social class
  - race
  - cultural citizenship and belonging
  - gender

- German immigrant communities in Latin America (i.e., Brazil)

- Identity negotiation through
  - sensory experience
  - performance (e.g., dance and music)
  - material culture (e.g., garden gnomes)
  - biophysical and built environments (e.g., gardens)

- Tourism
  - domestic tourism
  - urban and rural development strategies

- Sensory ethnography and anthropological theory
  - economy of aesthetics
  - power of symbols (multivocality and condensation)
  - secular ritual and liminality
  - forms of capital

Pedagogical Resources:

This sample of pedagogical resources can assist in scaffolding some of the discussions and activities featured in the teaching and learning guide:

Teaching with Virtual Reality


Teaching Theory Application

Introduction: Encountering Another Part of Brazil

Option 1: Reflecting on Tourism Imaginaries
A Virtual Walk through Blumenau, Brazil

The goal of this exercise is to examine expectations and the ways in which society and life experiences influence our perceptions of various places and people. Pre-reflection answers can be placed in an ethnographic reflection journal or in a course’s online platform to use later for the post-reflection.

Before you start the book, please answer the following pre-reflection questions and share your responses with the class.

Pre-Reflection:
- When you think of Brazil, what comes to mind?
  - e.g., cultural practices, types of landscapes
- What are you expecting to see and experience in a Brazilian city?
  - e.g., architecture, demographic composition, transportation, sensory experiences
- Where do some of these expectations come from?
  - e.g., a particular movie, song, video game, or video; photos from particular sources; travel experiences; conversations; personal experiences

After you complete the pre-reflection questions, please take this virtual walk https://youtu.be/u4puSlNdpVE along downtown streets in Blumenau, and read the book’s introduction.

Post-Reflection: Please answer individually or collectively with your class the following questions:
- What about the video surprised you? What did you see and experience that was NOT on your pre-reflection list?
- What were you expecting to see or experience but did not? What identities seemed missing or overlooked?
- What matched your expectations?

Looking back at your pre-reflection answers, what sources of your expectations were approximated more closely in the video? Which differed more? What might account for these similarities and differences?
- e.g., Were the sources of your expectations about a different region of Brazil? Were they drawn from experiences in other Latin American countries? Do they reflect stereotypes or highlight inequalities to varying degrees?
- e.g., How might the history of the city and its cultural heritage tourism have influenced what was featured in the walk?
- e.g., How might your own identities and life experiences have influenced your expectations?

This activity is based in part on Steinmetz and Bishop (2020).
Option 2: Doing Sensory Ethnography

The goal of this exercise is to gain experience doing sensory-oriented participant observation and practicing reflexivity. Descriptions and answers can be placed in an ethnographic journal or submitted to a course’s online platform to use later for the class comparison activity.

Participant observation can help us identify research questions and begin to better understand different social issues. Pretend that you are an anthropologist and this is your first trip through downtown Blumenau to do a sensory ethnography. Join this virtual walking tour of Blumenau [https://youtu.be/u4puSIINdpVE](https://youtu.be/u4puSIINdpVE) and take detailed notes on what you experience. Try to capture as many sensory details as possible, such as colors, what the buildings look like, types of sounds, kinds of plants, objects that you see and hear, and the people you encounter and what they are doing, saying, etc. Try to paint a picture with words or draw out sketches/maps of what is happening all around you without including (as much as possible) your own analysis. Then answer the following questions.

1. What visuals, sounds, and other experiences drew your attention?

2. What questions arose as you followed this person through downtown Blumenau? Where would you have explored more or gone in a different direction and why? Who would you have stopped and talked to and why? What questions would you have asked them?

3. How do your notes compare with other students’ notes in the class? Did you focus on something different? What did you note that other individuals did not?

4. Take a moment and reflect on your own positionality (e.g., your ethnic, gender, racial, religious/spiritual, socioeconomic class, sexual, and national/transnational identities as well as your age and physical abilities).
   - How might your own identities have influenced what you noticed and took notes on and the questions that you asked?

5. Before starting participant observation and ethnographic research, what types of permissions and relationships should you receive and develop?
Chapter 1. The Making of Ethnic and National Imaginaries

The goal of these activities is to analyze how social media influences the production of certain public images and in the process influences the social standings of the featured groups. These activities can be completed individually, in small groups, or as a class, using a shared online storage platform to create a database for the social media being analyzed.

Our images and expectations of people and places come from somewhere, and understanding the ways in which these get produced and reproduced is important for recognizing assumptions, generalizations, stereotypes, and the power embedded within them.

Option 1: Brazil’s Tourism Imaginaries

This is a chance to dive deeper into our expectations and assumptions about Brazil. Conduct research on the tourism imaginaries that circulate today and in the past about this country and its diverse population.

Step 1:
- Collect visual, auditory, and text samples of how Brazil is portrayed in tourism advertisements, websites, and magazines.
- Collect visual, auditory, and text samples of how Brazil is portrayed in movies, social media, video games, and TV.
- Collect news coverage of Brazil’s hosting of the 2014 World Cup, 2016 Summer Olympics, and other large international tourism events hosted in the country.

Step 2:
- Analyze these images, texts, videos, and auditory samples for themes in what they communicate about Brazil and the country’s diverse populace. Answering the following questions can lead you to the themes, that is, the patterns in representation and/or the underlying messages conveyed through juxtaposing certain topics, people, images, and sounds.
  - What are some common topics or associations in the tourism and social media/entertainment coverage of Brazil?
  - What words commonly appear across your sources to describe Brazil? What images commonly appear? What music and sounds commonly appear?
  - Which groups of people are continually represented and how? To what extent is Brazil’s ethnic and racial diversity represented? Is there a difference in how various identities are represented?
  - Who and what are missing from the tourism and social media/entertainment coverage of Brazil? What potential meaning(s) can be drawn from this absence?
  - To what extent are these portrayals of Brazil and the country’s populace positive or negative?
Option 2: Deconstructing Public Images

Select one ethnic/racialized group in the country where you are currently residing and keep an ethnographic journal of how they appear or not appear in all of the social media, news, video games, music, TV, movies, and advertisements that you consume during the next week.

Step 1:
- Write down as much of the context as possible, e.g., media format, role in the storyline, how individuals are portrayed socially, such as in interactions with other people, and approximation with certain products.

Step 2:
- Identify some themes in how individuals of the selected group are portrayed and whether stereotypes are used and how. (See Step 2 in Option 1 for more details on identifying themes.)

Step 3:
- Compare your results with other students’ results.
  - What are some differences in how each ethnic/racialized group is portrayed and the themes associated with them?
  - What do the commonalities and differences in representation across various groups of people reveal about how privilege and inequality get embedded, constructed, and/or challenged through these representations?
Chapter 2. Cultivating Identity

Social relationships are cultivated in a variety of ways beyond personal or virtual interactions.

Option 1: The Social Life of Plants

The goal of this activity is to analyze human-plant interactions to identify the social significance of plants in our daily lives.

Plants mean more to people than just food. Think about the social meanings and roles that plants play in your life or in the lives of the neighborhoods and communities where you live. Go beyond the role of subsistence and nutritional needs. What are the deeper social meanings and roles of particular plants, e.g., religious/spiritual significances, establishing relationships, or identity expression?

- At a loss of where to start?
  - Consider the role that plants and gardening played among German Brazilian communities in this chapter as it related to establishing social relationships or to identity expression. How does that compare or contrast with your experiences?

- Share and discuss your reflections and results with the class.

Option 2: The Economy of Aesthetics around You

The goal of this activity is to analyze the implicit and explicit messages communicated by the design of a space to those who occupy or pass through the space. This activity can be completed individually or in small groups. Each individual or group will decide on a public space to conduct participant observation in for the project and will compare their findings.

Physical spaces are not just backdrops to our lives but influence and are incorporated into social interactions and relationships. Select a public space that you spend time in and conduct participant observation in that space. Draw a map of the space. As you take participant observation notes and map the area, try to capture as much detail as possible, including signs, design features, colors, and other sensory experiences besides the visual (e.g., textures, smells, sounds, temperatures), and how the space is used and by whom.

- Review carefully the design features and layout as well as your participant observation notes. What do the design features and layout communicate about how the space should be used and by whom (think about all forms of diversity from various identities, states in life, physical mobilities, ages, etc.)? Elaborate on specific design features and observations to support your analysis.

- Share your map and analysis with the class or in small groups and ask for feedback. Identify and discuss the economy of aesthetics that is operating in the space you studied.
• In various cases, either your results or the comparison activity will highlight problematic areas of the space’s design (e.g., accessibility issues or messages of exclusion). Discuss ways in which the aesthetics of the space could be adjusted to address these issues.
Chapter 3. Polkaing in Brazil

If an image is worth a thousand words, how much does that make an experience worth? How can it be put into words?

Option 1: Translating Experience to Words

The goal of this activity is to develop a way to capture and convey to other individuals emotion-laden lived experiences, which can be an important step for beginning to understand lived experiences.

Metaphors and similes can help capture in a few words an emotional experience and help “translate” it for others. For example, as a college student I used to volunteer and play the organ for public events. Sometimes my nerves got the best of me, and my performance was like an old car starting on a cold morning. It was not always a smooth start; there were “backfires” as I accidently hit a wrong note until I “warmed up” and my nervousness subsided.

Think about a personal performance or another type of experience that produced one or more emotions that you are comfortable revealing to others. Write a metaphor or simile that captures the experience. Share your metaphor/simile and its explanation in class or through your course’s online platform or submit it individually.


Option 2: Understanding through Doing

The goal of this activity is to integrate lived experiences from participant observation with interview data and library research to identify the deeper meanings embedded in the emotions and experiences of an activity, such as dance.

Why do individuals participate in a particular dance genre? What are the deeper meanings, particularly surrounding the emotions and experience itself, for those who engage in it? To answer these questions,

- Select a dance form and try it out for at least one hour in any capacity you are physically able. You can divide your time across several informal or formal dance lessons or join others at a dance venue. No place to go dancing? Explore YouTube or another online venue for dance lessons and livestreamed or recorded dance events.

- Right after the experience, take detailed notes on what came to mind as you were participating in the dance; describe how the experience felt and the emotions that arose.

- Write several interview questions to explore the deeper meanings that this dance genre holds for participants.
Conduct some background research on the selected dance form to help you prepare your questions.

Consider asking dancers to describe their experiences with the dance and the associated emotions, why they participate in it, and the meanings it holds for them.

Consider trying some of the approaches and questions that are used in this chapter to understand the meanings tied to the form and emotions of the featured dance.

- Using the questions you prepared, interview several people who engage in that dance form regularly.

- Reflection questions: In what ways is this dance form and the emotions and experiences associated with it connected to individuals’ identities? How did your understanding or appreciation of the dance form change as a result of your experiences? In what ways did your knowledge of the associated cultural heritage(s) and communities expand or change as a result of your experiences and research?

- Example of an online samba dance lesson: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eExaVKey00E

This activity is based in part on the following video and assignment by Michael Wesch: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ev_wk5IDsT8
Chapter 4. Oktoberfest in Brazil

Tourism sites and events can sometimes be dismissed as just fun spaces, but as this book illustrates, they are spaces that have the power to potentially influence social relations and identity negotiation. As we near the end of the book, it is your turn to take the lead. The goal of this activity is to apply anthropological frameworks to analyze the social power running through a tourism site/event you will visit or have visited.

Making Sense of Sensescapes:

Using the observational and analysis skills you have been developing with the preceding activities, conduct participant observation and interviews at a tourism site/event or conduct an analysis of a tourism site/event you have recently visited through your own photos, videos, and memories of the tourism site and that of other individuals who have shared their experiences online in blogs, videos, and other formats. Combine this information with library research. Apply the economy of aesthetics framework to analyze the chosen tourism sensescapes.

- Whose identities and what specific public images (e.g., tourists, local groups, and/or nations) are being negotiated and how?

- What are the potential “double” or multiple meanings associated with the imagery, design, sensory experiences, and emotions of the tourism site/event? Who is included and who is excluded? How might these exclusions be addressed?

- What are some additional related impacts (e.g., economic, political, health, or environmental) of the tourism sensescapes for those who live in, work in, or visit the area?