

On Monday, April 8, 2013  
from 2:00-4:00pm  
in MCC 201

The Department of Communication and the Studio for Ethnographic Design present:

# Rising to the Concrete: Critical Ethnographic Practice in West Africa



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How is it that ethnographic fieldwork and social theoretical inquiry shape each other, in practice? What does it mean to take a critical stance as a researcher? What is involved in making a break from one theoretical problematic into another, starting from the very theory (positivist, empiricist, vernacular) that the field research was intended to challenge and moving to a quite different theoretical problematic, a relational theory of social practice? Responding to these questions involves following processes of changing practice: of apprentice Vai and Gola tailors in Monrovia, Liberia in the late 1970s and of the ethnographer's changing research practice as well.

Jean Lave is a social anthropologist, Professor Emerita in the Geography Department, at the University of California, Berkeley. Much of her ethnographically-based research concentrates on the re-conceiving of learning, apprenticeship, and everyday life in terms of social practice. Her books on the subject include: *Understanding Practice* (co-edited with S. Chaiklin, 1993); *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (with E. Wenger, 1991); and *Cognition in Practice* (1988). She edited an ethno-historical research project on British merchant families engaged in the port wine trade in Portugal titled *History in Person: Enduring Struggles, Contentious Practice, Intimate Identities* (2000, with Dorothy Holland). Professor Lave published *Apprenticeship in Critical Ethnographic Practice* on critical ethnographic research practice, intertwined with a close account of her five years of research on apprenticeship in Liberia (2011). She continues to write about social practice theory. Professor Lave will be in San Diego to receive a lifetime achievement award from the Society for Psychological Anthropology.

