

Panel Discussion on
Social Theory, War Crimes & Identity Politics
Discussing Critical Methodologies

Wednesday 17 November 2010
10:30 a.m.

Robinson Hall, Room A208 (Dept. of Public & Int'l Affairs)

The Brazilian Mulata: Methodological Challenges of the (Re)Assertion of the Body in Practice and Theory

By Nicole McCoy (Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology)

This paper reflects on the methodological challenges of situating the symbolic and physical body within the realm of feminist ethnographic methods. Pursuing a project committed to interrogating the relationship between status and identity through the processes that constitute corporeal existence, I attempt to navigate a methodology that can account for the intersection of the body and social structure. Starting from the perspective of institutional ethnography, I use interviews to access this notion of a lived experience (habitus) with both feminist commitments and an eye towards expanding existing theory.

Grounding human rights and justice: methodological challenges for analyzing post-conflict accountability efforts in the Balkans

By Arnaud Kurze (Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science)

Drawing on human rights organizations that focus on war crimes issues in Croatia, this paper discusses how sociological methods of participant observation and narrative interviews complement more conventional tools, i.e. archival research, to map the role of activists in their attempts to account for grave human rights violations and mass atrocities. While initially retributive justice mechanism dominated post-war attempts to put on trial perpetrators, restorative justice practices have emerged, creating a dynamic yet complex relationship between legal practitioners and human rights activists. The author argues that using the above methods to ground this research provides a framework that is flexible and contextually adaptable to analyze different, intersecting spaces and the role of key actors within these spaces to help understand current practices of truth and justice in post-conflict settings.



Discussant, Johanna Bockman (Assistant Professor of Sociology)