

ANT 324L: U.S. LATINO/A ETHNOGRAPHIES

Cecilia Ballí
cballi@austin.utexas.edu

Spring 2012
Tuesdays 11-12:30 p.m.
SAC 4.118

Office & Phone: SAC 5.134, 471-8522
Office Hours: T Th 3:30-5 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

As interpreters and translators of culture, anthropologists produce authoritative representations of other people's lives. This course will explore the everyday lived realities of U.S. Latino/a communities through the lens of ethnography, the anthropologist's method. Through texts representing a diversity of issues and geographic regions, we will examine the political, economic and cultural practices that structure social life through race/ethnicity, gender, class, citizenship, education, language, health and the body, as well as how individuals and communities resist or even subvert those practices. At the same time, we will ask critical questions about how those texts are produced – that is, what relationships of power and epistemologies (forms of knowing) shape and help build ethnographic authority. Students concurrently will develop their own ideas for an ethnographic study in the Austin vicinity and execute it in consultation with the professor and through small-group discussion. The write-up will serve as a final project, constituting half of the course grade.

TEXTS (selections on Blackboard and in course reader):

Arlene Dávila. *Latinos Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People*. University of California Press, 2001.

Carlos Ulises Decena. *Tacit Subjects: Belonging and Same-Sex Desire among Dominican Immigrant Men*. Duke University Press, 2011.

Douglas E. Foley. *Learning Capitalist Culture: Deep in the Heart of Tejas*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990.

Angela Garcia. *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession Along the Rio Grande*. University of California Press, 2010.

José Limon. *Dancing With the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1994.

Norma Mendoza Denton. *Homegirls: Language and Cultural Practice Among Latina Youth Gangs*. Wiley and Sons, 2008.

Merida M. Rúa (ed.) *Latino Urban Ethnography and the Work of Elena Padilla*. University of Illinois Press, 2011.

David Spener. *Clandestine Crossings: Migrants and Coyotes on the Texas-Mexico Border*. Cornell University Press, 2009.

GRADING:

Final project – 50%

Class participation – 20%

Reading questions and responses – 30%

OTHER MATTERS:

Attendance: You are expected to attend every class barring personal and medical emergencies or critical travel. If you have to miss, please notify the professor in advance whenever possible. More than three unexcused absences will lower your grade.

Classroom Conduct: Please be prepared to contribute to class discussion and to respect all viewpoints expressed by your peers. Laptop use is not allowed in class unless you are making a presentation or have prior authorization from the professor.

Communicating with the Professor: To consult with the professor about your project or reading materials, please reserve a slot during office hours by signing up outside of SAC 5.134. *Email should be reserved for small questions and class matters.*

Scholastic Dishonesty: The University takes a strong posture in cases of scholastic dishonesty, which include “cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts,” and anything else that violates “the basic standard of academic integrity” – including submitting the same paper to two professors without permission. Further details about expectations and consequences are detailed on this Dean of Student’s website:
<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>.

Students with Disabilities: Upon request, the University will make appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Please alert me in confidence of any special needs you have and visit
<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd> for additional information.

