SEMINAR DESCRIPTION
3/31/09

The purpose of this upper level graduate research seminar is to provide an organized forum for students to advance and enhance their research agendas in the general area of race and education. Each participant in the seminar is expected to be making steady progress on either a research proposal or a research paper during the term. Courses in Methods, Race, and Sociology of Education are useful background.

Seminars will be preceded by thoughtful, critical, and constructive reading of work in progress by one or more members of the seminar plus other relevant readings on the problem(s) being investigated. Seminars will be devoted to discussing questions and issues raised by the work(s), issues raised by the presenters as ones where they seek feedback, and will be initiated by one or two lead-off commentators for the day. Lead commentators will prepare one or two pages of written comments for everyone in the seminar, and other seminar members will also provide feedback to the author(s).

The author(s) whose work is being discussed are asked to bring to the seminar enough copies of their draft proposal or paper for everyone the week before, or to post it on the course website by noon of the week prior to discussion. That way, if there are any problems with the posting, we can discuss them. Author(s) are also asked to bring either a copy of the cognate readings that are not available electronically (so they can be put into the lounge) or to post electronic links to the readings along with the paper. It is likely that each participant will have a chance to have an earlier and a later version of their work discussed at least twice during the semester.

Some of the questions commentators might consider include: What is the question being addressed in the work? What is already known about this problem or question? What is the relation of the work to the larger field to which it is speaking? What is the significance or importance of the project? What literatures are germane and/or potentially useful to this project and why? What theoretical ideas are relevant? What are the strengths of the project? What is the proposed research design? What reactions do you have to the proposed research design, sample, and plans for measurement and analysis? What might be the implications of the project? How might the project be strengthened?

In addition to the lead-off commentators, everyone else in the seminar is expected each week to have at least one comment or question about the work being discussed. Final seminar grades will be based on 1) Presentations of work in progress (20%), 2) Lead-off commentaries (20%), 3) General commentaries (20%), and 4) Final papers or proposals (40%).