# Module 9 Assignment

# SPECIAL DISCUSSION: PORTRAITS OF ‘THE WHITEMAN’

## Assignment Overview

This week we have a MAJOR discussion. This discussion exercise is worth 50 points of your final grade and is considered an important component of your required work so far this semester. The primary goal of this assignment is to measure your ability to **summarize**, **analyze**, and **apply** the major concepts, theories, and ethnographic examples we have covered thus far this semester to **a stand-alone ethnography**. You may select any of the themes or topics we have covered thus far, or even a combination. Your primary objective is to take a topic (multilingualism, race, communities of speakers, etc) and use the theories associated with the topic (Butler’s take of performativity, Bakhtin’s heteroglossia, etc) to analyze Basso’s argument and data.

## Instructions

Complete the assigned readings for this week.

Again, this week’s assigned readings were:

* Basso, Keith. Portraits of ‘The Whiteman.’
* Ahearn, Laura. 2012. Living Language. Chapter 10.
* Urciuoli, Bonnie. [The Political Topography of English: The View From a New York Puerto Rican Neighborhood.](http://www.jstor.org/stable/645150) *American Ethnologist.*

Your discussion post this week does not have to be limited to these three readings. HOWEVER, if your discussion is NOT going to be centered on race, you must cite previous class readings.

### Original Post (30 points)

In your groups, you will have a thoughtful conversation about Basso’s *Portraits of the Whiteman*. Your initial post should indicate the topic you have chosen in its title (e.g., “Basso and Performativity). Rather than simply posting a reaction to the reading, you must consider how the particular theoretical framework you’ve chosen can be used to re-analyze Basso’s data or to critically engage with his argument. In order to do this, you must also demonstrate that you understand what Basso’s argument and/or data are.

* Your post should include something along the lines of:

“In Portraits of the ‘Whiteman’, Basso **argues/states/presents evidence** that…”

* followed eventually by:

“in this post, I **suggest/argue/show** that Butler’s performativity [for example] is **useful in/critical of/contradicts** considering Apache joke-telling performances because…” You must cite appropriately and demonstrate a clear grasp of the themes and the appropriateness of the literature cited to your argument.

You must post your original discussion post no later than **Midnight** on **Wednesday**.

### Reply Post (20 points)

You must post a reply to a colleague in your group. Your reply must demonstrate that you understand your colleague’s argument and either **build on it using relevant literature** or respectfully **disagree** with it citing appropriate literature. The idea is to demonstrate that you can have an intellectual exchange based on the texts, theories, and concepts we have read and learned about this semester.

* For example, your reply could say something along the lines of:

“Your use of Butler’s ideas of performativity is really interesting. This comparison might be even more productive if you introduce the Ahearn’s discussion of diglossia, which introduces the notion of hierarchy and power into the practice of language.

You must post your reply message no later than **Midnight on Sunday night.**

You **MUST** POST A REPLY. Not posting a reply will result in automatic **failure** on the assignment regardless of the quality of your original post.

#### If you need any help at all, please, please don’t hesitate to come to me or Corinne for help! This assignment is supposed to be challenging so if you feel challenged I’m doing my job!!!!!!