

English 286

“What Does It Mean to Buy a Book?”

Your first assignment for this class is to go to the local, independent feminist bookstore Charis and buy your course books.

You can access Charis by using MARTA or by car. You may want to talk with other members of the class to see whether they plan to make a trip sometime in the next week.

When you get to Charis, take some time to look around the store. Notice differences between this store and the Follette bookstore on Spelman’s campus. Talk to at least one staff member. What do you learn by exploring this location?

During and after your trip to Charis, take notes. You can think of these as your first field notes as a qualitative researcher in this class. To complete this exercise, write at least two pages which address the following questions (feel free to use informal language):

- What was your first response to being asked to buy books at a bookstore in Atlanta rather than at Spelman’s bookstore?
- How did you organize your trip to Charis? What resources did you have to call upon?
- What was your experience at Charis like? Note what you saw, felt, did, and learned. With whom did you speak? What were your responses to different areas of the store (e.g. the tea/coffee area; the places to sit; the magazines; the book displays; the calendars of events and flyers posted around the store)?
- Once you’ve returned from the bookstore, add some reflections on the trip. What did it cost (in terms of time, money, inconvenience)? What were the benefits, if any?
- Last, do some analysis: why do most colleges have bookstores on campus? How do they benefit? What power does this give them? What choices do you, as a student, have as a participant in your education?

Charis Books & More

1189 Euclid Avenue

Atlanta, GA 30307

Tel: (404) 524-0304

<http://charis.booksense.com/NASApp/store/IndexJsp>

Hours: Monday and Tuesday (10:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.); Wednesday (10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.); Thursday (10:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m.); Friday and Saturday (10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.); Sunday (12 p.m.-6 p.m.)