

Isabelle Placentia mini-bio

Isabelle Placentia is an applied anthropologist currently working in the geographic
area of the Inland Empire within the state of California (Riverside and San
Bernardino counties). Her research interests include the political economy of
housing at the intersections of race, class and gender, the experience of foreclosure
at the individual and community levels, and “how” the impacts of being unhoused
are embodied and reflected in negative health outcomes. She is dedicated to
Equity Orientated Collaborative Community Based Research (EOCCBR) and for the
past 6 years has worked with community based organizations in California, Nevada,
and Arizona which provide housing counseling and other resources to local
community members. As a student activist, she co-produces presentations with community
partners that engage policy makers as well as the general public in examining the
dynamic issues surrounding housing affordability, availability and equity. She is in
the writing phase of her PhD. dissertation entitled “Living the Statistics: The
Experience of the 2008 Foreclosure Crisis and the Meaning of Homeownership.”
This work is the product of intensive ethnographic research that recorded over 100
foreclosure narratives shared by homeowners that were daily living through the
process of foreclosure.

**Seminar Title: *Beyond Diversity: Are We There Yet?***

**Winter Quarter 2015**

Paper by Isabelle Placentia presented on March 30th, 2015 at the 1st quarterly meeting of the two year seminar series, *Advancing Intercultural Studies* funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and hosted by the Center for Ideas and Society (CIS).

*“You Don’t Know Me”: Speaking From the Experience of Diversity at UCR as Student and Teacher via Auto-Ethnography*

**Abstract**

This paper is the product of a 10 week seminar entitled “Beyond Diversity: Are We There Yet?,” where 12 UCR scholars (4 faculty members, 4 graduate students, 4 undergraduate students) intensively and extensively interrogated the now ubiquitous concept of diversity both real and imagined specifically on the campus at UCR. Informed by the logic, as presented by Dr. Yolanda Moses at the inception of the seminar, that we cannot begin to examine diversity issues elsewhere prior to having scrutinized our own, I have extended this reasoning to examine experience at the levels of the individual life history of diversity and students’ encounters with diversity in the classroom. Utilizing the methodology of auto-ethnography, I will journey through my own experience of diversity prior to campus life and subsequently as a student and teacher at UCR. Through this process, the statement “You don’t know Me” directed from one student to another in one of my recent classroom discussions very succinctly captures and problematizes one very important aspect of diversity on our campus—The need to really get to know our students and the imperative to help our students get to know each other beyond superficial statistics and stereotypes.