



Yale University

# Workshop in Urban Ethnography

*The Ethnographic Interpretation of Urban Life and Culture*

Monday, October 21, 11:30am-1:20pm

210 Prospect Street, Room 203



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**“We’re Free, but Not Free”: Black Custodial  
Citizenship and Racial Narratives**

Many young black men in America have their earliest and most salient interaction with the state in an encounter with police. Given this, criminal justice has been described as a “race-making institution”; it actively structures racial understandings within society, defines racial identities, and positions racial groups. Through the detailed narratives of custodial citizens, along with analyses of large-scale surveys, we demonstrate how contact with police, courts, prisons, and jails produces a “carceral lifeworld”—characterized by decreased trust in political institutions, a reduced faith that the state will respond to the will of the people, and diminished sense of standing and citizenship. Instead of developing the tools and ethos of engaged citizens, citizens learn to stay quiet, make no demands, and avoid interactions with government. In the workshop, I will focus on one part of this research, that which explores how criminal justice is an important site of racial socialization.

*Lunch Served - All Welcome*

For upcoming speakers and bios, visit <http://www.yale.edu/sociology/UEP>.

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