Term Paper Assignment:

Human Geography of California Cities

Paper: 100 Points (due Nov. 16) ; Outline: 10 points (due Oct 12)

Overview

The objective of this paper is to quantify and characterize the population of one of California’s urban areas. Research will be conducted and data presented based on one of the U.S. Census Bureau-defined metropolitan statistics areas (MSA). This data will cover population size, ethnicity and changes through time.

Focus on a particular ethnic or race group will serve to shift focus from broad trends to particular characteristics, opportunities and challenges. In effect, this will involve developing a narrative, based on research, that tells the story of a particular population group in the chosen urban area. Socio-economic conditions may be covered, as well as cultural characteristics such as language, art, or religion. This will entail describing the culture, perspectives and geographic imprint of a particular non-white ethnic group.

Step 1: Select Metropolitan Statistics Areas (MSA)

See Map for MSA names and area definitions. Instructor must approve choice to ensure coverage of all MSAs.

Step 2: Select an Ethnic Group for Detailed Investigation

You will begin the assignment by selecting an ethnic group and a specific city as the geographic area of your research. The five broad categories of non-European ethnic groups recognized by the U.S. Census: African-American, Asian, Pacific-Islander, Hispanic, Native American

Within these broad groups, you may select a specific ethnic group, for example Samoan, Korean, or Ethiopian. California has the most ethnically diverse population in the United States.

Step 3: What to Investigate

In characterizing the population of the chosen MSA, students will gather data on population size, ethnic composition (i.e., breakdown by ethnicity and race) and changes through time. This will be largely derived from census data (see links and resources below). Data will be interpreted and explained by the student, with graphs and maps used for support.

The focus on a particular ethnic group will focus on population trends as well as culture. Culture include perspectives, values, and unique expressions of this ethnic group.
changes through time, including migration history will be covered. Socio-economic characteristics of the ethnic group should be given consideration. Consider challenges this group faces and opportunities that exist for them, now and in the future. There is latitude in this section for students to focus attention on one or more aspects of culture and how it is reflected geographically.

The use of contrasting data is an effective way to present information about a particular group. Therefore, student will want to contrast data for their chosen ethnic group with those of another group, and perhaps in a different area. For example, when giving data such a population figures, contrast these with figures for other groups. Similarly, when citing unemployment data, include how this data compares with other groups in the city or in the wider region or state.

**Step 4: Conducting Research**

This is a research paper and students are expected to use several academic sources (books, articles, web sites). Links provided below may be used as sources for papers. Wikipedia and other online encyclopedias may be used as a starting point for research but may not be used as a source for this paper. Students may wish to use index cards to record facts and information derived from particular sources, which can then be easily organized to help construct and outline and the eventual paper.

All papers will include basic population or demographic information and maps. This information can be derived from the US Census American Factfinder, which includes MSA Data and MSA Population Change, 2012-2013.

One excellent source for census data is presented by Brown University US2010, which includes Population Change Data by MSA.

Another recommended source for is the Mapping 2010 Census (New York Times interactive atlas). This map-based data can be used to show changes in population size and ethnicity between 2000 and 2010 for a chosen area.

Use of city maps can help identify neighborhoods which can help to explain where this ethnic group is concentrated within your city.

A variety of sources provide economic data, including Labor Market Data for Metropolitan Area (State of California)

There are websites available from the library study guide available for this class at http://libguides.shastacollege.edu/geog7. These include sources that can acquaint you with various cultural groups and where they reside in California. Note that Assignment #2 listed on this site is from a different section of this class, so please disregard.
You can use your textbook as a reference but you must use other sources of information as well. Selby’s Chapters 7 and 8 for details about social and cultural groups. Chapter 11 also contains information about urban cultures. Chapters 9 and 10 discuss ways of making a living in California.

**Additional Websites to Support your Research**

- **A Portrait of California** – Statewide population and related data
- **Religion in America** (The Association of Religion Data Archives)
- **2010 U.S. Census Interactive Population Map** (op., race, ethnicity, age/sex, and household).
- **Public Policy Institute of California: New Patterns of Immigrant Settlement in California**
- **Public Policy Institute of California: A Portrait of Race and Ethnicity in California**
- **Population Change**: “Patterns of Population Change in California 2000-2010,” Allen James and Eugene Turner
- **Language Use**, 2011, Language Mapper, U.S. Census Bureau

**Step 4: Create an Outline from Information Gathered (Outlines due October 12)**

You will create an outline in order to organize the content of your research in preparation for writing your paper. Your outline will include major topical headings with 3 to 4 sub-topics for each. Additional details can be provided underneath each sub-topic as needed. You have flexibility in the format and content of your outline, but to give you some guidance I’ve created a list of general topics which you are free to use and modify as needed.

At the end of your outline include several sources, along with at least two maps and/or figures.

**Step 5: Writing the Paper (due November 16)**

Working from the detailed outline, students will develop a coherent paper with introduction, body and conclusion sections. Students are advised to clearly state in the opening paragraph the purpose of the paper and what will be presented. This should be rather general with details to follow. Following the introductions, students should provide an geographic overview of the MSA with supporting maps. Include major cities, dominant physical features or characteristics (e.g., climate or vegetation), and relative location. Student are encouraged to use underlined headings to organize the paper (approximately 4 or 5 in number).
The body of the paper will present population size, composition (e.g., ethnicity, age) and population change through time. Provide context and explanation of the reasons for changes where possible. Next student will elaborate on specifics related to a particular ethnic group, with support from articles addressing the unique concerns and circumstances of this group.

A conclusion is an essential part of a successful paper. What are the take home messages? What essential information was presented and what does it tell us? Close with a general, “big picture” statement.

Papers are to be written in the 3rd person perspective without use of “I”, “me”, and other personal pronouns.

Hardcopy and digital versions of the paper will be submitted.

The paper is to be 2,000 to 2,500 words in length, typed, and double-spaced. Paper should use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. All sources will need to be cited including the textbook for this class. Use the MLA citation style as a simple way to cite sources. Sources may be cited in the body of the text or in footnotes at the bottom of the page and in Works Cited at the end of the paper.

The Shasta College Writing Center has free handouts on MLA style. The Writing Center has writing tutors to assist you in drafting, editing, and polishing your paper. You can make an appointment to talk to a tutor by phone or in person.

Shasta College has excellent research librarians who can help you locate sources for this project also. You can contact the librarians in-person, via e-mail and telephone. Shasta College also subscribes to a number of article databases that are free to Shasta College students. Go to the main Shasta College website. Click on “Library.” From the library’s menu on the left side, select “Articles and Databases” and follow the links.

**Plagiarism**

Your paper must be a product of your own research and writing. If you caught using the words and ideas of others and have not used quotation marks with citations, you are plagiarizing and your will receive a “0” for this assignment. This also applied to purchasing research and research papers from vendors or using “free” research papers online. All of these practices are against Shasta College’s Student Conduct rules.

You may not use long quotations from sources either. A long quotation is defined as more than fifty words from a source. Several direct quotes that are more than 50 words each in a 2000 word paper are not appropriate because the work reflects less your thinking and writing and more the thinking and writing of someone else.