

SOCIOLOGY 476: URBAN ETHNOGRAPHY

Wednesdays 2-5PM

Parkes 222

Professor Mary Pattillo

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-5pm, 5-111 Crowe Hall, see instructions below

Phone: 847-491-3409 (Sociology), 847-491-2036 (AFAM)

E-mail: m-pattillo@northwestern.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In many ways, sociology was borne because of 19th Century urbanization and the preoccupations of observers who thought that big cities were uprooting people from ostensibly stable forms of identity and social connection. Hence, urban ethnography – the systematic observation of life in the metropolis – has a long history in sociology. In this class, we will cover various topics that have interested urban (and the few suburban) ethnographers over time, including race, families, poverty, gender, crime and violence, work, (im)migration, and organizing. We will attend to issues of ethics, representation and politics in the doing of urban ethnography. We will read outside of the U.S. a bit, but not as much as we should. We will discuss the dialogue between urban ethnography and other social science methods. And each week we will read (at least) one ethnographic book and one ethnographic journal article to serve as models for your own work and to see what can and cannot be done in each format. For all of the readings, we will ask ourselves: What makes this an *urban* ethnography (or not)? What is the role of the city in this reading?

REQUIREMENTS:

- 40% of grade: Lead two classes with 2-3 other students. There are four parts to the assignment. The first three are for the group to cover and the last is for each person to do:
 - Present the readings (methods, research questions, approach, findings)
 - Pose discussion questions (they need not be distributed in advance)
 - Make connections to empirical research on the topic that uses (an)other method(s)
 - Submit a 1-2 page (single-spaced) critical engagement with some specific question or finding from the reading(s). This is neither a summary nor a synthesis of the reading, but rather takes a specific point that a reading makes and *further* develops that point by, for example, bringing your own data to bear; using other literature on the topic to challenge or buttress the finding; or making a reasoned critique of the limitations of the method or evidence. Each presenter does this on his/her own for whatever reading(s) s/he chooses.
- 40% of grade: Paper(s). There are two Options for this assignment:
 - Option 1: Two papers (~10 pages each). Paper 1 critically reviews the ethnographic (and other qualitative) literature on a specific topic, theme, or area of study (e.g., work and the labor market; fatherhood; public housing; classroom dynamics). Paper 2 picks a *different topic* and puts existing ethnographic works *in critical dialogue with* research that uses *other* methods and/or disciplinary approaches.
 - Option 2: One paper (~20 pages) that begins or extends your own original urban

ethnographic research, methodological reflection, or mixed-methods project.

- 20% of grade: Class participation. You can't leave it to the presenters to carry the day or to your fellow classmates to say everything. Soon (if not already), you'll have to fill up 50-80 minutes of lecture with your voice, so you should start practicing in the safe space of graduate seminars. And 20% of your grade really means something. If you get an "A" on both papers and *never* talk and thus get an F for class participation, that's a final grade of a B for the course. But I'm sure none of you will have that problem (smile!).
- Paper 1 is due Wednesday, February 6th, by midnight by email to the professor.
- Paper 2 OR the longer paper is due Monday, March 18th, by midnight by email.
- *Paper extensions and incompletes will only be granted for reasons that could not be foreseen.*

OFFICE HOURS:

I use Google calendar to schedule my office hours. Follow the link and sign up for no more than 3 consecutive 15-minute slots, depending on your estimate of how much time we'll need. If you need to cancel the appointment, you can only do so through cancelling it on your own calendar. No need to send me any confirmation of the appointment you make or cancellation.

<https://www.google.com/calendar/selfsched?sstoken=UUxzNEw2UWFqVkJ2fGRIZmF1bHR8MjNINDU1OTA3OWQ2MWM0YWM2N2VIZWQwOTNINTdkZWU>

READINGS:

Below is a heavy reading list with at least one book and one article per week, and sometimes two books or two articles. If you are not presenting, you can read just one of the books for the week, but always read the articles. However, if you are presenting, you should read all of the readings. I have not ordered the books from Norris Bookstore, so feel free to find cheaper sources for purchasing the books. Also, some of them (as noted with NU EBOOK) are available as e-books through NU's library. All articles are available electronically on Blackboard.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

JANUARY 9: Introduction: Placing Urban Ethnography in Sociology

- "Global Ethnography." Zsuzsa Gille and Seán Ó Riain. *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 28 (2002): 271-295
- "Urban Ethnography: Situational and Normative Accounts." Gerald D. Suttles. *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 2 (1976): 1-18
- "The Texture of Hardship: Qualitative Sociology of Poverty, 1995–2005." Katherine S. Newman and Rebekah Massengill. *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 32 (2006): 423-446
- "Feminism in the Field." Jody Miller. In *Our Studies/Ourselves*

JANUARY 16: Neighborhood "Change" (our "Chicago" week)

- Mary Pattillo, *Black on the Block: The Politics of Race and Class in the City* (NU EBOOK)
- Japonica Brown-Saracino, *A Neighborhood that Never Changes: Gentrification, Social Preservation, and the Search for Authenticity* (NU EBOOK)

- Richard Lloyd. 2002. "Neo-Bohemia: Art and Neighborhood Redevelopment in Chicago," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 24: 517-532.

JANUARY 23: Work and Consumption

- Katherine Newman, *No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City* (NU EBOOK)
- Ryan Centner. 2008. "Places of Privileged Consumption Practices: Spatial Capital, the Dot-Com Habitus, and San Francisco's Internet Boom," *City and Community* 7: 193-223.
- Rubén Hernández-León. 2004. "Restructuring at the Source: High-skilled Industrial Migration from Mexico to the United States." *Work and Occupations* 34(4): 1-29.

JANUARY 30: Leisure

- David Grazian, *On the Make: The Hustle of Urban Nightlife* (NU EBOOK)
- Jeffrey Kidder. 2012. "Parkour: The Affective Appropriation of Urban Space, and the Real/Virtual Dialectic." *City and Community* 11: 229-253. Also see video abstract at http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291540-6040/homepage/city__community_video_abstracts.htm.
- Sharon Zukin and Ervin Kosta. 2004. "Bourdieu Off-Broadway: Managing Distinction on a Shopping Block in the East Village." *City and Community* 3: 101-114.

FEBRUARY 6: Suburbs

- Lorraine Kenny. 2000. *Daughters of Suburbia: Growing Up White, Middle Class, and Female*
- Jennifer Hamer. 2011. *Abandoned in the Heartland: Work, Family and Living in East St. Louis*. (NU EBOOK)
- Alexandra Murphy. 2012. "'Litterers': How Objects of Physical Disorder Are Used to Construct Subjects of Social Disorder in a Suburb." *Annals* 642: 210-227.

Paper #1 is due Feb 6 by midnight to m-pattillo@northwestern.edu

FEBRUARY 13: Poverty

- David Harding. 2011. *Living the Drama: Community, Conflict, and Culture among Inner-City Boys*. (NU EBOOK)
- Small, Mario L. 2002. "Culture, Cohorts, and Social Organization Theory: Understanding Local Participation in a Latino Housing Project." *American Journal of Sociology*. 108(1):1-54
- Venkatesh, Sudhir. 2002. "Doin' the Hustle': Constructing the Ethnographer in the American Ghetto." *Ethnography* 3: 91-111.

FEBRUARY 20: Marginalization and the State

- John Arena. 2012. *Driven from New Orleans: How Nonprofits Betray Public Housing and Promote Privatization*.
- Javier Auyero. 2011. "Patients of the State: An Ethnographic Account of Poor People's Waiting." *Latin American Research Review* 46: 5-29.
- Gonzales, Roberto G. 2008. "Left Out but not Shut Down: Political Activism and the

Undocumented Latino Student Movement.” *Northwestern Journal of Law and Social Policy*. Volume 3:2.

FEBRUARY 27: Global Spaces

- Steven Gregory. 2007. *The Devil behind the Mirror: Globalization and Politics in the Dominican Republic*. (NU EBOOK)
- Zhang, Li. 2010. *In Search of Paradise: Middle-Class Living in a Chinese Metropolis*. (NU EBOOK)
- Jerolmack, Colin. 2007. “Animal Practices, Ethnicity and Community: The Turkish Pigeon Handlers of Berlin.” *American Sociological Review*, 72(6): 874-894.

MARCH 6: Whiteness in the City

- Monica McDermott. 2006. *Working-Class White: The Making and Unmaking of Race Relations*.
- Edward W. Morris. 2004. “From “Middle Class” to “Trailer Trash:” Teachers’ Perceptions of White Students in a Predominately Minority School.” *Sociology of Education* 78: 99-121.
- John Hartigan Jr. 2008. “Remembering White Detroit: Whiteness in the Mix of History and Memory.” *City & Society* 12: 11-34.

MARCH 13: Discussion of Classic Ethnographies (defined as probably published before you were born): Chose one from the following or propose your own.

- See a list of Chicago School ethnographies from which you can choose in Mary Deegan, “The Chicago School of Ethnography,” in *The Handbook of Ethnography* on Blackboard. But many of those are out of print or expensive.
- William Foote Whyte, *Street Corner Society* (1955)
- Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, (mostly just Part I) (1961)
- Herbert Gans, *The Urban Villagers* (1962) or *The Levittowners* (1967)
- Howard Becker: *Outsiders: Studies In The Sociology Of Deviance* (1963)
- Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto* (1965)
- Oscar Lewis, *Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty* (1966)
- Gerry Suttles, *Social Order of the Slum* (1968)
- Lee Rainwater, *Behind Ghetto Walls* (1970)
- Carol Stack, *All Our Kin* (1974)
- Elijah Anderson, *A Place on the Corner* (1978)
- Mitch Duneier, *Slim’s Table* (1992) (not a classic by age, but important)

FINAL PAPER DUE MARCH 18TH BY MIDNIGHT TO m-pattillo@northwestern.edu

Happy Spring Break!