

**EPS 500pf1: Race and Ethnography: A Study of the University**  
Fall 2008

*Wednesdays 3:00 to 4:50*  
*149 Henry Admin Bldg*

*Dr. Priscilla Fortier*  
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*For an individual meeting, send a choice of three available times (between 9 am and 5 pm, M-F) to the above email address.*

This seminar is not only a course, but part of a cross-campus initiative. As a member of this course you are joining a campus-wide learning community in which the University of Illinois is being explored ethnographically. The initiative itself is titled Ethnography of the University Initiative. More information about EUI is available at <http://www.eui.uiuc.edu>.

We will begin the course by thinking about what the university is, as well as about race and ethnicity as phenomena within the university's narratives. We will be learning about universities and higher education in general and the University of Illinois in particular. A third area of concentration will be "ethnography," and you will learn and practice the basic skills of observation, interviewing, and writing as an ethnographer. You will complete several relatively short assignments that are intended to help you develop these skills, as well as one larger ethnographic project on the University. The latter will allow you to explore an aspect of the university that has to do with an issue of race or ethnicity; in addition to the readings that you will do as a class, you will be expected to explore other research related to your project.

EUI is committed to web-based archives of student research, and you are being asked to both consult the archived research of previous students, and to electronically archive your own project at the end of the semester. However, you will have the option not to make your project public if you wish.

*Class Participation:*

This class will be conducted as a combined seminar and independent study. Seminars require active participation and mandatory attendance. You are expected to complete all assigned readings before class, to bring questions about the readings to each meeting, and to be a ready and willing discussant. In addition to the group meetings, individual meetings with the instructor will be scheduled throughout the semester and will also require preparation and active participation. Because the class is very small, attendance

is very important. If you must miss class or an individual appointment for health reasons or a personal emergency, you should obtain a medical or dean's excuse. Unexcused absences (car trouble, etc.) will count against your grade.

*Moodle:*

We will be using course management software called Moodle. Moodle will provide us with a means of accessing course content and interacting with each other online. In addition, your projects will be built throughout the semester on Moodle. On the first day of class, we will discuss how you will establish your Moodle user account. (<https://moodle.atlas.uiuc.edu>).

*Readings:*

Required Books:

Nathan, Rebekah. (2006). My Freshman Year. New York: Penguin Books. (costs about \$14).

A reading packet and/or pdf files and e-links.

*Assignments and Grading:*

Final Project (at least 15 double-spaced pages) .....	35 points
Due date: 12/17 at midnight—if late, lose points	
Shorter Assignments: ( 5 to 10 pts. each).....	45 points
*Preparation and Participation in Seminar Discussion and Individual Meetings.....	20 points

**TOTAL.....100**

\*Participation consists of both in-class discussion and prior preparation, such as completing readings.

**The instructor reserves the right to change course requirements and to substitute readings for individuals or for the class.**

UNLESS THE FOLLOWING ASSIGNMENTS ARE CHANGED BY THE INSTRUCTOR, READINGS ARE TO BE COMPLETED BY THE DATES UNDER WHICH THEY ARE LISTED. LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL LOSE POINTS.

Bring printed copies of readings to class!!!!

**Syllabus:**

**Week 1**

*Wednesday, August 27<sup>th</sup>*

**THE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY**

Introduction, Review Syllabus, Intro to Moodle, brief intro to development of the American University

*Assignments:*

**Read Overview only:** Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates. (1998). Overview of *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Universities*. State University of New York at Stony Brook for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Click on <http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf/> Go to *Table of Contents* to access the Overview.

For discussion:

Based on these readings, what current problems can you identify for large flagship state institutions like ours?

What is the unique niche that Boyer believes research universities can fill?

A fair amount of public criticism is currently being directed at universities such as ours. Why?

**Week 2**

*Wednesday, September 3rd*

**THE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY AND CAMPUS DIVERSITY**

**Short assignment # 1: How do you think about the University? That is, how have you imagined it in the past and what do you think of it now? Post to your moodle page in the Initial Exercises box. 1-2 pages, (doublespaced). (5 pts.)**

Continue discussion of development of the American research university and access issues for underrepresented students:

Solorzano, Daniel G., et al., (July, 2005). *Educational Inequities and Latina/o Undergraduate Students in the United States: A Critical Race Analysis of Their Educational Progress*. Journal of Hispanic Higher Education. Pp. 272-294.  
<http://jhh.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/4/3/272>

Williamson, Joy Ann. (2003). In Black Power on Campus, Ch. 1, *Black Youth Forcing Change*, and Ch 2, *From Negro to Black*, pp. 7-55.\*

For Discussion: If you were leading a discussion of these two articles, how would you tie them together? (For example, how do they each contribute to a picture of present-day access to higher education for these two underrepresented groups?) As part of our discussion, prepare a 5 minute oral answer to the question. Bring in a list of talking points.

**Week 3**

*Wednesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>*

**INTRO TO ETHNOGRAPHY**

**Read:**

Nathan, Rebekah. (2005). My Freshman Year. Chapters 1 to 3, pp. 1-66;  
Afterword: Ethics and Ethnography, pp. 158-168.

Sunstein, Bonnie Stone, and Chiseri-Strater, Elizabeth. (2002). Fieldworking. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin' : Ch. 5, *Researching Place: The Spatial Gaze*. pp. 217-247.\*

For discussion: --Consider the first full paragraph on page 218 of the Fieldworking chapter. Be able to discuss IN DETAIL how Nathan presents both an outsider and an insider's perspective.

What did you learn about ethnography from these two readings?

**Discussion of human subjects and EUI consent form as well as assignment due on September 24th.**

#### **Week 4**

*Wednesday, September 17*

No Class Meeting

Continue work on group project due next week; think about possible research topic.

#### **Week 5**

*Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>*

### **INTRO TO ETHNOGRAPHY: Place**

Goodall Jr., H. L. (2000). Writing the New Ethnography. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 21-81.\*

In Sunstein, and Chiseri-Strater, *Friday Night at Iowa* 80, pp. 24-41; also *The Interview: Learning to Ask*, pp. 368-391.\*

For Discussion:

Read the *Fieldworking* chapters first, and then Goodall.

What does Rick do that makes his research "ethnographic?"

Why were you asked to read "The Interview: Learning to Ask?"

The Goodall chapters are a very personalized description of the new ethnography—that is, the idea of self-reflexivity within ethnographic writing. . Jot down at least three ideas from Goodall that you found either engaging or puzzling and be prepared to talk about them and how they enhance (or maybe inhibit?) your understanding of the ethnographic process next time—I'll ask each of you in turn to do this. Bring your talking points in writing.

### **Discussion of "final" EOTU project: topic due next week**

**Present and discuss writing assignment #2: *Mapping Space* on p. 233 of Stone and Chiseri-Strater\*:**

**(Worth 10 points—same as two smaller assignments: to be submitted in Initial Exercises box by noon on and paper copy, including map and notes, to be brought to class at 3 pm)**

***Submit individual notes and maps, but a collaborative final write-up.***

Assignment summary:

In groups of two, record and gather observations during a half-hour of an everyday routine. Work collaboratively so that you can collect a range of data.

1. Obtain access
2. Record your assumptions
3. Take notes on the overall setting
4. Map the space
5. Describe the activities and record the conversation
6. Talk with your partner
7. Write up your data collaboratively
8. Turn in your individual field notes and final (group) write-up

Meet individually with instructor between 9/25 and 10/1 about research topic.

### **Week 6**

*Wednesday, October 1st*

#### **ETHNOGRAPHY: (Reading and Interviewing)**

Nathan, Rebekah. (2005). My Freshman Year. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, Chapters 4 to 6, pp. 67-156.

For discussion: This course focuses upon the university as a subject of inquiry. How does Nathan's study contribute to this inquiry? In your opinion (as an expert on student life here!), how relevant are her findings to our university? Include the entire book in your answer, as we have previously discussed only her methodology. Prepare a five-minute oral answer. (Come to class with notes!)

#### **Discussion of Discourse Analysis and Moodle pages**

#### **Writing assignment #3: In-class writing exercise, 5 points.**

### **Week 7**

*Wednesday, October 8th*

#### **ETHNOGRAPHY: the Archives**

During previous week, meet with instructor about research project:

By today, make entries in the AUTHOR, TITLE, ABOUT THE AUTHOR, QUESTION, PLAN, and EUI LINKS boxes. The PLAN box should contain your subsidiary research questions and the EUI LINKS box should contain reference to at least three other projects

from the IDEALS section of Moodle. Briefly describe why each project is of interest to your research.

For today's class: A presentation by University archivist Ellen Swain at the Archives Research Center, 1707 S. Orchard St. in Urbana. The Center is in the Horticulture Field Lab at the corner of Orchard and Florida. The Number 8 Orchard Downs bus goes there—or it's a 20 minute walk from the quad.

***Short writing assignment #4: Project on Student Life and Culture:***

**As you explore the Student Life archives, find a previous student, staff member, or organization that interests you and with which you feel a sense of "connection."**

**Write a 2 to 3 page paper about that person or organization and include your own self-reflexive considerations. Try to relate this assignment to your first short essay, which asked that you reflect on how you first imagined the university and how you think about it now.**

**Due on Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>; to be submitted in Initial Exercises box by noon. (10 pts.)**

**Week 8**

*Wednesday, October 15<sup>th</sup>*

**No class meeting**

**Read** Ewell, Peter, *Who Do You Think You Are? The Art of the Institutional Reality* Check, University Business, Nov/Dec 1998: 20-21.

**Short Writing Assignment # 5:** By midnight on this date, enter a discourse analysis (2 double-spaced pages) in the Initial Exercises box. For your analysis choose a narrative from the University's website. Consult Ewell's article and Norman Fairclough's *Analysing Discourse*, which was handed out on October 8. Focus upon *assumptions* that are made in the narrative. (10 pts)

Continue collecting sources and references for your project, and begin drafting interview questions and planning how you will collect information. We will meet individually to finalize your interview protocol.

**Week 9**

*Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>*

**Share archives projects and introduce the class to your main research topic. Listen actively to others' project descriptions and be prepared to offer suggestions about the research.**

**Week 10**

*Wednesday, October 29<sup>th</sup>*

**UNIVERSITY NARRATIVES:**

**Short writing assignment # 6 (1-2 pages): Choose one of the following seven narratives: How does your Illinois story connect to these? Are these narratives connected to, or disconnected from, yours? ( 5 pts) To be submitted by noon in Initial Exercises.**

- 1) *2008 Diversity Initiatives Planning Committee Report*  
<http://www.provost.uiuc.edu/committees/reports/DiversityReport.pdf>
- 2) The Illinois Board of Higher Education. 1999. A Citizen's Agenda for Illinois Higher Education. *The Illinois Commitment: Partnerships, Opportunities, and Excellence*  
<http://www.ibhe.state.il.us/Board/Agendas/1999/February/1999-02-07.pdf>
- 3) The College Land Grant Act:  
<http://www.fs.uiuc.edu/hpmp/historical%20preservation/landgrant.html>
- 4) University of Illinois Extension:  
<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/state/whatwedo.html>
- 5) Carnegie Classification:  
<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/index.asp?key=785>
- 6) Graduate Employees' Union:  
<http://www.news.uiuc.edu/NEWS/04/0715geo.html>
- 7) American Association of University Professors  
<http://www.aaup.org/aaup>

**For class discussion:**

### **Illinois Statistical Narratives**

Reading: Introduction to Best, J. Damned Lies and Statistics at  
<http://www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/9358/9358.intro.html>

*Browse the following websites and come to class with the information/answers requested below:*

2007 Senior Survey

<http://www.oir.uiuc.edu/assessment/reports/SRSRVY2007.pdf>

On pages 8-10 of the Senior Survey, identify a statistic that you find interesting or surprising

2004 Faculty Status Report:

<http://www.eoa.uiuc.edu/FacultyStatus2004.htm>

In the Faculty Status report, choose a college and determine which department in that college has the best 10-year record for hiring Latino or African-American faculty members. What is the overall percentage for the entire college?

Student enrollment reports

<http://www.dmi.uiuc.edu/stuenr>

University of Illinois Student Data Book

[http://www.pb.uillinois.edu/Documents/databook/StudentDatabook\(UIUC\).pdf](http://www.pb.uillinois.edu/Documents/databook/StudentDatabook(UIUC).pdf)

Which community college sent the third largest number of transfer students to Illinois?

What did you find about retention by gender?

Which five Illinois counties send the most students to the University?

Bring in two other questions that focus upon this data.

## **Week 11**

*Wednesday, November 5th*

### **CAMPUS DIVERSITY AND ENGAGEMENT**

**You should have at least three interviews completed**

**In the Data box, reflect about the interviews and how they are helping you answer (or adjust) your research questions. For example, you may have seen some trends in the interviews, or you may have come upon some surprising or contradictory information or responses. Write informally about these—the equivalent of about two pages double-spaced.**

**In the Discuss box, summarize at least three academic (e.g., journal articles, books) sources that relate to your research—about 1 ½ pages double spaced.**

Levine, A. (1998). *Multiculturalism: The Campus Divided, When Hope and Fear Collide* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (pp. 71-92).

Possible additional reading assignment

Does this chapter describe our campus at this time? How accurate/inaccurate is it?

## **Week 12**

*Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>*

**No class meeting**

**Meet individually with instructor. Before meeting, at least five interviews should be finished, with an additional two pages added to the data box as described above.**

## **Week 13**

*Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>*

*T. B. A.*

**Week 14**

*Wednesday, November 26th*

*Thanksgiving Holiday*

Read:

Read: Cantor, N. and Schomberg, S. (2002) *What WE WANT Students to LEARN: Cultivating Playfulness and Responsibility in a Liberal Education*. *Change* 34(6), pp. 47+. \*

**Complete ICES forms**

**Week 15**

*December 3<sup>rd</sup>*

**Individual or group meeting to be scheduled; all EOTU IRB forms due.**

**Week 16**

*Friday, December 17th*

**Final Project due by midnight. Enter main part of paper in DISCUSS box. Add ABSTRACT and update other boxes where necessary. Note policy on late projects.**