

Spring 2007

Reading Ethnographies

ANG 6930 Sect. 9258

5:10 pm – 8:10 pm

Turlington 2341

M. M. Thomas-Houston, Ph.D.

Office Hours: Weds 12 Noon – 2 PM & Thurs 11 AM – 12 Noon

And by Appointment

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Streetlife in Harlem by Johnson

This survey course focuses mainly on ethnographies of the African Diaspora in the US written since the 1930s. The primary aim is the exploration of the various ways this specific Diaspora has been documented and represented in ethnographic writings. The course is designed to help students understand: 1) the conditions under which fieldwork was written; 2) the development of the theoretical arguments; and 3) the methodological approaches used to interpret the Black experience in the “New World.” Our critical analyses of these ethnographies will shed light on the role that perception and representation (i.e., social constructive processes) play in the formation of social theory, public policy and popular culture. The course provides a linear view of changes in writing practices in the field of cultural anthropology in general, a sort of historical “time line.” It also highlights diverse contemporary works that address particular experiences of postcolonial others in large-scaled complex societies. Each student is expected to develop and improve ethnographic writing and research skills during the course. The ethnographies are available through UF ebooks, library reserve, and bookstore purchase. However, Amazon.com and other online distributors also have the ethnographies at reasonable prices. Chapters from *Decolonizing Anthropology* will be on reserve as well.

LIST OF ETHNOGRAPHIES and ASSIGNED TEXT

1990 (1938) *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica* by Zora Neale Hurston

1993 (1939) *After freedom: a cultural study in the Deep South* by Hortense Powdermaker

1945. *Black Metropolis: a study of Negro life in a northern city* by St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton

1955. *Blackways of Kent* by Hyland Lewis

1967. *Tally’s Corner: a study of Negro streetcorner men* by Elliot Liebow

1997 (1974) *All our kin: strategies for survival in a Black community* by Carol Stack

1994. *Little Brazil: An Ethnography of Brazilian Immigrants In New York City* by Maxine Magolis

1995. *Ain’t No Makin’ It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood* by Jay MacLeod

1997. *On our own terms: race, class, and gender in the lives of African American women* by Leith Mullings

1997. *Stains on My Name, War in My Veins: Guyana and the Politics of Cultural Struggle* by Brackette Williams

2005. “*Stony the Road*” to Change: *Black Mississippians and the Culture of Social Relations* by Marilyn M. Thomas-Houston

1997 (1991). *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an anthropology of liberation*. Faye. V. Harrison, ed.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Davis, Allison. 1941. *Deep South: a social anthropological study of class and caste*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cox, Oliver Cromwell. *Caste, Class, & Race: A Study in Social Dynamics*. 1948. Doubleday

Anderson, Elijah. 1990. *Streetwise: race, class, and change in an urban community*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gregory, Steven. 1998. *Black Corona: race and the politics of place in an urban community*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Stolzoff, Norman. 2000. *Wake the Town and Tell the People: Dancehall Culture in Jamaica*. Duke University Press

GRADING POINT SYSTEM

7 CA Essays (100 pts. Each) = 700 pts.

Final CA Essay = 300 pts.

TOTAL = 1000 pts.

LETTER GRADES

900 – 1000 = A 850 – 899 = B+

800 – 849 = B 750 – 799 = C+

700 – 749 = C 650 – 699 = D+

REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1 T 1/9 – Introduction to Course

Week 2 T 1/16 –

Assigned Reading for Discussion:

Harrison, Faye V.

1997 (1991). Anthropology as an Agent of Transformation: Introductory Comments and Queries. IN Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an anthropology of liberation. Faye V. Harrison, ed. Arlington, VA: Association of Black Anthropologist, American Anthropological Association.

Begin Reading:

Tell My Horse : Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica by Zora Neale Hurston. Harper and Row

Week 3

T 1/23

Assigned Reading:

Finish Reading: Tell My Horse

Week 4

T 1/30 – 1st Critical Analysis Paper Due thru email by Noon.

Assigned Reading for Discussion:

Blakey, Michael L.

1997 (1991). Man and Nature, White and Other. IN Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an anthropology of liberation. Faye V. Harrison, ed. Arlington, VA: Association of Black Anthropologist, American Anthropological Association.

Begin Reading:

Powdermaker, Hortense

1993 (1939). After freedom: a cultural study in the Deep South. University of Wisconsin Press.

Week 5

T 2/6 – 2nd Critical Analysis Paper Due

Assigned Reading:

Finish Reading: After Freedom.

Week 6

T 2/13

Assigned Reading for Discussion:

Jordan, Glenn H.

1997 (1991). On Ethnography in an intertextual situation: reading narratives or deconstructing discourse? IN Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an anthropology of liberation. Faye V. Harrison, ed. Arlington, VA: Association of Black Anthropologist, American Anthropological Association.

Begin Reading:

Drake, St. Clair and Horace R. Cayton

1945. Black Metropolis: a study of Negro life in a northern city. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Week 7

T 2/20

Assigned Reading:

Finish Reading: Black Metropolis

Week 8

T 2/27 – 3rd Critical Analysis Paper Due

Assigned Reading for Discussion:

D'Amico-Samuels, Deborah

1997 (1991). Undoing Fieldwork: personal, political, theoretical and methodological implications. IN Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an anthropology of

liberation. Faye V. Harrison, ed. Arlington, VA: Association of Black Anthropologist, American Anthropological Association.

Begin Reading:

Lewis, Hyland

1955. *Blackways of Kent*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Week 9

T 3/6

Assigned Readings:

Finish Reading: *Blackways of Kent*

Week 10 Spring Break – NO CLASS

T 3/13 – 4th Critical Analysis Paper Due

Begin Reading:

Liebow, Elliot

1967. *Tally's Corner: a study of Negro streetcorner men*. Boston: Little, Brown

Week 11

T 3/20

Assigned Reading:

Finish Reading: *Tally's Corner*

Week 12

T 3/27 – 5th Critical Analysis Paper Due

Assigned Reading for Discussion:

Harrison, Faye V.

1997 (1991). *Ethnography as Politics*. IN *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an anthropology of liberation*. Faye V. Harrison, ed. Arlington, VA: Association of Black Anthropologist, American Anthropological Association.

Begin Reading:

Stack, Carol B.

1997 (1974). *All our kin: strategies for survival in a Black community*. New York: Basic Books.

Week 13

T 4/3

Assigned Reading:

Finish Reading: *All Our Kin*

Week 14

T 4/10 – 6th Critical Analysis Paper Due

Assigned Reading for Discussion:

Bourgois, Philippe

1997 (1991). *Confronting the Ethics of Ethnography: Lessons from fieldwork in Central America*. IN *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an anthropology of liberation*. Faye V. Harrison, ed. Arlington, VA: Association of Black Anthropologist, American Anthropological Association.

Begin Reading:

Mullings, Leith

1997. *On our own terms: race, class, and gender in the lives of African American women*. London: Routledge.

Week 15

T 4/17

Assigned Reading:

Finish Reading: *On Our Own Terms*

Week 16

T 4/24 – 7th Critical Analysis Paper Due

Assigned Reading for Discussion:

Jones, Delmos J.

1997 (1991). Epilogue. IN *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further toward an anthropology of liberation*. Faye V. Harrison, ed. Arlington, VA: Association of Black Anthropologist, American Anthropological Association.

Begin Reading:

Thomas-Houston, Marilyn

2005 "Stony the Road" to Change: Black Mississippians and the Culture of Social Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Final Exam Day - Tuesday 5/1 8 am – 10 am (No Meeting) – Final Paper Due By 10 PM.

Instructions for critical analysis reviews

A critical analysis review involves at least three elements: 1) a synopsis of the book; 2) an assessment of what the author is trying to achieve in writing the book; 3) situating the work in the context of the various discussions/arguments it engages.

1. **Synopsis:** Assume you are writing for an audience who has no knowledge of the book. In approximately 250 words summarize the book's topic
the book's primary argument
the book's primary methodology
if relevant, the book's narrative voice
2. **Assessment of what the author is trying to achieve:** Elaborate on the book's primary argument. How is this study significant to the field? Does it succeed or fail in achieving this significance? Note that a book may be extremely successful in dealing with one dimension of the problem it engages, and fail utterly in another. And it may be partially successful in another.
3. **Situating the text in the larger context:** You will need to read at least one review or other commentary of the book. The reviews will give you a good idea of how other scholars who are more-or-less specialized in the same areas assess the books. You will need to determine
What are the key issues in the field, as indicated by these reviews?
How do other scholars assess the book you have read?
Do you agree or disagree with these assessments? Support your arguments.
Note that elements 2 and 3 can be combined. You can cite reviews concerning the significance of the book, in assessing its successes and failures, and so forth. That is, draw on the reviews as material for *your* analysis and assessment.
4. **Format:** Head your paper as if it were a formal scholarly review. Use the following style: *Book title [in italics]*, Author's name (first, middle, surname), Publisher (city, state: press), date of publication. Put your name below it flush to the left margin, with the course title below your name. Then begin your text. Here's an example

Reshaping Ethnic and Racial Relations in Philadelphia: Immigrants in a Divided City, Judith Goode. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.

marilyn m. thomas-houston

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The entire essay should be no more than 7 double-spaced pages; you should be able to address these issues in around 5 pages (1250-2500 words). Use standard American Ethnologist citation form and include a bibliography of all works cited, including reviews.

Email your paper by Noon on date due. Turn in all printouts and notes from your search and copies of all reviews and commentaries that you located at the end of class on due date. These documents should be used for issue discussions in class.

DESCRIPTION OF FINAL ANALYSIS ESSAY – This critical analysis paper should be based on the assigned readings, classroom discussions, and reviews. From these works write a descriptive analysis of the ways in which methodology, theory, and perspectives changed through time in the construction and intent of ethnographies reviewed in this class. This final essay should be no more than 10 and no less than 7 double-spaced pages. (Not including the works cited pages.) Use a cover page for the title information of your essay. **The paper must be turned in by email no later than 10PM on final exam day.**