

# ON AND AROUND THE HILL: TEAM ETHNOGRAPHY

## Project description

The research is concerned with social interaction and mutual perceptions of campus community members and city residents in areas adjoining the campus. It considers how identities and interactions are shaped by positions within and travels across the boundaries between campus and community. Our approach to these questions is shaped by the key sociological concept of the “interaction order,” drawing on interactionist insights regarding bounded institutions, the micro-order of a “glimpsed world,” and behaviors in the public realm (Goffman 1961, 1971, 1979; Lofland 1973, 1998).

A large university is an extremely complex and relatively self-contained organization; while it is not a “total institution” like a prison or ship at sea, it shares several features with such institutions--a strong effect on members’ identities, a self-contained round of activities, and relatively well-defined and consequential boundaries. Such large organizations also have significant effects on the communities in which they are located, and universities may often have distinctive impacts on surrounding communities--so much so that their interactions are often given the distinctive label, “town-gown relations.” Indeed, precisely because the university is not a total institution, students, faculty, staff, and community residents regularly cross its boundaries and mingle in border zones surrounding the campus. The purpose of our project is to examine social life in the public spaces of the campus, neighboring communities, and such border zones between them.

### Overall research questions:

Specific research questions will evolve over time, as is typically the case in qualitative research, and as might be expected in a team project of this sort, given that team members will bring varying particular interests and insights to the research. However, the following are the overarching clusters of questions that will provide our starting points:

- How do individuals present and read identities linked to campus or community? What are the interactional consequences of such performances and readings? How are campus and community identities related to other kinds of social identities?
- How are the boundaries of the campus maintained, and to what effects? How do individuals manage boundary crossings and what are their experiences in various zones? What kinds of spaces and activities provide for interaction between campus and community members?
- What are the meanings that members bring to intergroup relations? How are those shaped, sustained, and transformed in interaction?

**Research Portfolio Project Outlines**  
**Qualitative Methods Spring 2010**  
**Alecea Standlee**

- I. You will work together in teams throughout the semester to collect data using the two major research methods we use in class, participant observation and interviewing. We will conduct exercises throughout the semester to prepare you for your final assignment, a research portfolio.
- II. **Due April 22-** Printed documents together neatly held together with a paper clip or in a folder. Will Include:
  - a. Cover Page with your name, a snappy title for your project and a list of what you are turning in.
  - b. 3-4 Sets of data
    - i. One set will be coded
    - ii. A list of codes
  - c. 2 Memos of your choice
  - d. All of the signed interview consent forms for the project
- III. **Due April 26-** Digital documents will be turned in via email ([stan0504@yahoo.com](mailto:stan0504@yahoo.com)).
  - a. *Subject Line:* Data Sets for Your Name
  - b. Will include all of the data sets you turned in with your portfolio
    - i. Names will be removed (both yours and the interview participants)
    - ii. Each data set will have a descriptive title and your initials
      1. Example “Tennis Match Observation AS” or “Food Service Employee interview AS”