

Jolen Martinez

Fondren Use Essay

In writing the paper, **Materials of Movement: Homeless bodies and mobile technologies in a feminist new materialist lens**, I wanted to incorporate multiple different disciplinary approaches to de-naturalizing “transience” in homelessness. I first conducted ethnographic research in Spring 2018 and continued to do so until Spring 2019. These included semi-structured interviews, sustained observation, surveys, and video ethnography. I transcribed and coded these notes and began to piece together a narrative about the materiality of homelessness. Simultaneously, I was conducting archival research in Houston libraries, and among online news articles to document the development of homeless mobilities in the city. This also included several meetings with City of Houston officials that informed me about ongoing ordinances against homeless populations and volunteer groups and serve them. From these primary sources, I proceeded to read relevant theoretical-methodological literatures to include in my analysis.

I conducted extensive archival research and comparative analysis at Fondren Library. Using OneSearch and WorldCat, I was able to find vast amounts of journal articles and books related to materialities in a wide variety of contexts. Joe Goetz, Fondren’s Information Literacy Librarian assisted me in locating particular journals and literatures that I weaved into this paper. By utilizing these different search mechanisms, I was able to fully adopt an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the intra-actions between homeless bodies and the materials, infrastructures, technologies, and spaces that they encounter. Ultimately, I drew heavily from Science and Technology Studies (STS), Feminist New Materialisms, Assemblage Theory (Deleuze and Guattari), and Cybernetics. Due to a recent increase in interest in materialities,

several of the books that I required at Fondren were unavailable. This led me to use the Fondren Interlibrary Loan tool to request several titles. I documented the books and journals that I found through the Fondren database in Zotero, where I was able to separate different sources into several themes that assisted the organization of my paper.

Additionally, I used the Digital Media Commons to rent out video equipment to conduct video ethnography of “transience”. This included capturing images of objects, materials, and technologies that homeless persons frequently use (pictures are offered in the paper). I also filmed rhythms of movement among carts, cars and pedestrians on the streets. These images and films were absolutely crucial to developing a more thorough understanding of transience. When I completed the first draft of my paper, I took it to the Center for Academic and Professional Communication (previously the CWOVC) for writing consultations. These appointments proved to be very useful for reducing excessive language and crafting much smoother transitions between different themes in the paper.

Word Count: 433