

CENSUS TRACT ANALYSIS AND FIELD WORK ASSIGNMENT

Geography 1101

In this assignment, you will collect, analyze, and write about the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the place where you live. The assignment consists of two parts:

- 1) Generating and reporting information about your census tract and the Atlanta metropolitan area from the U.S. Census Bureau.
- 2) Describing and analyzing the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of your census tract, with a comparison to the metropolitan area in general, in a 2 ½- 3 page report, based on field work and the census information.

The two geographical units we will focus on in this assignment are the **census tract** and the **metro area**. A census tract is an area of roughly the same number of people established by the U.S. Census Bureau for collecting data. Most census tracts have around 5,000 people – reflecting a fairly small area but often with the ability for the census to report detailed data without compromising confidentiality. **Metro Areas** are collections of central cities and surrounding counties that are linked together economically. The Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell Metro area included 28 counties in the 2010 Census.

PART I. The first part of the assignment will be to find, write down, and print out statistics that relate to your own census tract as well as the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell Metro area. You will record these statistics on the chart provided to you.

To get started, go to the Census Bureau Factfinder Page:

<http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

Scroll down on the right hand side until you come to a link that says “**Find census data by adding a street address.**” A small grey pop-up window will appear midway between the center and the bottom of the screen. Enter your street address, city, state and zip code and then press “Go.” (Do not include an apartment number in your address.) A “getting data” window will appear and wait until this window disappears. The grey window will now have expanded. Scroll down and under Geography Name, click on Census Tract _____. This is the **seventh** row down, and your census tract will have a number like 501.02 or 96. The “getting data” window will appear again briefly. Jot down your census tract number for future reference.

The next thing you want to do is pull up a map of your census tract, to make sure that the census identified your area correctly and, more important, because this map will delineate the boundaries of the area on which you will concentrate your report and your field work. To get the map, on the same row where you see the word “address” in the middle, the word “map” will appear directly to the right. Click on the word “map.” and the map of your census tract will appear. Print out this map (using the print icon on the right hand side of the screen), as you will be required to turn it in with your assignment. It will ask you for a title of your map....give it a title of “Census Tract _____.” After you print out your map, close out the census map and both the map and the grey window will disappear, leaving a mostly blue page with a list of many census data sets.

For this assignment, we will use four data sets that come from the **2015 ACS 5-year estimates**. (The ACS – or American Community Survey – is a statistical sampling of households that collects more detailed and timely data than the decennial censuses that are conducted every 10 years.) These data sets used to appear on the first page, but now they take a bit of clicking to find them. On the row where you see the word “Selected:” scroll over to the right where you see the numbers 1-5. You will need to click on the number 5, then 7, then 9, and on and on, until you get to **page 44**. The data sets we are using are about half way down on the page – DP02 (Selected Social Characteristics in the United States), DP03 (Selected Economic Characteristics), DP04 (Housing Characteristics), and DP05 (ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates.) *Do not use the search bar at the top of the page to find the data sets. Although it would seem a much more efficient way of finding these data sets, it will not find any search results for a few of the data sets and also may bring up data sets for incorrect years.*

Since you can only download and/or print three data sets at a time, first click on the first three boxes – DP02, DP03 and DP04, and then click “View.” Then on the right hand, click on the grey box that says “View all as PDF.” (Alternately, if you want to download these charts to a flash drive or your computer, you can click on “Download” and then choose PDF as the format you want to use. The reason I am suggesting using just 3 files at a time is that if you want to view or download more than that, you need to create a zip file, which can be problematic.) Then you will want to scroll back, using the backspace, to the list of data sets. De-select DP02, DP03, and DP04 and select DP05. Then perform the same functions - “View,” “View all as PDF,” or “Download” and choose “PDF.” *You will be required to print out these 4 data sets and attach them to your assignment when you turn it in.*

You will then need to find the appropriate data on the chart and record it on the blank sheet I have provided to you. Write it in the “Census Tract” column and write the number of your census tract at the top. For a few pieces of data, I have asked you to “collapse” some of the information into fewer categories, so you will need to manipulate the figures for all of the items indicated by a * in the first column. This is not difficult, and will only require you to add the data from a few rows together. For example, to get the % 5-19 years, you need to add the percentages together for 5-9 years, 10-14 years, and 15-19 years. (For example, if these figures were 3%, 4% and 5%, respectively, the combined total you would record on the chart would be $12\% = 3\% + 4\% + 5\%$.)

In reporting the data, make sure you are careful to look in the correct column and the correct table. In some cases I have asked you to report raw numbers and in other cases I have asked you to report percentages.

Now that you have completed finding the data for your particular census tract, you also need to record the same data for the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell Metro area. As this information will be the same for every student, **I have uploaded these files into the Census Assignment in iCollege**. You will then record the identical information for the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell Metro Area. While you will may want to print these out for ease of use, it is not required, and you do **not** need to turn these metropolitan area data sets for your assignment. Record the statistical data in the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell Metro Area column of the blank sheet I provided. This will complete the data gathering and recording part of the assignment.

PART II: For this part of the assignment, I want you to write an essay, **2 -3 pages long**, analyzing the characteristics of your census tract. This part will require you to do some “field work” and to analyze the data for your particular census tract and compare it to the Atlanta metro area data. In the first section, you should tell me **WHERE** your census tract is located – its precise location **relative** (in distance and direction) to downtown Atlanta or another landmark such as a major freeway intersection. (Do **NOT** give me driving directions to your house. I am looking for a straightforward sentence such as – My home is located 13 miles southeast of downtown Atlanta.) Then you need to do some “field work” by driving or walking around and making some general observations. Make sure to generate the map of your census tract so you know the specific area to examine. (It may just be one small section of the town or city where you live). Then, based on your field work, you will describe the physical characteristics of your tract (is it hilly or flat, does it include a river or lake, do major transportation routes go through it?). You should also describe the major land uses – for example, is your area primarily residential (single-family and/or multi-family) or does it include a major mall, industrial areas, offices or a park? Finally, what do you observe about the general economic and social characteristics of your census tract? (For example, is the housing new or old, expensive or modest, what ethnic/racial groups are predominant?). Who lives there – what particular racial and/or ethnic groups? Could you make a guess of the types of incomes and jobs of the people who live in your area? How would you describe the “cultural landscape” of your area? If and only when appropriate, you can pull in some of the concepts about American cities we learned in Chapter 3 – gentrification, edge cities, new urbanism, etc. Do **NOT** feel that you need to make reference to these concepts if they do not fit your census tract. This section should be at least one page long.

For the rest of the essay, you will use your census data to provide more specific information about your census tract. You will want to point out the ways that the data for your census tract is similar to and differs from the overall figures for the Atlanta Metro Area, which essentially represents an “average” for the entire metropolitan area. Is the age structure of your census tract similar to or different from the average for the metropolitan area? Are the rates of home ownership, the income levels and occupations, the percentage of family and non-family households, and household and family sizes similar? Are the racial and/or ethnic characteristics significantly different from the MSA figures? Do the census tract statistics seem to accurately reflect what you observe in your field observations?

You should end your essay with a brief, summarizing conclusion.

The essay should be 2 ½ to 3 pages in length. It can be longer, but probably no more than 5 pages. It should be double-spaced, written in Times New Roman print with a size 12 font, and one-inch margins. It should be well organized, divided into paragraphs, and free from grammatical errors. You do not need a cover page; put your name and class time in the upper right hand corner. As you only have one written source (the U.S. census), you do not need a sources page.

Grading

The assignment will be worth 100 points (out of 800), or 13.3 percent of your total grade for the class. **Part I** will count for **35 points**, and your score will be based on the accuracy of your data and inclusion of the printouts I have requested. **Part II** will count for **65 points**. Essays receiving the highest grades will be informative, well organized, and will give me a sense of the important and/or distinctive characteristics of your census tract. High scoring essays will also be balanced with roughly half of the paper derived from your field work and half of the paper derived from your census tract analysis. **Students will be graded as follows: 3 points for a clear statement of relative location, 25 points for the field observation, 25 points for the census analysis, and 12 points for style and grammar.**

Pulling this information together and synthesizing it into a readable report takes time – don't wait until the last minute! In addition, do not wait until the last minute to visit the census web site to begin collecting and recording the census data. If you are experiencing technical issues, or don't understand the directions, you need to find that out before the night before the assignment is due.

Turning in the Assignment:

You should turn in the assignment, stapled or clipped together, in the following order, from front to back:

- 1) **Your essay (at least 2 ½ pages). Write your name and “Geography 1101” in the top right hand corner.**
- 2) **Your filled out chart with data from your census tract and the metro area.**
- 3) **The map of your census tract and the four data sets for your census tract (do not hand in a map or the data sets for the metropolitan area).**

CENSUS DATA WORKSHEET FOR STUDENTS

CHART	CENSUS CHARACTERISTIC	CENSUS TRACT #	Atlanta-Sandy Springs- Roswell Metro Area
DP05	Total population		
DP05	% under 5 years	%	%
DP05*	% 5-19 years	%	%
DP05*	% 20-44 years	%	%
DP05*	% 45-64 years	%	%
DP05	% 65 + years	%	%
DP05	Median Age		
DP05	Race - % White	%	%
DP05	Race - % Black or African-American	%	%
DP05	Race - % American Indian	%	%
DP05	Race - % Asian	%	%
DP05	Race - % Native Hawaiian	%	%
DP05	Race - % Two or more races	%	%
DP05	% Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	%	%
DP02	% family households	%	%
DP02	% non-family households	%	%
DP02	Average Household Size		
DP02	Average Family Size		
DP02	Marital status – Males % now married, except separated	%	%
DP02	Marital status – Females % now married, except separated	%	%
DP02	Educational attainment - % high-school graduate or higher	%	%
DP02	Educational attainment - % bachelor’s degree or higher	%	%
DP02	Residence 1 year ago – same house	%	%
DP02	Place of birth - % born in U.S.	%	%
DP02	Place of birth - % born in different state	%	%
DP02	Place of birth - % Foreign-born	%	%
DP02	% of foreign born from Europe	%	%
DP02	% of foreign born from Asia	%	%
DP02	% of foreign born from Africa	%	%
DP02	% of foreign born from Oceania	%	%

DP02	% of foreign born from Latin America	%	%
DP02	% of foreign born from Northern America	%	%
DP03	Employment status - % of population over 16 in labor force	%	%
DP03	% management, business, science and arts occupations	%	%
DP03	% service occupations	%	%
DP03	% sales and office occupations	%	%
DP03	% natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	%	%
DP03	% production, transportation, and material moving occupations	%	%
DP03*	Income 2015: % total households less than \$25,000	%	%
DP03*	Income 2015: % total households \$25,000 - \$49,999	%	%
DP03*	Income 2015: % total households \$50,000 - \$99,999	%	%
DP03*	Income 2015: % total households over \$100,000	%	%
DP03	Median household income	\$	\$
DP03	% below poverty level in last 12 months – all families	%	%
DP03	% below poverty level in last 12 months – all people	%	%
DP04*	% Housing units: 1 unit (detached and attached)	%	%
DP04*	% Housing units: 2 – 19 units	%	%
DP04	% Housing units: 20+ units	%	%
DP04*	% Structures built 2000 or later	%	%
DP04*	% Structures built 1960 - 1999	%	%
DP04*	% Structures built before 1960	%	%
DP04	Median Rooms		
DP04	% owner-occupied housing units	%	%
DP04	% renter-occupied housing units	%	%
DP04	Median dollar value – owner-occupied housing units	\$	\$
DP04	Median gross rent – occupied units paying rent	\$	\$

* For all rows with a * in the first column, values will need to be modified by adding two or more columns together.