The Center for Inclusive Education presents:

**RESEARCH CAFÉ**

**Presenter:** Louis Edgar Esparza  
*Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Sociology*

**Title:** Demanding Rights, Withholding Peace: The Colombian Sugarcane Workers Strike

**Synopsis:** In late 2008, ten-thousand sugarcane workers spread across 8 plantations went on strike and blockaded access to roads to sugarcane plantations in Valle del Cauca, Colombia. Allied with human rights organizations, unions, and other political allies, the workers and their families faced repression and hunger. This presentation will illustrate research conducted during the strike using photographs, transcripts from interviews, and excerpts from ethnographic fieldnotes. It will also translate recent events into the Colombian context and explore a preliminary analysis on how people who have been denied human rights attempt to regain it by withholding peace from state and private powerbrokers.

**Brief Biography:** Louis Edgar Esparza is an American Sociological Association Minority Fellow, winner of the Sociologists Without Borders Beatrice and Sidney Webb Award and a Woodrow Wilson Foundation Charlotte W. Newcombe Dissertation Fellowship finalist. He spent six months in Colombia conducting an ethnographic study on the determinants of high-risk action among human rights activists in Bogota and Valle del Cauca, Colombia. Louis is Co-Editor with Judith Blau of a forthcoming special issue of the journal Societies Without Borders on Human Rights in Japan. He has published in Sociological Forum, Contemporary Sociology, Contexts, and the ASA Teaching Resource Guide. Louis was elected Chair of the Student Forum Advisory Board to the ASA in 2005, was Student Editor of the journal Contexts, and sits on the Executive Boards of Sociologists Without Borders and the Stony Brook University Senate. Louis expects to defend his dissertation, “Grassroots Human Rights Activism in Contemporary Bogota,” in May 2010.

**March 23, 2009 at 3:00pm**

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Lite refreshments provided.

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