

ENGLISH 100: Composition

Inst. Roger Farr

Study Guide for "Woodsquat."

I've put this special issue of the SFU journal *West Coast Line* on the syllabus for two reasons: 1) because it deals with a broad and urgent topic ("homelessness") from a local perspective; 2) because it is an excellent example of thorough and thoughtful research. It also raises several important questions about researchers' relationships to "their object of study", and about what responsibilities researchers might have when they undertake a project that has immediate social and political implications.

Below are the readings and questions you will be responsible for in class. Please be prepared to discuss these in class next week. Items marked with an asterix (*) are potentials for the quiz. Some of the questions will be used as in-class writing exercises.

Readings (in this order):

1. "Intro & Acknowledgements", Aaron Vidaver p. 7.
2. "Woodsquat" (comic), Trevor M, p. 106.
- *3. "Showing Stories to Ill-Informed Public", Diana Leung, p. 222.
- *4. "Squatting as an organizational Tool", Lisa Wulwick, p. 18.
- *5. "Beyond the Collar of Blight", Jeff Sommers, p. 20.
6. "Campbell is the WTO Virus", Claude Maurice, p. 128 (see also photo on p. 192).
7. "Roughing it in the City", Craig Ballantyne, p. 88.
8. "We Need to Be Left Alone", Lyn Tooley, p. 150.

Questions:

1. What is the rationale behind this collection? Which sentence states the editor's purpose? Is the rationale clear? Could this introduction have been longer? Explain.
2. Is the comic history effective? Why would the editor use this particular genre to tell the history of the squat, instead of a more traditional "timeline"?
3. Consider your own ideas about homelessness, or other "social problems" in the context of Leung's essay. Do you ever experience "compassion fatigue"?
4. Identify Wulwick's definition of "squatting." Does this definition support her title and conclusion? How could squatting be both a kind of "living" and "a tool" at the same time?
5. What contribution does Jeff Sommers' essay make to the collection?
6. The last three readings are statements from a few of the people who were living at the Woodwards squat. Why do you think the editor included these contributions? Do they confirm or contradict the other readings? Which ones?
7. Compose your own question for the editor: