coms 217 methods portfolio

Assignment: To practice using several methods for understanding communication in organizations.

Objectives:
- To appreciate the range of tools available for understanding communication in organizations
- To practice various methods of assessing communication in organizations
- To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various methodologies

Directions:
Students will craft a portfolio of data gathered using various research methodologies. Portfolios should have four entries using four different methodologies. These entries will be turned in at several points during the semester for feedback before being turned in at the end of the semester in a formal format (see below). Students are strongly encouraged to use the data gathered to inform their final end of semester research project.

Because of the complexities of each method and the range of organizations being studied, students should use their discretion to meet the assignment objectives. For instance, if one student turned in a transcribed in-depth 1 hour interview and another student turned in four transcribed 15-minute interviews, both could reasonably achieve the assignment's goals. Do what makes sense for your overall research project/interests, and keeping in mind methodological rigor.

At minimum, each entry should include:
- A short description of the overall project (if developed) and the organization being studied
- The guiding research question or goals for the data collection
- A description of methods undertaken including, where relevant, any instruments, questionnaires, guides, etc.
- Data gathered (for instance, a transcribed interview; interpreted survey or questionnaire data; results of a metaphor analysis; full formal fieldnotes for an observation)
- A short reflection on the data gathering process including thoughts/feelings during data gathering, the ease or difficulty of the method, how well the method was suited to the research goal, what you would have done differently if given the chance

Final Portfolios
Students will turn in their portfolio entries for feedback at various points throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, students will turn in revised entries (where necessary) into a formal portfolio (such as a small ½ inch binder or folder). Students should also include a brief reflection paper (2-ish pages) summarizing their overall experience with the project, and comparing and contrasting the various methods tried.

Assessment Criteria
Portfolio entries will be evaluated on the quality of data and/or analysis, demonstrated methodological rigor, and insightfulness in self-reflections

Final Due Date/Presentation: May 9