Quiz 9: Due November 22 in class.

To prepare for Project 3, your research paper on ‘cultures of circulation,’ we would like you to develop your project in greater detail. We will be grading the final project in terms of:

Thesis statement (aka hypothesis or problematic): 5 pts

Argument: 5 pts

Use of evidence: 5 pts

Presentation and organization: 5 pts

We would like you to work on the first three aspects in the context of this quiz.

**First**: One way to think of the thesis statement is in terms of a question, hypothesis, or problematic that can be tested, evaluated, or even disproved. It sets up guidelines for your inquiry, allowing you to pose questions, construct an argument, and work through evidence and observations. Naturally, a thesis statement also grows out of your knowledge of the topic, and as such, can also be modified during your research or fieldwork.

The following examples are intended as loose suggestions, not rigid instructions. Many of you may adopt a very different kind of thesis, but it should be recognizable as a thesis.

In the context of manga cafés, for instance, based on some preliminary reading and observations, you might ask: do regular customers of this manga café frequent it simply because they want to read more manga, or because they want an experience of manga comprising a broader set of relations, or both? Stated as a loose hypothesis rather than a question, you might say: customers seem to think of manga cafés as a social place more than as a place to read, even though they read a lot, but I want to find out if this is indeed the case.

In the context of cosplay, again based on some preliminary reading and observations of a particular venue, you might ask something like: do these cosplayers seem more interested in being seen and controlling attention or more interested in acting out manga worlds with other performers? Or is there a mixture of interests?

Of bookstores or libraries, you might begin by asking: to what extent is store space repurposed for manga customers, and to what extent do manga customers ‘repurpose’ the store space?

**Second**: once you develop a working hypothesis or problematic, you can pose a series of smaller questions or sub-questions that will help you explore your thesis. These provide the basis for your argument. Here are some suggestions, neither exhaustive nor set in stone.

Of a manga café, you might ask, are there different kinds of customers? What does the owner or servers think about this matter (if you interview)? Do you see something different happening? How is the space laid out? Does it encourage socialization and if so, of what kind? What sorts of manga are available? What is popular and with whom?

Similar sub-questions arise in the context of cosplay. Are there different kinds of cosplayers in this particular venue? How do they interact among themselves? How do they interact with ‘viewers’? Do players and viewers see the event in the same way? How is the event laid out, in time and in space?

Likewise, with bookstores or libraries: is the space re-purposed? Is it deliberately open to repurposing or not? What is the space like, and does it present limits? How do readers or customers respond to limits? What is the collection like? What sorts of opportunities and limits does it afford?

The general questions posed in class can also be used for sub-questions:

—To what extent do consumers become makers?

—Where and how is value created? What matters, what counts? How is the ‘making’ judged?

—What kind of profit or return is there for making or repurposing?

—What kinds of community are implied?

—What kinds of hierarchy?

—Who recognizes its value and how?

**Third**: the course materials and lectures have offered a range of sources and questions. And so we would like you to select what materials from class are relevant to your project, as a start on your bibliography. If you’re doing cosplay or Comiket, there are a number of directly relevant sources, and we expect you to use them. For other topics, you may need to be more imaginative with the sources, perhaps using them for setting up contrasts or giving general information. You can go outside course materials of course, but it may not be necessary either.

In sum, for quiz 9, you will need to give us: (1) a paragraph with your thesis statement and an explanation of it; (2) a series of sub-questions upon which you will build your argument, with some explanation of how you will pursue these questions; and (3) a list of relevant sources with a brief explanation of how they are relevant.

**NOTE**:

—if you are doing a manga, you still need to do this exercise. If you have questions about how to do this, please discuss it with your facilitator.

—if you are doing a presentation, you must confirm this with us at this time. Many of you wrote ‘paper or presentation’ on Quiz 8. You need to decide now so we can schedule your presentation.