

Ethnography and Criminal Justice  
Criminal Justice 73370  
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Office: Room 520 - T Building  
SPRING 2004

Introduction:

This course will introduce students to the fundamental ideas and principles of ethnography, placing this research practice specifically in relationship to the study of crime and the social construction of deviance. In doing so, we will be evaluating and discussing the historical emergence of the ethnographic imagination and come to an understanding of how much the field has changed, how much it has contributed to criminological discourse and how much the conventional research establishment are still committed to keeping it in the margins.

The course will be divided into five parts. Part one (two weeks) will comprise a short introduction to the difference between naturalistic and/or interpretive methods of inquiry and those of positivism. Part two (three weeks) will be a survey of the early works of ethnographically based criminology which aims to show students a humanistic approach to seeing, explaining and representing crime, criminals, social control and social controllers. Part three (three weeks) will be an introduction to the different methodological interpretations of the ethnographic act and the attendant ethical, practical and political-philosophical issues associated with this kind of research. Part four (three weeks) will bring us up to date with contemporary ethnography through analyzing current works in the field. Part five (three weeks) will be reserved for students to present their work at whatever stage it has reached and discuss hands-on problems of doing ethnographic praxis. These presentations should be taken seriously and all members of the class are expected to participate with their own insights and constructive criticisms.

Requirements:

There will be two mid-terms, both take home exams, worth 15% of the grade. A final that is worth 25% and a research project also worth 25%. In class participation will be worth the remaining 20%. Hand-outs will be given in class and if you are absent there will not be copies. In other words, you will have to get them from class mate. If you are absent more than twice from a class this is an automatic fail or in extenuating circumstances an incomplete. You will be expected to have read all the work for each class ahead of time and I will orally test you on this knowledge from as I see fit. Remember, an essential part of this class is the commission of the ethnographic act. We are not here to ruminate in the abstract but “to do” inquiry through a reflexive approach to culture and the accomplishment of everyday life.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

**Texts:**

Elijah Anderson, Codes of the Street  
Philippe Bourgois, In Search of Respect

David Brotherton and Luis Barrios, The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation: The Transformation of a New York Street Gang.  
Anne Campbell, Girls in the Gang (on reserve)  
Louis Kontos, David Brotherton and Luis Barrios (editors), Gangs and Society: Alternative Perspectives  
Lisa Meyer, Sexed Work: Gender, Race and Resistance in a Brooklyn Drug Market  
Renato Rosaldo, Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis  
Jim Thomas, An Introduction to Critical Ethnography  
Sudhir Venkatesh, American Project

**Other Useful and Recommended Texts:**

J. Clifford & G. Marcus, Writing Culture: The Poetics & Politics of Ethnography  
N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, Handbook of Qualitative Research (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)  
R. Emerson, R. Fretz & L. Shaw, Writing Ethnographic Field Notes  
Y. Lincoln and E. Guba, Naturalistic Inquiry  
J. Van Maanen, Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography  
J. Ferrell & M.S. Hamm, Ethnography at the Edge

**Videos:**

“Flying Cut Sleeves” - R. Fecher and H. Chalfant  
“The Heart Broken in Two” - Dwight Conquergood

**Photo Exhibits:**

“A Family Album” - Steve Hart

**THE COURSE**

PART ONE

Week One: What is Ethnography?

Read: Levi Strauss - History and Anthropology;  
Jack London - People of the Abyss;  
Malinowski -Subject, Method and Scope of This Inquiry;  
Weber - The Interpretation of Social Reality,  
Liebow - Tally’s Corner;  
Geertz - The Interpretation of Cultures (all on reserve)

Week Two: Arguing with and against the cannon:

Read: Lincoln and Guba - Competing paradigms;  
Burawoy - The Extended Case Method;  
Schepher-Hughes - Tropical Sadness;  
Roberts - Naturalistic Research into Subcultures and Deviance;  
Hammersley and Atkinson - What is Ethnography?;  
Fleisher - Street Ethnography: Methods, Ethics and Politics (all on reserve)

PART TWO

Week Three: Representing the Poor and “Low Lifes” in Chicago

Read: Anderson - The Hobos for Life;  
Thrasher - Preface and Ganging from “The Gang.”;  
Shaw and Burgess - The Jack-Roller;  
Thomas - The Unadjusted Girl (all on reserve)

Week Four: The Other Classes:

Read: Sutherland, Cressey, Suttles (on reserve)  
Winick - Physician Narcotic Addicts

Week Five: Post World War Two Interpretations

Read: Becker - The Marijuana User;  
Firestone - Cats, Kicks and Color;  
Lewis - Introduction from “La Vida.”  
Werthman - Delinquency and Moral Character  
Whyte - On the Evolution of Street Corner Society; (on reserve)

PART THREE

Week Six: Seeing History and Documenting Life

Read: Chapters 13, 14 and 15 (Gangs and Society)  
John Berger - Seeing comes before words from “Ways of Seeing.” (on reserve)  
D. Harper - On the Authority of the Image; (on reserve).  
In-class video - Flying Cut Sleeves

Week Seven: Critical Ethnography

Read: J. Thomas - Critical Ethnography (required text),  
Conquergood - Rethinking Ethnography;  
Gouldner - The Partisan Sociologist  
Lincoln and Denzin - The Fifth Moment;  
Marcus - Contemporary Problems of Ethnography in the World System (all on reserve)  
In-class video - The Heart Broken in Two

Week Eight: Issues on Seeing, Remembering and Writing

Read: Rosaldo - Culture and Truth (Required text);  
Clifford - Partial Truths (on reserve);  
Pfohl and Gordon - Criminological Displacements (on reserve);

PART FOUR

Week Nine: The Orthodox Ethnography

Read: Elijah Anderson - Codes of the Street (Required Text),  
di Leonardo (on reserve)  
Sudhir Venkatesh - The American Project

Week Ten: Where are the Women?

Read: Lisa Maher - Sexed Work (Required Text),  
Campbell - Girls in the gang (Required Text),  
Chapters 9 and 10 (Gangs and Society) (required text)  
Harding - From the Woman Question in Science to the Science Question in Feminism;  
Haraway - Situated Knowledges  
McRobbie and Garber - Girls and Subculture  
Oleson - Feminisms and Models of Qualitative Research  
Speaker: Rachel Pfeffer

Week Eleven: The Testimony

Read: Brotherton and Barrios - Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation (required text)  
Conover - "School for Jailers from "New Jack." (on reserve)  
Sanchez - My Bloody Life (on reserve)

PART FIVE

Week Twelve: Student Presentations and Discussion on Entree

Read: Bourgois - In Search of Respect (required text)  
Adler & Adler- Observational Techniques  
Ferrell - Criminological Verstehen;  
McLeod, Appendix from the "Hallway Hangers";  
Wolcott - Confessions of a Trained Observer (all on reserve)

Week Thirteen: Student Presentations and Discussion on Sampling

Read: Duneier - A Statement on Method (on reserve)  
Guba and Lincoln - Implementing the Naturalist Inquiry (on reserve)

Week Fourteen: Student Presentations and Discussion on Analysis

Read: Wolcott - Description, Analysis and Interpretation (on reserve)