Charles R. Hale (crhale@mail.utexas.edu)
Wed. 2-5  LLILAS, Hackett Seminar Room
Office hours:  Tues, 2-5 and by appointment with Carla Lañas (clanas@austin.utexas.edu)

Course Description

How do anthropologists and other social scientists conceive of the relationship between field research and the call (whether from others or one’s own commitments) to become involved in the politics of the fieldwork situation? What consequences follow when we respond affirmatively to such calls? How does this change the character and the outcomes of our work in relation to conventional research methods? How do our answers to these questions vary as we consider different understandings of the very term “politics”? In addressing these and related questions, we will be especially interested to understand how the deep chasm between “applied” and “theoretical” approaches to social science research came about, and to explore possibilities for a terrain beyond that divide. Throughout we will examine the potential benefits that follow from different forms of political engagement in the research process, as well as the dilemmas and contradictions that arise. We will pay special attention to claims that “decolonized” research yields theoretical knowledge that otherwise would be difficult to achieve. What are the theoretical contributions of authors associated with the notions of “coloniality” and “decolonization,” and to what extent do they emerge from a particular kind of research method? Although the decolonization literature is global, we will emphasize works that are ethnographically grounded in Black and indigenous Latin America.

Course Requirements

Seminar participants are required to attend every session (barring special circumstances, with advanced permission of the instructor), to read all required texts, and come to seminar prepared to discuss them; to prepare reading notes for the three ethnographies and the Abriendo Brecha conference; to work with others in structuring discussion for one other session over the course of the semester (weeks assigned on the first class day); and to complete in a timely manner three short writing assignments: essay #1 (on positioning in field research); essay #2 (your research, framed in conventional and “activist” terms); essay #3 (on the genesis of theoretical breakthroughs). Short essays are 5-7 double spaced pages. In all three assignments, you are expected to draw heavily on your own research, either already completed or planned, in dialogue with the readings associated with each of the three sections.

Required Readings

All readings will be posted on Blackboard in a timely manner. The three ethnographies may be purchased at either Resistencia or Monkey Wrench Bookstore, according to arrangements discussed during the first class day.
January
16: Introduction

I. Colonial / Modernist Legacies: defining the problem (3)

23: The call (again and again) for “decolonization”
a. 1960s: (Willis 1969)
b. 1970s: (Asad 1973)
c. 1980s: (Mugabane and Faris 1985)
d. 1990s: (Smith 1999), pp.
e. 2000s: (Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey 2008), pp.
f. 2010s: (Springer 2012)

Supplementary Resources:
(Fals Borda 1987); (Stavenhagen 1971); (Gordon 1991); (Gordon 2007); (Harrison 1991); (Hale 2008)

30: “Banking” education, corporate universities, “culturally sensitive” counterinsurgency
b. (Shore and Wright 2000)
c. (Strathern 2000)
d. (Benson and Kirsch 2010)
e. (Visweswaran 2011)
f. (Lucas Jr. 2009), pp. 1-25

Group project #1: Report of Committee of 125 / McDowell / Phoenix model

February
6: Reflexivity, privilege and positioning
a. (Rich 1986)
b. (Clifford 1983)
c. (Haraway 1988)
d. (Lipsitz 1995)
e. (Tinsley 2008)

13: “Transformational Video” with special guest Juan Mejía

Readings / Viewings TBA

Group project #2: The role of video in activist scholarship

**Abriendo Brecha, Feb 14-17**

20: Ethnography I: Reckoning with legacies of violence in Peru

Theidon, Kimberly  Intimate Enemies (Penn)
II. **Conventional research methods**

27: Positivism, objectivity, analytical rigor  
   a. (Weber 1949)  
   c. (Harding 2005)  
   d. (Scheper-Hughes 1995) versus (D'Andrade 1995)  
   e. Research grant guidelines  
      i. SSRC--Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon  
      ii. Wenner-Gren--Application Guidelines

**March**

6: [OJO: reschedule for Mon or Tue evening]  
   Special session: The NSF as subject of scrutiny  
   **Group project #3:** Organize Student Panel Discussion (Batz, Ihmoud, Velasquez)  
   c. Stuesse NSF proposal

20:  Interviews, field notes, observed data and participant observation  
   b. (Sanjek 1990), pp.  
   c. (Johnson and Sackett 1998)  
   d. (Gupta and Ferguson 1997), pp.  
   e. (Clifford 1997), pp. 52-91

27: Ethnography II: The Violence of the Everyday in Bolivia  
   Goldstein, Daniel *Outlawed: Between Security and Rights in a Bolivian City*

III. **Emancipatory knowledge and theoretical breakthroughs: where do they come from?**

**April**

3: Research / reflection in political practice  
   b. (Fanon 1967), pp.  
   c. (Colectivo Situaciones 2007), pp.  
   d. (Greenwood 2008)  
   e. (Speed 2008), pp.  
   f. (Farmer 2004)

Supplemental Readings  
   a. (Esteva 2007)
b. (Hale 2007)

10: Epistemological critique and decolonization
b. Geopolitics of Academic writing
c. (Pierre 2008)
d. For indigenous minds only
e. (Ribeiro 2006);

17: Erotic and spiritual knowledge as politics
a. (Lorde 1984), pp. 53-59
c. (Allen 2012)
d. Gill, Lyndon [Allen special issue]

24: The turn to ontology
b. (Blaser 2009), pp.
d. (de la Cadena 2009), pp.
e. (Latour 2010), pp.

May
1: Ethnography III: Performing Activist Research

Madison, Soyini Acts of Activism
Citations

Alexander, M. Jacqui

Allen, Jafari

Asad, Talal

Benson, Peter, and Stuart Kirsch

Blaser, Mario

Briggs, Charles

Chakrabarty, Dipesh

Clifford, James

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Colectivo Situaciones

D'Andrade, Roy

de la Cadena, Marisol

Escobar, Arturo

Esteva, Gustavo

Fals Borda, Orlando

Fanon, Frantz

Farmer, Paul

Freire, Paulo

Gordon, Edmund T.
Gramsci, Antonio
Greenwood, Davydd J.
Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson
Hale, Charles R
Haraway, Donna
Harding, Sandra
Harrison, Faye V.
Johnson, Allen, and Ross Sackett
Latour, Bruno
Lipsitz, George
Lorde, Audre
Lucas Jr., George R
Mugabane, B. , and J.C. Faris
Pierre, Jemima
Ribeiro, Gustavo Lins
Rich, Adrienne
Sanjek, Roger
Scheper-Hughes, Nancy
Shore, Cris, and Susan Wright
Smith, Linda Tuhiwai
Speed, Shannon
Springer, Simon
Stavenhagen, Rodolfo
Strathern, Marilyn
Sudbury, Julia , and Margo Okazawa-Rey
Tinsley, Omise’eke Natasha
Visweswaran, Kamala
Weber, M
Wilderson, Frank
Willis, W.S.