



Yale University

Workshop in Urban Ethnography

The Ethnographic Interpretation of Urban Life and Culture

Monday, September 30, 11:30am-1:20pm

210 Prospect Street, Room 203



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**Many Shades of Grey: Past, Present,
and Future of Age Relations in America**

Population aging is considered one of the top three challenges of global development by the United Nations. By 2025 one in every seven Americans, one in five Japanese, and one in four Europeans will be over the age of 65. This presentation reflects on the key sociological question: in the context of this historically unique transition towards aging society, how does age matter to deviance and to social status? It describes how the 21st century cult of the youth is linked to the revolution in age relations circa 1776. It points out recent changes in family structure, migration patterns, and welfare regimes that underlie inter- and intra-generational conflicts in fragile urban communities. Drawing on my ongoing ethnographic and mixed methods research, it shows when age relations may become a matter of life and death. First, it brings up the media case of “disposable lives” of nursing home residents (the majority of whom were Black and poor) who died in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Second, it discusses how American veterans’ ideals of “successful aging” tell the story of the Old and the New ageism, or age-based discrimination, that exacerbates race, class, and gender divides in America.

Lunch Served - All Welcome

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

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