

THE URBAN ETHNOGRAPHIC TRADITION: THEORY, METHOD, STANDPOINT

CAAS 634 SOCIOLOGY 634

Tuesdays 1:00 p.m. -- 4:00 p.m.

Modern Language Building – Room 2010

Instructor: Professor Alford Young, Jr. (ayoun@umich.edu)

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00 -11:00 a.m. Thursday 3:00 -4:00 p.m.

This course provides a critical consideration of classic and contemporary literature in the urban ethnographic tradition, one of the oldest and most renowned subfields in sociology. Race and class-based social inequality are central themes in this tradition. Hence, the literature in this course will focus on these issues. More specifically, this course will involve an exploration of how social actors in various race and class categories react and respond to -- and, thus, ultimately help create -- different dimensions of the urban experience. The literature for this course includes classic Chicago School-style ethnographies, post-World War II era "realist" ethnographies, and contemporary works that reflect diverse theoretical and methodological orientations. Each work will be explored in terms of the three points of emphasis included in the course subtitle:

- 1) theoretical, which concerns the specific claims made in each work about culture and social organization,
- 2) methodological, which includes how different research tools (e.g., participant-observation, interviewing), research designs (e.g., the community study, streetcorner/public space study, small group study), and data-presentation techniques (e.g., depiction of whole characters, use of select quotes and fieldnotes) were employed in these works, and
- 3) standpoint, which refers to the narrative style employed in these works (i.e., whether and how researchers situate their own voices and persons in their works).

Finally, attention will be given to where and how each work fits into the intellectual history of ethnographic research and the social and cultural dynamics in American urban life at the time of its publication. The themes and perspectives will be considered through a series of short critical reaction papers. A final paper, a review essay on two books of your choosing, will incorporate all of the points of emphasis.

Course Assignments:

Four short papers (4-5 pages) 15% each

Final Paper (10-12 pages)	30%
*Class participation	10%

*Includes preparing and leading a class discussion on one of the readings

Course Materials:

(Available at Shaman Drum Bookstore and on reserve at the Shapiro and CAAS Libraries)

- Elijah Anderson Streetwise
- Philippe Bourgois In Search of Respect
- St. Claire Drake and Horace Cayton Black Metropolis
- W.E.B. DuBois The Philadelphia Negro
- Steven Gregory Black Corona
- John Hartigan, Jr. Racial Situations
- John Jackson, Jr. Harlemworld
- Eliot Liebow Tally's Corner
- Mary Pattillo-McCoy Black Picket Fences
- Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh American Project

Coursepack available at Excel on S. University

COURSE OUTLINE

Introducing Urban Ethnography: Situating Theory, Method, and Standpoint

January 11: General introduction to course design and objectives.

Reading due: None for this period

January 18: The Craft of Ethnography: Issues in Production and Analysis

- Reading due:
- "Ethnography and Ethnographic Representation" (coursepack)
 - "Writing: A Method of Inquiry" (coursepack)
 - "Ethnographies as Texts" (coursepack)
 - "Personal Writing in Social Research" (coursepack)
 - "Urban Ethnography: Situational and Normative Accounts" (coursepack)

The Emergence of the Urban Ethnographic Tradition

January 25: Initiating an Approach to Urban Ethnography

Reading due: W.E.B. DuBois The Philadelphia Negro chapters 1, 2, 6-9, 11, 12, 13, 18.
(recommended) The Philadelphia Negro chapters 3, 4, 5, 10, 14.

February 1: The Chicago School and the Community Study

Reading due: St. Claire Drake and Horace Cayton Black Metropolis chapters 6, 8-10, 14,
18, 19, 21-23.
(recommended) Black Metropolis chapters 1-5, 7, 11-13, 15, 16.

The Modern Urban Ethnographic Tradition

February 8: Culture and Social Organization in 1960s Urban Ethnography

Reading due: "Research in the Black Ghetto: A Review of the Sixties" (coursepack)
"Culture and Class in the Study of Poverty..." (coursepack)
"The Culture of Poverty" (coursepack)

Paper I Due

February 15: Culture and Social Organization in 1960s Urban Ethnography (continued)

Reading due: Eliot Liebow Tally's Corner

Contemporary Urban Ethnographic Approaches to Community

February 22: Race and Public Space

Reading due: Elijah Anderson Streetwise

March 8: Race, Class, and Community

Reading due: Mary Pattillo-McCoy Black Picket Fences
Paper II Due

March 15: Race, Class, and Community (continued)

Reading due: John Hartigan, Jr. Racial Situations

March 22: Race, Classes, and Community

Reading due: John Jackson, Jr. Harlemworld

March 29: Races, Classes, and Community (continued)

Reading due: Steven Gregory Black Corona chapters 1-6, 9
Paper III Due

Contemporary Urban Ethnographic Approaches to Poverty

April 5: Culture, Social Organization, and Political Economy

Reading due: Philippe Bourgois In Search of Respect chapters 1-4, 6, 7, 9
"Three Pernicious Premises in the Study of the American Ghetto"
(coursepack)

April 12: History, Social Organization, and Political Economy

Reading due: Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh American Project

Course Conclusion

April 19: Overview of the course

Readings due: "Working the Hyphens: Reinventing Self and Other..." (coursepack)
Paper IV Due

FINAL PAPER DUE:

**MONDAY APRIL 25, 2004
5:00 P.M.
SOCIOLOGY MAILBOX
1225 S. UNIVERSITY
2ND FLOOR**