

Anthropology 3425: Anthropology of the University  
Spring, 2013  
Tuesday and Thursday, 11:40-12:55  
105 Kennedy Hall

Davydd J. Greenwood  
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Office hours  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:30

**Course description:** We examine the contemporary university as a social and cultural system. The seminar involves an examination of the convergences and divergences between the trajectories of the sciences and engineering, the humanities, and the social sciences in contemporary universities and some international comparisons with the trajectories of universities around the world. The overall aim is to link an ethnographic analysis of the microstructures of departmental differentiation, professional hegemonies, and local financing with the larger-scale processes of transformation of universities' place in society under the pressures of corporatization, globalization, and competition from a host of alternative higher education institutions.

**Required books to purchase:**

- Arum, Richard and Josipa Roska, Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. 978-0226028552
- Ginsberg, Benjamin, The Fall of the Faculty. Chicago: Oxford University Press, 2011: 978-0199782444.
- Kim, Walter, Lost in the Meritocracy: The Undereducation of an Overachiever. New York: Anchor, 2010. 978-0307279453
- Ruch, Richard, Higher Ed, Inc.: The Rise of the For-profit University. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. 978-0801874475
- Jean Schensul and Margaret LeCompte, Essential Ethnographic Methods: A Mixed Method Approach, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Lanham, MD: Altamira, 2013: 978-075922031.
- Tuchman, Gayle, Wannabe U: Inside the Corporate University. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. 978-0226815305

**Optional book to purchase:**

- Canaan, Joyce and Wesley Shumar, eds., Structure and Agency in the Neo-liberal University. London: Routledge, 2008. 978-0415898010

Arum and Roska, Canaan and Shumar, Ginsberg, Kirn, Schensul, and Tuchman are all available as ebooks (Kindle) as well.

**Other articles are on the course website as indicated in the syllabus:**

**Course requirements:**

1. An “ethnography” on a university topic chosen in consultation with me and developed through 2 brief ethnographic research papers of 5 pages each based on first-hand ethnographic observations and a final completed ethnography: 75% of grade
2. Class attendance: 5% of grade
3. Class participation: 20% of grade – presentations of reading materials, presentations of status reports on the ethnography.
4. All students must complete IRB Human Subjects tutorial and to be prepared to seek authorization to conduct research on campus involving human subjects or exemption from authorization where necessary for a selected project. See <http://www.irb.cornell.edu/>.

**NOTE:** All papers must be delivered by 9 p.m. on the due date in the form of a Word document sent to my e-mail address at [djg6@cornell.edu](mailto:djg6@cornell.edu). In naming these files, do as follows: [your last name] Essay number [1, 2, or 3], and the date as ddmmYYYY. For example: Smith Essay 1 02052012.

**Policy on absences and lateness:** Absences are destructive to your own learning process and to your contribution to the learning of your classmates. Except for *bona fide* emergencies and illnesses, absences are not permitted. I will take roll in the class at every class meeting. If you are absent, it is up to you to find out from classmates what took place in the class.

**University policies and regulations:** This instructor upholds University policies and regulations about the observation of religious holidays, assistance available to students with disabilities, plagiarism, sexual harassment, and racial and ethnic discrimination. All students should become familiar with the University regulations and should bring any concerns to my attention.

Intellectual property: All written work in this course is considered to be in the public domain and therefore can be read by me and all of your classmates. During the semester, you will do some collaborative work, including peer review and critique of each other's papers. With my approval, some collaborative projects can be done and we will work out the issues about attributing and evaluating your work in such situations.

The Cornell Code of Academic Integrity: All the work you do in this course must be written for this course and no other and must originate with you in form and substance with full acknowledgement of the sources you have used. Familiarize yourself with Cornell's Academic Integrity Code which you can find online at <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>. The penalty for violating the code in this course is to receive a final grade of "F".

Students with disabilities: In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Request for such accommodations must be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except in unusual circumstances. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations (<http://sds.cornell.edu/>).

**Course website:** The course website is a "pbworks" wiki website that Greenwood manages directly.

<http://anthrouniversity3425spring2013.pbworks.com/w/page/62255338/Anthropology%203425%2C%20Spring%202013%20Course%20Website>

This is an interactive site. I will sign up the members of the class for the site and will use the site for all course-related announcements and materials. You will also post your work there. The wiki sends you a notification of e-mail each time there is a change on the site. You must leave the website notification setting on so you receive e-mails when there are changes on the site. This is the only way I will communicate with members of the class about changes in assignments and other course matters. You can see a brief extract of the change and if you need to go to the site for more information, the e-mail contains a jump link to make that easy.

**Course management:** A central teaching/learning strategy of this course is to cross-reference between the research literature on higher education and the results of your own ethnographic research on campus. The different student projects will be a key component in the course and the developing projects will be shared in class and on the course website. Peer advising will complement the advising I provide. Formal lecturing will be held to minimum with students presenting analyses of the readings in a discussion seminar format.

**Supplementary readings:** There are thousands of books and articles on higher education and so, when I have learned about the interests of the class members, I will provide you with reference lists for supplementary readings on higher education that address your interests.

## **Course outline:**

### Tuesday, January 22 – Introduction

An overview of the course aims, the landscape of higher education, and the role of anthropological/ethnographic research in gaining a renewed and reformist understanding of future higher education. Brief tutorial on use of course website.

### Thursday, January 24: Ethnography

This is an introduction to the concept of ethnography managed through a discussion of Schensul and LeCompte. We will also discuss the ethics of human subjects research and the legal/ethical requirements you must meet to be in compliance with Cornell's Institutional Review Board's rules and procedures.

#### Readings:

1. Schensul and LeCompte, Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2 – volunteer presenter
2. Wright, Greenwood, and Boden, Report on a Visit to Mondragón University – in Pages and Files on the course website – volunteer presenter
3. Review the contents of the Cornell Institutional Review Board website as a number of you will need to get IRB clearance for your work: <http://www.irb.cornell.edu/>

### Tuesday, January 29 - Universities as learning environments

Opinions and ideologies abound about the state of higher education from the students' point of view. A major recent book, Academically Adrift? By Arum and Roska, takes a serious look at a body of data. The book merits a close reading and comparison with your own experiences and observations. In addition, I have published an essay-length review of the book and then requested briefer reviews from a set of international scholars on both the book and my review of it. My review and the other reviewers' responses to it are found in Pages and Files on the course website.

#### Readings:

1. Arum and Roska, chapters 1,2 – volunteer presenters
2. Schensul and LeCompte, chapters 3, 4 – volunteer presenters

### Thursday, January 31: Universities as learning environments

#### Readings:

1. Arum and Roska, chs. 3,4, 5 – volunteer presenters

2. Greenwood et al. reviews of Arum and Roska and other reviewer responses – on the course website – volunteer presenter

Tuesday, February 5 - Universities as learning environments What does “education” mean? Are you getting “an education”? How would you know? What is the difference between education and training?

Readings:

1. Kim, Lost in the Meritocracy, chapters 1-6 – volunteer presenters

**DUE: Completion of IRB tutorial and submission of request for permission to conduct ethnographic research at Cornell due.**

Thursday, February 7 - Universities as learning environments

Readings:

1. Kim, Lost in the Meritocracy, chapters 10-18 – volunteer presenters

**DUE: Selection of topic of your ethnography and presentation of your proposal to me and to the class for comment.**

Tuesday, February 12 – What produces these problems? Universities and the Tayloristic organizational model

The principal organizational model for higher education in the North American research university is the Taylorist or Fordist design of assembly line factories with separate work stations, narrowly defined skills areas, and a segmentary, hierarchical administrative structure. This privileges a specific model of expertise and narrows education to disciplinary training.

Reading:

1. Review Cornell organizational charts – pdf on the course website - volunteer presenters
2. Read Greenwood, Are Universities Knowledge-intensive Learning Organizations? - pdf on the course website - volunteer presenter

Thursday, February 14 - Universities and Research

One of the key innovations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the creation of research universities with advanced degree programs. Once this model was consolidated, significant issues about the relation between teaching and research, basic and applied research, making money from university research, and how to assess the excellence and value of research arose.

Since research grants and expenses are a significant call on Cornell's resources and have a major impact on Cornell's national/international ranking, we will conduct our own examination of the Cornell research system and its links to the teaching and extension system of the university. We will conduct this work together by dividing components of it up to then bring together in class.

Assignment:

1. Examine the website of the Vice President for Research to understand the scope and some of the details of the research apparatus at Cornell. <http://www.cornell.edu/research/> and come to class prepared with notes about your questions and observations.

Tuesday, February 19: Where do the faculty fit and how have faculty roles changed in the past 25 years?

Reading:

1. Ginsberg, The Fall of the Faculty, Preface, Chapters 1, 2 - volunteer presenters

**DUE: first 5-page ethnography**

Thursday, February 21 Where do the faculty fit and how have faculty roles changed in the past 25 years?

Reading:

1. Ginsberg, The Fall of the Faculty, Chapters 3, 4, 5 - volunteer presenters

Tuesday, February 26 Where do the faculty fit and how have faculty roles changed in the past 25 years?

Reading:

1. Ginsberg, The Fall of the Faculty, Chapters 6, 7 - volunteer presenters

Thursday, February 28: University administrations

Readings:

1. Tuchman, Wannabe U, Chapters, 1, 2,3 - volunteer presenter

Tuesday, March 5 – University administrations

Readings:

1. Tuchman, Wannabe U., Chapters 4, 5, 6 - volunteer presenters

**DUE: Second 5-page ethnography**

Thursday, March 7 – University administrations

Reading:

1. Tuchman, Wannabe U., Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 - volunteer presenters

**Tuesday, March 12 and Thursday March 14 Greenwood away at professional meetings**

**Use this time for a major push on your ethnographic work**

**SPRING BREAK**

Tuesday, March 26 - Universities as Employment Systems and the use of business models

In this section, we are viewing the conditions of employment of students, faculty, staff, and administration under current systems of management.

Readings:

1. Ruch, chs. 1, 2 - volunteer presenters
2. optional: Bousquet, chs. 1, 2,3 - volunteer presenters

**Mid-term course evaluation in class**

Thursday, March 28 - Universities as Employment Systems

In this section, we are viewing the conditions of employment of students, faculty, staff, and administration under current systems of management.

Readings:

1. Ruch, chs. 5, 6 - volunteer presenters
2. optional, Bousquet, chs. 4, 5 - volunteer presenters

Tuesday, April 2 - Universities and Political Economy

Universities are both complex political economies in their own right and part of a much larger political economy that is ultimately global in its reach and processes. Understanding the relationships between economy and systems of power and inequality is greatly obfuscated by

contemporary views on the economy and the mystifications of public policy about the “markets”, “accountability”, and other popular terms. Approaching these dimensions ethnographically offers a very different view of what is going on in universities from the views favored by liberals, conservatives, and neo-liberals.

Reading:

1. Shumar and Caanan, chapters. 1, 2, 3 – copies will be made available - volunteer presenters

#### Thursday, April 4 - Universities and Political Economy

In class development of a model of the political economy of the university

#### Tuesday, April 9 - Universities and Political Economy

Readings:

1. Baskaran et al., Boden et al. Epstein et al. articles provided on course website - volunteer presenters
2. Optional: Shumar and Caanan, Chapters 12, 13, 14 - volunteer presenters

#### Thursday, April 11 - Universities as Public Goods: An ethnographic dimension

A key problem in the age of the dominance of the neo-liberal paradigm in the world political economy is the all-out attack on public goods. Since universities long were key creators of public goods in the form of an educated populace, social mobility, socially-relevant research, the attempt to destroy the public goods creation capacities of higher education is a central part of the current crisis. Getting a good understanding of the concepts of public and private goods and understanding their interdependency is central to having a thoughtful position on higher education reform.

Reading:

1. Greenwood, Companion to Organizational Research on the course website - volunteer presenter

#### Tuesday, April 16 - Universities as Public Goods: A work reform perspective

At present, the discussion of higher education reform is impoverished by the straitjacket of choosing between a market or a collegial model of organization. Neither option has much meaning any longer as both have proved themselves incapable of protecting the key strengths of higher education institutions. An alternative is a labor-managed, self-owning organization of



higher education built on the English “trust” model and the Spanish Basque Mondragón cooperative model.

Readings:

1. Boden, Ciacanelli, and Wright, Trust Universities? on the course website - volunteer presenter
2. Re-read the article on the Wright, Greenwood, and Boden Mondragón University on the course website

Thursday, April 18 - Universities as Public Goods: A work reform perspective

Reading:

1. Greenwood and Levin, The Future of Universities: Action Research and the Transformation of Higher Education on the course website - volunteer presenter

Tuesday, April 23 – Ethnographic grand rounds

Class presentations

Reading:

Read to the end of Schensul and LeCompte for ideas about improving your ethnography.

**DUE: First draft of final-20 page ethnography uploaded on the course website**

Thursday, April 25 – Ethnographic grand rounds

Class presentations

Reading:

Read to the end of Schensul and LeCompte for ideas about improving your ethnography.

Tuesday, April 30 – Ethnographic grand rounds

Class presentations

Reading:

Read to the end of Schensul and LeCompte for ideas about improving your ethnography.

Thursday, May 2 – Conclusion and final course evaluation

May 13: DUE: Final draft of 20-page ethnography