This seminar serves as our departmental colloquium on culture, power, and social change. Our working group is interested in employing ethnographic analysis, broadly defined, however, without restricting it to a particular region. In other words, you are expected to attend and participate in the seminar for pass or no pass (for 2-4 units, depending on your needs). You are not required to write a paper or do any other requirement. If you have any questions and concerns, feel free to email me.

Talks are in 353 Haines between 4 and 6 unless otherwise noted. The following is the list of speakers scheduled to talk this spring:

April 5: No Meeting

April 12: Prof. Sandra Morgen (Women's Studies and Anthropology, Pennsylvania State University)


From their different social locations within the state, welfare agency administrators and workers have promoted, enacted, interpreted, and, to some degree, resisted the neoliberalization of the U.S. welfare state. Not only do their experiences of and perspectives on welfare restructuring differ substantially from those of their low-income clients, but class, gender, race and location within the state bureaucracy differentiate the power, agency and interpretations of administrators and workers. How does this play out in the everyday lives of those whose job it is to craft and/or implement state policy? What can we learn about neoliberal hegemony from studying welfare restructuring? What are the implications of exploring positionality within the
neoliberal state for ethnographies and theories of the state?

April 19: **Jooyoung Lee** (Sociology, UCLA)

Jooyoung Lee is a third year Ph.D. student in UCLA's Sociology Department. He is a predoctoral fellow at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and studies race, culture, neighborhoods, and crime. His dissertation analyzes the everyday lives and career trajectories of aspiring rappers at “Project Blowed”, a weekly open mic in South Central Los Angeles' Leimert Park. He has spent the past 2+ years conducting ethnographic fieldwork, video recording, and interviewing regulars at Project Blowed. In his spare time, he dances with members of the “L.A. Boppers”, a funk-styles dance crew from Compton and South Central Los Angeles.

**Rap Dreams:**
**Turning Points in the Hip Hop Career**

In this paper I show how the meanings of Hip Hop change over the individual's life course. Through oral histories and ongoing participant-observation in a Hip Hop scene in South Central Los Angeles, I explore how individuals go through patterned career stages - fan, wannabe, and rapper - in the Hip Hop career. To show how people move through these stages, I look at different ‘turning points’ that change the ways people orient to and experience Hip Hop. First, individuals remember becoming fans as part of mundane processes with family members and friends. Next, aspiring rappers describe how they wanted to rap after seeing someone else do it. Finally, aspiring rappers describe three ways they 'go public' and professionalize their approach to Hip Hop music. Each of these stages represents a deeper level of participation in Hip Hop, but also marks a change in what Hip Hop means to people. Ultimately, this paper adds onto existing narratives of Hip Hop as an “oppositional” and “resistance” culture and shows how the meanings change over the life course.

April 26: Prof. **Carrie M. Lane** (American Studies, California State University, Fullerton)

Carrie M. Lane is an Assistant Professor of American Studies at California State University, Fullerton, where she teaches courses on ethnography, U.S. cultural history, community studies, the corporation and American culture, and the theories and methods of interdisciplinary research. Professor Lane completed her BA in Cultural Anthropology at Princeton University, and her PhD in American Studies at Yale University. She is currently revising a manuscript on unemployment, jobseeking, and professional identity among U.S. high-tech professionals, and will soon begin ethnographic fieldwork on service workers in Southern California. Professor Lane currently serves as an Executive Board

A decline in long-term job security for white-collar U.S. workers over the last four decades has been paralleled by an equally precipitous rise in the availability of part-time, contract, and other contingent work arrangements. While the social and economic impact of these shifts has been widely debated, less attention has been given to how middle-class workers model and experience their relationship with corporate employers in this new environment. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Dallas, Texas, I investigate how the global high-technology labor market has combined with broader cultural and economic shifts to reshape the relationship between white-collar tech workers, the work they do, and the corporations that employ them. These workers see the relationship between employer and employee as a temporary contractual exchange, in contrast to earlier models that emphasized loyalty, tenure, and paternal obligation.

According to this new model, individual workers are not so much employees of the corporation as they are self-pronounced “companies of one,” little capitalist enterprises linked on a provisional basis corporations that, despite considerable differences in capital and scale, are conceptualized as equal trading partners, each free to terminate the relationship at will. This new model bolsters middle-class tech workers’ self-esteem and professional identities by casting them as autonomous capitalist agents, but also renders them especially vulnerable to the vagaries of an increasingly volatile and pro-corporate labor market. This paper assesses the cultural ramifications of this altered employment relationship, with particular regard to broader debates over the impact of unemployment and “flexible careers” on middle-class workers’ identities, professional strategies, and family life.

May 3: Prof. Lynn Hunt (History, UCLA)

Born in Panama and raised in St. Paul, Minnesota, Lynn Hunt has her B.A. from Carleton College (Minnesota) and her Ph.D. from Stanford University. She taught at the University of Pennsylvania (1987-1998) and the University of California, Berkeley (1974-1987) before coming to UCLA as Eugen Weber Professor of Modern European History. Her books include Revolution and Urban Politics in Provincial France (1978); Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution (1984; new edition 2004); The Family Romance of the French Revolution (1992); and most recently, Inventing Human Rights (2007). She has also written about historical method and epistemology: The New Cultural History (1989); with Joyce Appleby and Margaret Jacob, Telling the Truth about History (1994); with Jacques Revel, Histories: French Constructions of the Past (1995); and with Victoria Bonnell, Beyond the Cultural Turn (1999). She has edited collections on
the history of eroticism, pornography, and human rights and published a western civilization textbook, a co-authored textbook on the French Revolution (with Jack Censer), and a collection of documents on human rights and the French Revolution. Her books have been translated into Japanese, French, German, Italian, Korean, Turkish, Portuguese, Chinese and Polish. She was President of the American Historical Association in 2002.

**What Now? Beyond Paradigms**

I propose to talk in general terms about current developments in cultural history, in part using my own work as a point of departure, in part referring to new work that is appearing.

May 10: Prof. **Edward Soja** (Urban Planning, School of Public Policy and Social Research, UCLA)

Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning at UCLA and Visiting Centennial Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics.

**Seeking Spatial Justice**

Spatial justice refers most broadly to the spatial dimension of social justice. More specifically, it focuses on how justice and injustice are produced and reproduced spatially, through the social production of urban and regional spaces, and how the geography of injustice can be used as a framework and focus for collective action and coalition-building. Particular attention will be given to related concepts such as the "right to the city" and environmental justice, as well as to the example of the Bus Riders Union.

May 17: Prof. **John Jackson** Jr. (Anthropology, Univ. of Pennsylvania)

John L. Jackson, Jr., is Richard Perry University Associate Professor of Communication and Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. Before joining the faculty at Penn, Jackson received his PhD in Anthropology from Columbia University, spent three years as a Junior Fellow at Harvard University's Society of Fellows, and then taught cultural anthropology at Duke University for four years. He is author of two books, Harlemworld: Doing Race and Class in Contemporary Black America (2001) and Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity (2005), both published by University of Chicago Press. Jackson edited special issues of the journal South Atlantic Quarterly ("Racial Americana") in 2005 and Women & Performance ("Pass*in") in 2006. He spent last year as a Lilly Fellow at the National Humanities Center, and he is currently putting the finishing touches on a book about racial paranoia in
contemporary American society.

**The Twelve Tribes of Transnationalism:**
*Race, Religion, and Representation among African-American Hebrews in Israel*

Focusing on the transatlantic flow of adherents, religious beliefs, and cultural practices, this talk is based on a current ethnographic research project that examines how Black Hebrew Israelites in New York City, Washington DC, and Dimona (Israel) construct a globally diverse spiritual subjectivity with its own particular iteration of Black Diasporic possibility. This paper describes the historical, philosophical, ethno-medical and critico-geographical interventions that define this group's revisionist worldview, a revisionism that challenges conventional notions of racial identity and religious community. The talk will also highlight how the group deploys and theorizes the mass media as mechanisms for community building.

May 24: Prof. **Clare M. Weber** (Sociology, California State University, Dominguez Hills)

Assistant Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies Program Coordinator, California State University Dominguez Hills

Clare M. Weber will be giving a presentation based upon her recent book, *Visions of Solidarity U.S. Peace Activists in Nicaragua from War to Women's Activism and Globalization*. *Visions of Solidarity* is currently the only study of peace activist's transformation from an anti-war struggle to an anti-globalization struggle. It explores the power dynamics between citizen activists in the Global North and South, examining efforts at reframing issues of social justice over time, and highlighting transnational feminist politics and agency at the local level. This book focuses on the way that transnational activists strategies are negotiated across boundaries. Through a comparative ethnographic study of the U.S.-based Witness for Peace and the Wisconsin Coordination Council on Nicaragua, the author, Clare Weber, explores how the organizations came to have very different responses over time to the neoliberal development project imposed on Nicaragua by the United States. Weber skillfully links studies of transnational social movements, women's grassroot activism, and the Central America Peace movement in this unique book.

May 31: Dr. **Bangele [Nonoy] Alsaybar** (Anthropology, UCLA)

Bangele (Nonoy) Alsaybar recently completed his doctoral work at the UCLA Anthropology Department; he also has an M.A. in Asian American Studies from UCLA and an MA in Anthropology from the
Filipino American Youth Formations in Los Angeles: A Transnational View

Extensive field ethnography of youth groups in both the Philippines and Los Angeles has shown me that the "gang" framework and the "gang/non-gang" dichotomy (widely held by both law enforcement and influential researchers) cannot adequately explain the rise and creation of a violence-rejecting, fun-seeking Filipino American youth culture. Rather than search for defects in the mental and social backgrounds of immigrant youths and explain gangs as a response to difficult acculturation, I bring attention to pre-immigration American cultural influences that provided models for aggressive behavior and group bonding. An examination of youth formations like the transplanted barkada, gang, fraternity, the more recent crew and the linkages among them illustrates the relative complexity of the phenomenon and challenges assumptions and dominant images of Filipino American gangs and youth.

June 7: Dr. Nina Sylvanus (Global Fellow, International Institute, UCLA)

Nina Sylvanus is a Global Fellow at UCLA's International Institute where she is working on a book project based on her dissertation, entitled "The Fabric of Globality: West African Women in the World Commodity Trade." She received her Ph.D in Anthropology from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris in 2006.

She has published several papers in French journals, including Les Temps Modernes, and has an article forthcoming in Anthropological Theory and a book chapter in Globalization and Transformation of Local Socio-Economic Practices (U. Schuerkens, eds. London: Routledge). She currently teaches Anthro 191 (Globalization and Trade in Africa) and will teach a course in Global Studies next Fall.

Chinese devils, the global market, and the declining power of Togo’s commodity queens

Through the lens of changing moral economies and shifting local-global articulations, this paper will analyze the most recent phase in the long-standing and shifting global trade of printed “African” fabrics, produced in Europe for export markets in West Africa, and most recently reproduced in China. The center stage of my analysis is Lomé’s Grand-Marché, West Africa's former regional pole of textile distribution. Examining the market’s current tensions and shifting power relations provides compelling ethnographic insight into the complexity of local-global articulations. Formerly powerful women traders articulate anxieties surrounding the transformed market for globally produced
'African' fabrics. The organizational shifts in the market appear to these women as a moral conundrum. While considering China as the new giant of the global economy, they simultaneously accuse the Chinese 'devil' to have brought globalization, ‘immoral’ free-trade dynamics and defective commodities to Togo, which are held responsible for the unsettling of long-standing values and trade hierarchies. This paper seeks to explore these sets of tensions by considering two interrelated processes: the change/distortion in value hierarchies expressed with the appearance of “fake” fabrics and the change in trade hierarchies with the decline of Togo’s commodity queens.