

Shopping Anthropology – Field Report



Weebly Posting Due On-Line by 5:00 PM, Saturday, OCTOBER 5, 2013. (THIS IS AN EXTENSION OF THE ORIGINAL DUE DATE)

Select three major retail outlets in your area. They should be recognizable franchises with a national presence either as free-standing “big box” stores (Wal-Mart, Best Buy) or major-name department stores such as those which “anchor” a shopping mall.

Visit each of the stores and examine the layout using the format and concepts forwarded by Paco Underhill in “The Science of Shopping”.

WRITTEN REPORT: You will post a written report of your three visits, broken into three separate entries and adhering to the following format. For EACH store:

- **OVERVIEW:** Briefly describe the store in general... name, location, its presence in the market (“...is a well-known retailer of clothing for fashionable, middle-class women living in urban and suburban regions...” “...is a well-known retailer of mid-priced home entertainment components located in major commuter hubs...” etc.). Look up your retailer on Wikipedia and provide information concerning how long they have been in business, their headquarters, area served, and most recent revenue figures (for now, accept the Wikipedia figures as accurate). This should be about a paragraph.
 - o **PHOTOGRAPH** the exterior

- **ANALYSIS:** Assess to what degree the store utilizes Underhill’s strategies in the way the store is laid out and organized.
 - o **PHOTOGRAPH** the various areas in the store that utilize Underhill’s concepts (e.g., “the Decompression Zone”)
 - o **IN ADDITION/ALTERNATIVELY** (optional), make short video clips of these strategies (e.g., moving “invariant right”, “petting” etc.)
 - o **OBSERVE** and describe customer behavior. How are they responding to the “cues” the store has laid out for them? Are any of them struggling with the store’s layout? (In other words, does the store fail to utilize Underhill’s strategies? This may be true of only a certain part of the store.). How do the subjects behave? Any “petting”? Are there “negotiations” going on between participants in the shopping excursion?
 - DO NOT PHOTOGRAPH or VIDEO customers without their permission!
 - YOU MAY use a friend to demonstrate shopping behavior and photograph or video them.

- **FINDINGS:** Write up your findings as three separate reports. The ideal minimum page length would be approximately 1.5 to 2 pages per report (double spaced word processing document).

- Post your findings for each of the stores (treat them separately) on a page of your Weebly site titled “Shopping Anthropology – Field Report”
 - o Include your visuals in the posted report

IMPORTANT: *Avoid doing anything that would interfere with the running of the store's business. If you are approached by a clerk or other representative of the store, tell them that you are working on a project for a class. If they ask you to stop photographing or to leave, COMPLY immediately and move on to another location. (In practice, this has never happened, nonetheless, please use common sense!)*