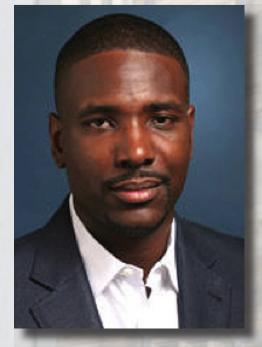# Workshop in Urban Ethnography

Spring 2013

Still Looking for Freedom: An Ethnography of Black Men Through Basketball

Scott Brooks
Associate Professor of Sociology and Black Studies University of Missouri

Scott Brooks is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Black Studies at the University of Missouri. He received his doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania while coaching basketball in South Philadelphia. Grounded in his research as a coach and observing participant, he has published in academic journals, edited volumes, and textbooks, and has been quoted and reviewed by *The Wall Street Journal* and *SLAM* magazine. He is the author of *Black Men Can't Shoot* (2009) and is currently working on two manuscripts that deal with coaching and a separate project that investigates urban factors in the production of Black basketball players.

Still Looking for Freedom

Young inner-city Black men are often treated qualitatively differently than other segments of our youth population. Elijah Anderson offers the framework of "the Black male in public," which encompasses both how the Black male is seen by others—as a criminal, uncivil, tough, and street-smart person who is to be feared—and the social-psychological consequence for Black males—namely, that they "must work hard to make others trust" their common decency. Anderson's framework suggests that for many young Black males, the label "bad kid" effectively operates as self-fulfilling prophecy. The problem is compounded by structure and agency: lacking access to the resources needed to succeed, they engage in behaviors that fit an alternative system of norms, standards, and expectations, and that come with local status and rewards. This presentation will look at the status of young Black men in Philadelphia who are "doing life" and how basketball is being used as a space for building capital in their search for freedom.

*Lunch Served *** All Welcome*

Monday, April 15, 11:30a-1:20p

210 Prospect Street, Room 203, New Haven

Yale