



Hervé Varenne

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When is education? On working hard, here, there, everywhere [“LOL![..?..!]”]

In this talk, I report on *Educating in Life: Ethnographies of Challenging New Normals* (Routledge 2019), a collective book written with several of my students. Together, we explore, first, the rising of “new normals” against powerful “old normals,” as well as some of the consequences of having to make a life when the work of other people keep old normals alive and inescapable. To do this, we look first for moments when simple reproduction fails. We report, among other happenings, on adolescent girls having fun while telling their lives in a setting where they should have done neither. We trace the appearance of a new way of funding capitalism. We then look for moments when the issue is survival in a hostile world. We report on mothers who walked across a desert and find themselves responsible for two sets of children in two nation-states. We tell of people from Bangladesh making a life in Detroit. In all cases, we emphasize the fragility of cultural arbitrariness, the limits of even overwhelming power, and the ongoing education that all give all as they struggle with what cannot be expressed by the most normal cultural arbitrary.

Monday | March 9 | 3:30pm
Maple Room, IMU

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