

ETHN 210  
Graduate Research Seminar

Spring 2005

Topic: Researching Race and Activism

Instructor: Jane Rhodes, Associate Professor

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Hours: Tuesday 1-4 p.m., or by appointment

## Overview

There are two goals for this course: to focus attention on an area of research central to Ethnic Studies scholarship, and to conceptualize and plan student's M. A. theses. Most Ethnic Studies scholars identify themselves in some ways as activists. Often they bring a background of involvement in social movements and community organizations to their intellectual projects; others place activist projects at the center of their research agendas; and still others scholars view their very existence in the academy as a radical act. We will spend the quarter reading studies of social movements for racial justice that represent a range of methodological and theoretical approaches. The readings offer a loose historical overview of numerous organizations and activists, while raising crucial questions about race, gender, sexuality, identity, community, and political strategies. It is hoped that students in the class will find ways in which this body of literature can serve their own research, regardless of whether the explicit focus is on activism. This course will also be structured to allow students opportunities to refine the topics for their M. A. thesis, discuss questions of method and approach, and prepare to embark on their independent research.

## Required Texts

Books are available at Groundworks Bookstore

Supplementary readings are available on Electronic Reserves at the UCSD Library

Charles Payne, I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle (UC Press 1995)

Cathy J. Cohen, The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics (U of Chicago Press 1997)

David Naguib Pellow, Garbage Wars: The Struggle for Environmental Justice in Chicago (MIT Press 2002)

Joy James, Shadowboxing: Representations of Black Feminist Politics  
(Palgrave 1999)

Julia Sudbury, Other Kinds of Dreams: Black Women's Organisations and the Politics of Transformation (Routledge 1998)

Rumi Yasutake, Transnational Women's Activism: The United States, Japan, and Japanese Immigrant Communities in California, 1859-1920 (NYU Press 2003)

Juana Maria Rodriguez, Queer Latinidad : Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces  
(NYU Press 2003)

Dennis Banks, Ojibwa Warrior: Denise Banks and the American Indian Movement (University of Oklahoma Press, 2005)

## Course Requirements

Students are required to read all materials prior to class and be prepared to contribute to a detailed, analytical discussion of the materials at hand. Twice during the quarter you will write a 3-5 page essay that links the main book to the supplementary articles/chapters for one week; you may choose any two weeks for your analysis. The essays are due at the end of the class for which the readings are assigned. Simultaneously, you will be working towards having a viable proposal for the M. A. thesis, which will culminate in a 15-20 page prospectus. Written assignments are as follows:

- Two short essays
- Project outline
- Project bibliography
- Project plan
- Prospectus

## Schedule

March 29      Introduction; discussion of course theme  
Overview of individual research projects

April 5      Early models of radical activism  
R. Yasutake, Transnational Women's Activism  
L. Glickman, "'Buy for the Sake of the Slave': Abolitionism and the Origins of American Consumer Activism," American Quarterly (Dec. 2004) 56/4: 889-912.  
J. Rhodes, "Emigration Furor and Notes of Canada West," Mary Ann Shadd Cary, pp. 25-50

- April 12      The culture of activism and its roots in the southern civil rights struggle  
 C. Payne, I've Got the Light of Freedom  
 B. Ransby, "Behind-the-scenes View of a Behind-the-scenes Organizer: The Roots of Ella Baker's Political Passions," Sisters in the Struggle, pp. 42-57.  
 A. Umoja, "1964: The Beginning of the End of Nonviolence in the Mississippi Freedom Movement," Radical History Review (Winter 2003) 85: 201-26.  
**Assignment: Project Outline**
- April 19      Translating civil rights activism for a Northern, urban terrain  
 D. N. Pellow, Garbage Wars  
 J. Sze, "Asian American Activism for Environmental Justice," Peace Review (June 2004) 16:149-156.  
 J. Fernandez, "Between Social Service Reform and Revolutionary Politics: The Young Lords, Late Sixties Radicalism, and Community Organizing in New York City," Freedom North, pp. 255-285.
- April 26      The politics of confrontation through Red Power  
 D. Banks, Dennis Banks and the American Indian Movement  
 T. Loo and C. Strange, "'Rock Prison of Liberation': Alcatraz Island and the American Imagination," Radical History Review (Fall 2000) 78:27-56  
 J. Nagel, "American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Politics and the Resurgence of Identity," American Sociological Review (Dec. 1995) 60: 947-965  
**Assignment: Project Bibliography**
- May 3      Linking gender and race in activist movements  
 J. James, Shadowboxing  
 D. Espinosa, "'Revolutionary Sisters': Women's Solidarity and Collective Identification Among Chicano Brown Berets in East Los Angeles, 1967-1970," Aztlan (2001) 26(1):17-58.  
 P. S. Brush, "Problematizing the Race Consciousness of Women of Color," Signs (Autumn 2001) 27:171-198
- May 10      Race, gender and transnational women's politics  
 J. Sudbury, Other Kinds of Dreams  
 U. Narayan, "Contesting Cultures: Westernization, Respect for Cultures, and Third-World Feminists," Dislocating Cultures, pp. 1-39  
 V. Moghadam, "Islamic Feminism and its Discontents: Toward a Resolution of the Debate," Signs (Summer 2002) 27: 1135-1171.  
**Assignment: Project Plan**
- May 17      no class

- May 24      “High Risk Activism”: The politics of racializing the queer subject  
J. M. Rodriguez, Queer Latinidad  
V. Taylor and N. Raeburn, “Identity Politics as High-Risk Activism:  
Career Consequences for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Sociologists,” Social  
Problems (May 1995) 42:252-273.  
C. Sandoval, “Dissident Globalizations, Emancipatory Methods, Social-  
Erotics,” Queer Globalizations, pp. 20-32
- May 31      Crossing the borders of race, sexuality, and politics  
C. Cohen, The Boundaries of Blackness  
Reading TBA

**Prospectus Due Tuesday June 7**