

## **Proseminar: Feminist Ethnography Spring 2007**

WST 5933 (5488) / ANG 6930 (3468)  
Tuesdays 3-6pm, 108 Ustler Hall  
Office tel.: 352-273-0384

Instructor: Professor Florence Babb  
Office hours: Thursday 2-4pm, 204 Ustler Hall  
and by appointment, [fbabb@wst.ufl.edu](mailto:fbabb@wst.ufl.edu)

### **Course description and objective:**

This graduate seminar will consider issues in qualitative research methodology through reading and discussing feminist ethnographies as well as critical assessments of feminist scholarship and methods. We will ask challenging questions about interdisciplinarity and the dilemmas of field research, including the fundamental question of whether there is indeed a feminist ethnographic methodology. Moreover, we will discuss the feminist politics of ethnographic representation (by the researcher depicting the researched) and of positionality (of the researcher in relation to the researched). Case studies from a wide range of societies will present opportunities for students to consider the relative merits of various approaches in feminist anthropology and related fields in the social sciences. Seminar participants will be expected to try out their own feminist ethnographic writing, which will be shared with others in the course as a way to refine analytical and writing skills.

### **Course books, available at Wild Iris Bookstore, 802 W. University Avenue:**

Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon (eds.), *Women Writing Culture*. University of California Press, 1995.

Donna M. Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown*. University of California Press, 2003.

Dorothy L. Hodgson (ed.), *Gendered Modernities: Ethnographic Perspectives*. Palgrave, 2001.

Nancy A. Naples, *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, and Activist Research*. Routledge, 2003.

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing. *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen*. Princeton University Press, 1993.

### **Course requirements and policies:**

#### **Participation**

Because the course meets just once each week, full attendance in all classes is essential. Students are expected to come to class having done the reading and ready to participate in discussion. Everyone will have an opportunity to play a part in facilitating the weekly

discussion. Brief two-page précis of the week's reading will be collected during class periods to ensure that all have given thoughtful attention to the reading. Each student is allowed to skip two submissions of précis and to submit instead a short piece of ethnographic writing. [50% of course grade]

### **Paper**

There will be a course paper of approximately 18-20pp based on additional reading, and in some cases ethnographic research, due at the end of the semester. I will expect to receive proposals for these papers by the end of February, including short bibliographies of material to be used and referenced. These papers may focus on a single ethnographic work to be examined closely or they may draw on multiple works on a specific topic of relevance to the course. Everyone will have an opportunity to give an oral presentation of their subject matter during the final weeks of the semester. [50% of course grade]

### **Academic Honesty**

The University of Florida's honor code requires all students to be honest in their academic work. University policies on cheating, plagiarism, and related issues are available at: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/academicguide.html>

### **Accommodations**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to me when requesting accommodation.

### **Course readings:**

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| Jan 9  | <p><b>Introduction to Feminist Ethnography</b></p> <p><b>Read for first class on E-reserve:</b><br/>         Judith Stacey, "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" <i>Women's Studies International Forum</i> 11(1), 1988<br/>         Lila Abu-Lughod, "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" <i>Women and Performance</i> 5(1), 1990</p> |
| Jan 16 | <p><b>Feminist Ethnographic Methods</b><br/>         Nancy Naples to p. 85</p>   |
| Jan 23 | <p><b>Women Writing Culture</b><br/>         Ruth Behar and Deborah Gordon (eds.), to p. 103</p>   |
| Jan 30 | <p><b>Histories of Feminist Ethnography</b><br/>         Behar and Gordon, pp. 104-232<br/>         Video: "Number Our Days"</p>   |

- Feb 6        **Feminist Politics of Ethnographic Representation**  
Behar and Gordon, pp. 233-335
- Feb 13       **Case Study: Positionality and Subjectivity in Feminist Research**  
Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, to p. 153  
Guest: Dr. Laura Graham, Anthropology, U of Iowa
- Feb 20       Tsing, to end
- Feb 27       **Case Study: Race, Class, and Sexuality in Feminist Research**  
Donna Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place*, to p. 135
- Mar 6        Goldstein, to end
- Mar 13       **Spring Break**
- Mar 20       **Gender and Modernity**  
Dorothy Hodgson (ed.), to p. 145
- Mar 27       Hodgson, to end
- Apr 3        **Border Crossings and Intersectionality**  
Behar and Gordon (eds.), pp. 337-441  
Video: "Adio Kerida"
- Apr 10       **The Ethnographic Turn in Feminist Research and Practice**  
Naples, p. 87 to end
- Apr 17       Class presentations
- Apr 24       Class presentations
- May 1        **Exam week, papers due Tuesday at noon**