

## AMST 350: Junior Seminar in Ethnic Studies (Theories & Methods) **UPDATED**

Fall 2009

Lec 10424R

M 2-4:50PM

GFS 109 [New Location]

**Professor:** Lanita Jacobs

Office: Grace Ford Salvatori Hall (GFS) 128

[Note: To get to my office, you must first enter the Anthropology Department at GFS 120]

Phone: 213-740-1909

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Office Hours: M/W 10-11AM; also by appointment. You can also contact me Monday-Friday via email.

Course Website: AMST 350 course materials are accessible through Blackboard; to access, click on:  
<https://blackboard.usc.edu/>

### Required Texts:

1. AMST 350 Reader (*Abbreviated as **RDR** in Reading & Exam Schedule*) [Available in Blackboard; select articles available via Ares Electronic Reserves.]
2. Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. (*Abbreviated as **Emerson** in Reading & Exam Schedule*)
3. Hurston, Zora Neale. 1990 [1935]. *Mules and Men*. New York: HarperCollins. (*Abbreviated as **Hurston** in Reading & Exam Schedule*)
4. Jackson, John L. 2001. *Harlemworld: Doing Race and Class in Contemporary Black America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (*Abbreviated as **Jackson** in Reading & Exam Schedule*)
5. Bryman, Alan. 2008. *Social Research Methods*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (*Abbreviated as **Bryman** in Reading & Exam Schedule*)

### Optional Texts:

1. Jacobs-Huey, Lanita. 2006. *From the Kitchen to the Parlor: Language and Becoming in African American Women's Hair Care*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Liebow, Elliot. 2003. *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. (*Abbreviated as **Liebow** in Reading & Exam Schedule*)
3. Rotella, Carlo. 2003. *Cut Time: An Education at the Fights*. New York: Houghton Mifflin. (*Abbreviated as **Rotella** in Reading & Exam Schedule*)

**Course Description:** This seminar will provide a broad overview of social research methods pertinent to the study of race, ethnicity, gender, and culture. In the first half of the course, attention will be devoted to qualitative and quantitative methods, including oral history interviews, ethnographic observation/field research, and surveys. We will also explore theories concerning “ethnicity” as both a social construct and constituent feature of peoples’ identities and lived experiences. In the second half of the course, we will examine the application of social research methods and theories in scholarship pertinent to American Studies.

**Grading:** There will be a midterm and final exam covering assigned readings, films, and guest speakers. The midterm is worth 25% (25 points) and the final exam is worth 40% (40 points) of your overall grade. Each of the exams will include short-answer and essay questions and will be non-cumulative. In addition, 10% (10 points) of your grade will be determined by your class participation. As such, you should aim to be punctual, and well-prepared to participate in class discussions. The remaining 25% (25 points) of your grade will be determined by a 5-7 page essay (excluding bibliography of 3-5 sources) due in my mailbox in GFS 120 by 5PM on **Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup>** (details below). A total of 4 extra-credit points can be earned on the midterm and final exam via a two-point Bonus Question. Bonus questions will be based primarily on “optional” readings.

**Paper Guidelines:** You have two options for this essay assignment: you can complete an oral history of a senior member (50+ years old) of your ethnic community OR a critical book review of either John L. Jackson's *Harlemworld: Doing Race and Class in Contemporary Black America*, Carlo Rotella's *Cut Time: An Education at the Fights*, Elliot Liebow's *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men*, or another ethnography approved by the professor. Those who complete oral histories should follow established guidelines for conducting oral history interviews (to be discussed in class) and critically synthesize the important lived experiences, lessons, and values that helped to shape the senior person's sense of self. Oral histories should also examine the extent to which the interviewee's sense of self has been or continues to be shaped by ethnicity, gender, class, etc. Those who complete book reviews should critically synthesize the book's thesis *in relation* to class readings and discussions concerning ethnographic methods and modes of analyses. Special attention should also be paid to the researcher's positionality, "voice," and demonstrated accountabilities as discernable in the text. All essays **must adhere** to the following format: double-spaced, 12 point-font, 1" top, bottom, right, and left margins, pages numbered consecutively in upper right hand corner. Also, late essays will only be accepted in exceptional cases and will be deducted a minimum of 3 points; additional points will be deducted for every day the paper is late. (Additional guidelines for book reviews and oral histories assignments will be posted in Blackboard.)

**Grading Scale:**

94-100 = A	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+	≥ 59 = F
90-93 = A-	84-86 = B	74-76 = C	64-66 = D	
	80-83 = B-	70-73 = C-	60-63 = D-	

**GRADE BASIS**

Midterm: 25%
Oral History or Book Review: 25%
Final Exam: 40%
Participation: 10%

**An Official Note on Examinations:** Make-up exams will only be given under extraordinary circumstances and will require documentation from a physician. The content and form of any make-up exam will be at my discretion. In any case, you should inform me via email or phone **prior** to missing an exam. If you feel you must reschedule an exam on account of having (a) two additional exams scheduled at the same time or (b) three exams in a 24-hour period, inform me *at least* two weeks prior to our scheduled mid-term. The final exam **must** be taken at the time noted below.

**Attendance:** A grading percentage will not be given for class attendance. However, consistent and punctual attendance in seminar is strongly encouraged to enhance (a) your understanding of course readings and (b) your ability to participate in seminar. Do note that it is *your* responsibility to be aware of class lectures and assignments. Should sickness, family emergencies, or other events necessitate your absence from class, I recommend that you consult your peers for lecture notes.

**Academic Accommodations:** Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability should register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when necessary documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible, preferably by or before fifth week. DSP is open Monday-Friday, 8:30AM-5PM. The office is in Student Union 301 and their phone number is 213-740-0776.

**Class Structure and Resources:** Class meetings will consist of lecture and discussion, with a clear emphasis on the latter. As such, it is essential that you keep up with the weekly readings and submit assignments on time. Resources for this course are available through Blackboard. Consult AMST 350 in Blackboard for access to the course syllabus, grades, Oral History or Book Review guidelines and examples, announcements, mock essay and short answer questions, exam study guides, and other helpful information.

## READING & EXAM SCHEDULE\*

- Wk. 1: 8/24**     **COURSE INTRODUCTION, SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ON ETHNICITY: *What are the parameters of social science research? What is ethnicity and how can it be studied?***
- *Class Overview:* Syllabus, Exam Policy, Essay Guidelines, etc.
  - Eriksen: What is Ethnicity? [in RDR]
  - **Bryman:** Chs. 1-2
  - Film: *Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (LVYDVD 1184)
- Wk. 2: 8/31**     **THEORY, METHODS, AND POLITICS OF RESEARCH: *What is theory? How are theory and method related? In what ways might research be political and/or politicized?***
- Eriksen: The Non-Ethnic [in RDR]
  - **Bryman:** Chs. 3-4
  - Song: Introduction [optional; in RDR]
- Wk. 3: 9/7**     **NO CLASS – LABOR DAY**
- Wk. 4: 9/14**     **QUALITATIVE RESEARCH – FIELD METHODS: *What is ethnography? How can questions concerning race and ethnicity, gender, and culture be studied qualitatively?***
- Agar: Who Are You To Do This? [in RDR]
  - Emerson: Chs. 2
  - Jacobs-Huey: Introduction: From the Kitchen to the Parlor [optional; in RDR]
  - **Bryman:** Ch. 14
- Wk. 5: 9/21**     **QUALITATIVE RESEARCH – FIELD METHODS & ANALYSES: *How can long-term fieldwork address questions concerning race/ethnicity, gender, and class? What methods and modes of analyses characterize qualitative research? What political issues should be considered when studying ethnic minorities?***
- Emerson: Chs. 5 and 7
  - Smith: Neither Victim Nor Villain [optional; accessible via Leavey Library Electronic Reserves]
  - Films: *Tuskegee* (LVYDVD 1543), *Capturing the Past: How to Prepare and Conduct an Oral History Interview* (LVYVID 767)
- Wk. 6: 9/28**     **QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH – RESEARCH DESIGN: *What are the parameters of quantitative research? Can studies of language and ethnicity employ quantitative and qualitative methods?***
- Jacobs-Huey: Is There an Authentic African American Speech Community? [in RDR]
  - **Bryman:** Ch. 6
  - Film: *In A Manner of Speaking* (LVYDVD 360)
- Wk. 7: 10/5**     **Midterm this Monday!**
- Wk. 8: 10/12**     **“THICK DESCRIPTIONS” & FAILURES IN THE FIELD: *Can researchers “fail”? What can be learned from their failures? How can “thick description” be used to convey these lessons?***
- Geertz: Thick Description [in RDR]
  - Jacobs-Huey: Learning through the Breach [in RDR]
  - Kent: Fieldwork that Failed [in RDR]
  - Visweswaran: Betrayal: An Analysis in Three Acts [optional; in RDR]
- Wk. 9: 10/19**     **VOICE & ACCOUNTABILITY: *How can researchers “speak” in more “accountable” ways?***
- Rosaldo: Subjectivity in Social Analysis [in RDR]
  - Rosaldo: Grief and a Headhunter’s Rage [in RDR]

**Wk 10: 10/26** **POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION:** *How is “everyday” Black culture reflected in early ethnographic/literary accounts? How did racial and gender politics influence the nature and perception of Hurston’s study of Black “folk” culture?*

- Hurston: Mules and Men, Part I
- Washington: Zora Neale Hurston: A Woman in Half Shadow [in RDR]
- Walker: Looking for Zora [optional; in RDR]
- Film: *Zora Neale Hurston: A Heart with Room for Every Joy* (LVYDVD 1450)

**Wk. 11: 11/2** **LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, CULTURE:** *How do stories serve to construct identity? How is narrative used to socialize cultural and moral behavior?*

- Bryman: Chapter 20 [OPTIONAL]
- Basso: Stalking with Stories [in RDR]
- Jacobs-Huey: Ch. 3 [optional; in [From the Kitchen to the Parlor](#)]
- Ochs & Capps: Narrating the Self [in RDR]
- Film: *Jesus Camp*

**Oral History/Critical Book Review Papers Due FRI 11/6 by 5PM in Jacobs-Huey's mailbox in GFS 120!**

**Wk. 12: 11/9** **RACE AND THE NATION:** *How are notions of race and nation interrelated? Specifically, how are notions of ethnicity, race, and “belonging” indexed in African American humor about 9/11 and the war on terrorism?*

- Du Bois: Introduction; On Our Spiritual Strivings [optional; in RDR]
- Gwaltney: Introduction; A Nation within a Nation [in RDR]
- Jacobs-Huey: Performance Review: Brandon Bowlin [optional; in RDR]
- Jacobs-Huey: “The Arab is the New Nigger” [in RDR]
- Film/Video: *Select Comedy Clips*

**Wk. 13: 11/16** **RACE, GENDER, AND AUTHENTICITY”:** *What constitutes one as a racially “authentic” or “inauthentic”? What role does gender and hair play in such constructions? How are notions of (racial) consciousness indexed in African American hairstyles and language?*

- Emerson et al.: Ch. 4
- Gwaltney: The Many Shades of Black [optional; in RDR]
- Jacobs-Huey: Ch. 4 - Gender and Authenticity in African American Standup Comedy [accessible via Levey Library Electronic Reserves]
- Film: *Select Comedy Clips*

**Wk. 14: 11/23** **NOTIONS OF RACE AND AUTHENTICITY:** *How are notions of “race” and “racial authenticity” represented in popular depictions of Asian Americans and European Americans? What is at stake in these representations?*

- Braxton: Hollywood Loves BBFs 4-Ever [in RDR]
- Jacobs-Huey: Moralizing Whiteness in *Joan of Arcadia* [in RDR]
- Kendell: [Understanding White Privilege](#) [available via hyperlink and/or Blackboard]
- Williams: My Best White Friend: Cinderella Revisited [optional; in RDR]
- Song: Ethnic Identities: Choices and Constraints [optional; in RDR]
- Film: Select Clips from *Joan of Arcadia*

**Wk. 15: 11/30** **RACE AND CLASS:** *How do people “do” race and class? What expectations do “native” scholars encounter while conducting fieldwork “at home”?*

- Jackson: Class(ed) Acts, or Class is as Class Does [Ch. 4 of [Harlemworld](#)]
- Jackson: An Ethnographic *Film/Flam* [in RDR]
- Jacobs-Huey: Ch. 7 [optional; in [From the Kitchen to the Parlor](#)]

**FINAL EXAM: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2-4PM, GFS 109**

## COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY (Textbooks in Bold)

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### AMST 350 Reader

Agar, Michael. 1996. Who are You to Do This? *In* The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (91-111). New York: Academic Press.

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Basso, Keith H. 1988 [1984]. “Stalking with Stories”: Names, Places, and Moral Narratives among the Western Apache’. *In* E.M. Bruner (ed.) Text, Play, and Story: The Construction and Reconstruction of Self and Society (19-55). Washington, D.C.: American Ethnological Society.

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**Bryman, Alan. 2008. Social Research Methods, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.**

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2002. What is Ethnicity? *In* Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Pluto Press.

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- Waters, Mary C. 1990. The Costs of a Costless Community. In *Ethnic Options* (147-168). Los Angeles: University of California Press.