Cordially invites everyone to our

SPRING 2009 COLLOQUIUM SERIES

“Surviving the Streets”

Risk in ethnography: research on drugs, violence and crime

Tuesday, February 3, 2009
3:30pm
Sociology Department, Suite 520.14T

Student Discussants

Jennifer Fleetwood, Visiting Scholar, University of Edinburgh

Crystal Rodriguez, Doctoral Student, John Jay College

Discussants/Presenters:

Barry Spunt, Sociology, John Jay College

David Brotherton, Chair of Sociology, John Jay College

Richard Curtis, Chair of Anthropology, John Jay College

Yolanda Martin, Doctoral Candidate, CUNY Graduate Center

Introduction: Hanging around criminals and places where crime takes is occurring is a risky business. The ethnographer may find themselves witnessing crimes, or if they are particularly unlucky, becoming a victim of crime.

Purpose: This seminar brings together ethnographers with a wide range of experience researching hard to reach populations dealing with drugs and crime in different parts of the world to discuss how risky the position is and how to avoid or reduce risk.

Questions:
1. How dangerous is ethnography? Is it necessarily risky?
2. Where do ‘risks’ emanate from?
3. Who pose danger to the researcher? Our respondents? Gatekeepers? Police? ‘Others’ in the field who are not respondents?
4. Can risk to the researcher be limited or managed? How can we avoid or reduce the risks?
5. What legal requirements do ethnographers have to explain their observations of crimes or illegal activity?
6. What are some IRB issues and how can ethnographers get IRB approval?