**SOC 395D: Poverty and Marginality in the Americas: Emerging Problems, Enduring Debates, Ethnographic Perspectives**

Javier Auyero

Wednesdays 12-3

This reading-intensive course is devoted to review past and present ethnographic analyses of the nature and experiences of poverty and marginality in Latin America and in the United States, to examine some of the most controversial issues and debates, and to explore the emerging research topics north and south of the border.

Requirements:

The course follows a mixed lecture-seminar format, combining formal presentations, short lectures, and group discussion. The requirements are threefold:

* Weekly electronic reading notes: every TUESDAY before 10 AM, participants will post on blackboard reading notes (three paragraphs maximum). These notes should include: one paragraph outlining possible connections between the assigned readings (if there is more than one), one paragraph of questions/topics you would like to discuss in class, and one paragraph describing one or more research topics that emerge from the assigned readings.
* Active participation in class discussions, including two short oral presentations on a given set of readings. Presentations should be done in groups of two. In weeks FOUR and NINE, presentations should be more detailed, summarizing arguments, substantive contribution and methodological strategies (half of the class would not have read the book).
* A term paper of no more than 15 pages. The paper can criticize and contrast two or more of the authors studied, deploy their ideas in the course of a research proposal, etc. Term paper topics should be submitted for approval by the instructor by week 9 (one page abstract).

Schedule

* **Two new classics:**

Week ONE:

Philippe Bourgois. 1995. *In Search of Respect*. *Selling Crack in El Barrio* (ENTIRE)

Week TWO:

Nancy Scheper-Hughes. 1993. *Death Without Weeping. The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (Intro, Chapters 1-5, 7, 8, 9).

* **Mapping the Field(s):**

Week THREE:

Katherine Newman and Rebekah Peeples Massengill. 2006. “The Texture of Hardship: Qualitative Sociology of Poverty, 1995-2005,” Annual Review of Sociology 32:423-446

Small, Mario Luis, David J. Harding, and Michele Lamont. 2010. “Reconsidering Culture and Poverty.” The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 629:6-27.

González de la Rocha, Mercedes, et al. 2004. “From the Marginality of the 1960s to the ‘New Poverty’ of Today: A LARR Research Forum.” *Latin American Research Review* 39(1): 184–203.

Fischer, Brodwyn. 2012. “A Century in the Present Tense.” In Fischer, McCann and Auyero (eds.) “Cities from Scratch: Poverty and Informality in Urban Latin America.”

* **Ethnography’s promises and shortcomings**

Week FOUR:

Half of the class reads: Anderson, Elijah. 1999. *Code of the Street*.

Half of the class reads: Duneier, Mitchel. 2000. *Sidewalk* (Pp. 1-154, 313-357).

Loïc Wacquant. 2002. “Scrutinizing the street. Poverty, morality, and the pitfalls of urban ethnography.” *American Journal of Sociology* 107 (6).

Gowan, Teresa. 2009. “New Hobos or Neo-Romantic Fantasy? Urban Ethnography beyond the Neoliberal Disconnect.” *Qualitative Sociology* 33 (2):231-258.

* **Survival Networks:**

Week FIVE:

Desmond, Matthew. Forthcoming. “Disposable Ties.” American Journal of Sociology.

Auyero, Javier. 2000. *Poor People’s Politics.* (Introduction, skim 1-2, focus on 3-5).

Recommended:

Stack, Carol. *All our Kin.*

Lomnitz, Larissa. *Networks and Marginality: Life in a Mexican Shantytown*

Small, Mario. 2004. *Villa Victoria: The Transformation of Social Capital in a Boston Barrio.*

* **Informal Economies**

WEEK SIX:

Venkatesh, Sudhir. 2009. *Off the Books. The Underground Economy and the Urban Poor*.

Those who read Spanish, can volunteer to present these:

Girón, Nacho. 2011. *La Salada*; Hacher, Sebastián. 2011. *Sangre Salada*.

* **Environmental Suffering**

WEEK SEVEN:

Lerner, Steve. 2010. *Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposure in the United States.*

Auyero, J. and D. Swistun. 2008. “The Social Production of Toxic Uncertainty,” *American Sociological Review* 73(3): 357-379*.*

Recommended:

Kroll-Smith et.al. 2000. Illness and the Environment: A Reader in Contested Medicine

Auyero, J. and D. Swistun. 2009. Flammable. Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantyown.

Sze, Julie. 2006. Noxious New York: The Racial Politics of Urban Health and Environmental Justice

* **Urban Violence**

WEEK EIGHT:

Wilding, Polly. 2010. “‘New Violence’: Silencing Women’s Experiences in the Favelas of Brazil.” Journal of Latin American Studies 42:719-747.

Rodgers, Dennis. 2009. “Living in the Shadow of Death: Gangs, Violence, and Social Disorder in Urban Nicaragua, 1996-2002.”

Castillo Berthier, Hector and Gareth Jones. 2009. “Mean Streets: Youth, Violence, and Daily Life in Mexico City.”

Those who read Spanish, can volunteer to present these:

Alarcón, Cristian. 2003. *Cuando me muera quiero que me toquen cumbia*.

Alarcón, Cristian. 2010. *Si me querés quereme transa*.

WEEK NINE:

Half of the class reads: Harding, David. 2010. *Living the Drama. Community, Conflict, and Culture among Inner-City Boys* (selections TBA).

Half of the class reads: Jones, Nikki. 2010. *Between Good and Ghetto. African American Girls and Inner City Violence* (selections TBA).

Recommended:

Brush, Lisa. 2011. *Poverty, Battered Women, Work, and U.S. Public Policy*.

* **Incarceration and Prison’s Tentacles**

WEEK TEN:

Wacquant, Loïc. 2010. “Deadly Symbiosis. When Ghetto and Prison Meet and Mesh,” “Class, Race & Hyperincarceration in Revanchist America,” “The Militarization of Urban Marginality: Lessons from the Brazilian Metropolis.”

Müller, Markus. 2011. “The Rise of the Penal State in Latin America.” Forthcoming .

Recommended:

Wacquant, Loïc. 2009. *Punishing the Poor*.

WEEK ELEVEN:

Goffman, Alice. 2009. “On The Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto.” *American Sociological Review* 74 (2): 339-357

Comfort, Megan. *Doing Time Together. Love and Family in the Shadow of the Prison.*

Recommended:

Rios, Victor. *Punished. Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys.*

* **Chains of Violence at the Urban Margins**

WEEK TWELVE:

Auyero, Javier; Agustín Burbano de Lara; and Flavia Bellomi (MANUSCRIPT IN PROGRESS). *In Harm’s Way at the Urban Margins*.