

## **Feminist Ethnography**

### **Fall 2012**

WST 6935 (O1H6)/ ANG 6930 (1F52)  
Mondays 2-5pm, Ustler Hall 308  
Office tel.: 352-273-0384

Instructor: Professor Florence Babb  
Office hours: Fridays 1-3pm and  
By appointment: [fbabb@ufl.edu](mailto:fbabb@ufl.edu)

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

This graduate seminar will consider issues in qualitative research methodology through reading and discussing feminist ethnographies, critical assessments of feminist scholarship and methods, and related work. 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 write frequent précis based on the reading and to try out their own feminist ethnographic writing as a way to refine analytical and writing skills. A final paper will be due and will be presented at the end of the semester.

#### **Course books, available at UF Bookstore**

Margery Wolf, *A Thrice-Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility*. Stanford University Press, 1992.

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

Diane L. Wolf (ed.), *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*. Westview Press, 1996.

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (with foreword by Edwidge Danticat), HarperCollins, 2000

Gina A. Ulysse, *Downtown Ladies: Informal Commercial Importers, a Haitian Anthropologist, and Self-Making in Jamaica*. University of Chicago Press, 2007.

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

Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*, 15th Anniversary Ed., University of California Press, 2008.

## 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 all the reading and to be 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 every class period between September 10 and November 26 to ensure thoughtful attention to the reading. However, note that each student is allowed to skip four of the eleven submissions of précis and for two of those dates should submit instead a short piece of **ethnographic writing**. Be sure that you have submitted a total of **nine short pieces** of writing for the course, on which you will be graded on a 20 point scale (if you do not have nine submissions, you will receive a zero for the missing entries). [60% of course grade]

### Final 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 or before **October 29**, 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 is expected to give an oral presentation of their subject matter during the final weeks of the semester. [40% 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.

### Grading

<u>Grade scale:</u>	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
	93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	59-below
grade points:	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0

See the following website on current grading policies:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

**Course readings:**

Aug 27      **Introduction to Feminist Ethnography**

**Read for first class on E-reserve:**

Judith Stacey, "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" *Women's Studies International Forum* 11(1):21-27, 1988

Lila Abu-Lughod, "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" *Women and Performance* 5(1):7-27, 1990

Also recommended (see pieces by Babb, Blackwood, and Manalansan):

*Voices*, special issue in honor of Elizabeth Kennedy (Florence Babb, ed.) 2011  
<http://www.aaanet.org/sections/afa/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/2011-Voices.pdf>

Video: "Number Our Days"

Sept 3      Labor Day (no class)

Sept 10     **Alternative Approaches**

Margery Wolf, *A Thrice-Told Tale* (all)

Sept 17     **Histories of Feminist Ethnography**

Behar and Gordon (eds.), pp.83-245

Sept 24     **Positionality in Feminist Research**

Diane Wolf (ed.): *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork* (all)

Oct 1        **Feminist Politics of Ethnographic Representation**

Behar and Gordon (eds.), to p. 82 and pp.247-335

Oct 8        **Zora Neale Hurston's Fiction and Ethnography**

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* and selections from *Mules and Men*

Oct 15      **Feminist Ethnographies**

Gina Ulysse, *Downtown Ladies*, to p.131

Oct 22      Ulysse, to end

[Hurston film and panel on Oct 26]

- Oct 29 Donna Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place*, to p.135  
**Final paper proposals due in class**
- Nov 5 Goldstein, to end
- Nov 12 Veterans Day (no class) AAA
- Nov 19 Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds* (all)
- Nov 26 **Border Crossings and Intersectionality**  
Behar and Gordon (eds.), pp. 337-441  
Video: "Adio Kerida"
- Dec 3 **Class presentations**
- Dec 7 (Fri) **Final papers due**