

Ethnic Studies 291B, Spring 2016
Comprehensive Research Preparation:
The Methodologies Paper
Tuesday 9:30-12:20pm
SSB 103

Prof. Gabriel N. Mendes

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*Please write “ETHN 291B” in the subject line or the e-mail might be directed to my spam folder.

Office Hours: SSB Rm 229—Wednesday 1:30-3:00pm & Thursday 12-1:30pm, **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**

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“It is good form to introduce a work in psychology with a statement of its methodological point of view. I shall be derelict. I leave methods to the botanists and the mathematicians. There is a point at which methods devour themselves.”

Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks (1952)

Course Description:

As the basis for our studies together this quarter, let’s struggle with Fanon’s provocative bracketing of methodological pronouncement. Let’s do so by considering both the epistemic and theoretical *conditions of possibility* for research in Ethnic Studies and the strategies/tools available for conducting research in this field of study. The practical result of the course will be each student producing a 20-25 page paper that identifies a research question requiring a reflexive critical analysis of relevant methodologies that you project to be of assistance in addressing that salient question.

From the Graduate Handbook: “The Second Year Research Methodologies Paper evaluates students’ knowledge of interdisciplinary research methods in the service of an Ethnic Studies research agenda. It consists of a 20-25 page critical paper that encompasses a critical evaluation of the selection of Ethnic Studies research methodologies. The goal of the research methodology paper is for students to demonstrate their familiarity with the breadth of interdisciplinary methods appropriate to the field of Ethnic Studies and their mastery of the research methodological and analytical skills necessary for writing a Doctoral Dissertation in the field.”

From the Official Course Catalogue Description: “Implementing interdisciplinary research methods, students produce independent, generative research germane to the study of race and ethnicity. Students write a 20-25 page critical paper that poses an appropriate research question; engages relevant literature to provide a conceptual framework; develops and incorporates appropriate research methodologies; and constructs a critical, thorough, and cohesive argument based on the collection, organization, interpretation, and analysis of evidence.”

Basic Requirements:

- Attend all class sessions
- Come prepared and ready to engage
- Submit ALL material promptly
- 20-25 page paper
- 5-10 key texts from your graduate core coursework as well as relevant graduate electives, organized under a methodological theme or question
- Invite/propose one reader, and another reader is assigned to you
- NOT an implementation of a research project, but a meditation on method
- Final draft due at the end of the quarter, and students receive feedback from readers over the summer.

Supplementary Texts of Note:

Howard S. Becker, *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Second Edition. (University of Chicago Press, 2007)
Robert Boice, *Advice for New Faculty Members: Nihil Nimus* (Pearson, 2000)
Stanley Fish, *How to Write a Sentence and How to Read One* (Harper, 2011)
William Germano, *From Dissertation to Book* (University of Chicago Press, 2005)
Anne Lammott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* (Anchor Books, 1994)
William Strunk and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*. Fourth Edition. (Allyn and Bacon, 2000)
The Paris Review Interviews (<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews>)

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1, March 29th

- **Discuss:** What is method? What is methodology? What is theory of method? What is interdisciplinarity? What is transdisciplinarity?
- **In Class Reading:** Lewis R. Gordon, "Shifting the Geography of Reason in an Age of Disciplinary Decadence," *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, Volume 1, Issue 2 (2011): pp.95-103; Gabriel N. Mendes, "The Study of History," Prelim Exam Synthesis Essay for Prof. Mari Jo Buhle, Brown University, August 2003.
- **Read for next week:** Kyla Wazana Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (NYU Press, 2012)
< <http://roger.ucsd.edu/record=b9009004~S9> > and scholarly book reviews of *Racial Indigestion* (try JSTOR).
- **Write for next week:** a reflection on methodology in *Racial Indigestion* drawing from the book reviews and your own reading of Tompkins.
 1. What are the main arguments of the book?
 2. What are the methods and the theory behind the method?
 3. Using the text as a springboard, what generative arguments can be made that could be relevant to your own research interests? If the methodologies and theoretical orientations of Tompkins's book do not overlap with your own research interests, then begin to draw contrasts and begin to illuminate what methodological & theoretical questions you have.
Include citations from the reviews, and from the text.

Book Talk & Signing: Gabriel N. Mendes, *Under the Strain of Color: Harlem's Lafargue Clinic and the Promise of an Antiracist Psychiatry* (Cornell University Press, 2015), Weds. March 30th, 4:30-6:00pm, Cross-Cultural Center-Library

Week 2, April 5th

- **Part I, Discussion:** Theory and method in Kyla Wazana Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century*. Please prepare by highlighting at least one passage from one of the reviews that you want to discuss, and at least one corresponding passage from Tompkins's book that you also want to discuss.
- **Read for next week:** Sample Methodologies Papers
- **Write for next week:** A proposal for your methodologies paper. This proposal must include:
 1. A proposed title for your paper;
 2. A methodological theme or question that is specific to your intended area of research. For example, "How do we research resistance to...in X...during Y?";
 3. A solid paragraph that explains the significance of your theme/question to the field of Ethnic Studies (along with any other relevant field of study);
 4. A bibliography of 5-10 texts that can speak to your methodological theme or question.

Week 3, April 12th

- **Present:** Your methodologies paper proposal. (Post to TritonEd page by 12noon PST, Monday, April 11th)
- **Q&A:** Ethnic Studies Doctoral Candidates Martin Boston and Jennifer Mogannam. 11:00am-12:20pm.
- **Write for next week:** Annotations for 3 texts in your bibliography, similar to what you did for Tompkins's *Racial Indigestion*. Write one paragraph reflecting on how these three texts connect/contrast/complement one another methodologically.

Week 4, April 19th

- **Present:** Your annotated bibliography
- **Revise for next week:** Annotations for 3 texts in your bibliography, similar to what you did for *Racial Indigestion*. Write one paragraph reflecting on how these three texts connect/contrast/complement one another methodologically.
- **Revise for next week:** A proposal for your methodologies paper.

Week 5, April 26th

- **Present:** Revised proposal
- **Write for next week:** First draft of Methodologies paper

Week 6, May 3rd

- **First draft** of Methodologies paper due 3pm, Monday, May 2nd (TritonEd)
- **Revise for next week:** Draft of Methodologies paper

Week 7, May 10th

- **Revised draft** of Methodologies paper due, 3pm, Monday, May 9th (TritonEd)

**Ethnic Studies 25th Anniversary Keynote Speaker:
DR. ROBIN D.G. KELLEY, UCLA,**

FRIDAY, MAY 13TH, 3-5PM, GREAT HALL

Week 8, May 17th

- One on one sessions with Professor Mendes—Schedule TBD

Week 9, May 24th

- **Final draft** of Methodologies paper due

Read for Next Week: C. Wright Mills, “On Intellectual Craftsmanship,”
Appendix in *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) [TED/TritonEd]

Week 10, June 2

- **Final discussion:** “On Intellectual Craftsmanship”

Methodologies Paper Rubric & Guidelines for Readers

Ethnic Studies 2nd year MA paper

MA Methodologies Paper

Student Name:

Reader: _____ # 1 X # 2 ____ (check)

Recommendation (check): pass _____ no pass _____ **Date:**

Reader Comment / Evaluation form (optional)

In a few words, what methodological question or problem does this paper raise?
What main methodological approaches does this paper consider or critique?
What anchoring texts are used to discuss these methodological approaches? Are these texts suitable for a graduate level reading list in Ethnic Studies?
What research area/site/object does the student evoke to engage their methodological question/problem? Does this paper seem sufficiently relevant to this area/site/object?
Please suggest any texts that this paper ought to engage? Are these gaps significant to the purpose of the paper?
Does the paper sustain a methodological conversation <u>across</u> texts?
Overall, is this paper a satisfactory graduate level discussion of interdisciplinary methodologies, suitable for a comparative examination of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality vis-à-vis indigeneity, trans/nationalism, coloniality, etc.?