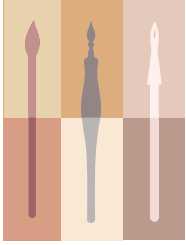


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ANSO 320-01, Anthropology and the written word, Fall 2003

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Anthropology / Sociology 320

Anthropology and the *Written Word*

Fall Term, 2003



CLASS PERIOD -- T, Th 9:40 – 11:10
PROFESSOR -- Susan Kus
OFFICE -- 105 Clough

CLASSROOM – 100 Clough
OFFICE HOURS -- M, W 9:10 – 10:30,
or by appointment

Course Statement

The written word is powerful. There are sacred texts and political documents that purport to explain the world or, in some cases, change and/or control it. Sometimes the possession of the skills of writing and reading politically empower individuals, as in the case of ancient elite Mesopotamian and Chinese scribes. While the writing of a dissertation grants authority to some anthropologists in the form of a degree, anthropologists have also been involved in various literary projects beyond the classic ethnography and the theoretical treatise. There is a tradition in anthropology of biographies and autobiographies of individuals from non-Western societies. Anthropologists have considered such works as important means of conveying a sense of what it is like to be a member of and to live inside an alternative cultural system. Other anthropologists have used poetry and the novel to portray a sense of their understanding of alternative realities and some have even written science fiction to allow them to focus on a specific cultural dilemma or moral crisis that arises in cross-cultural interactions. It is also the case that we have access to the voice of others when they choose to write down their own thoughts and tales in literary texts. Some of these texts conform to Western literary traditions; others speak in different voices with different styles.

Consider the words of Chief Cobb of the Choctaw:

The redman has no books, and when he wants to say what he thinks, he speaks from the mouth, like his fathers before him. He is afraid of writing. When he speaks, he knows what he says. The Great Spirit hears him. Writing is the invention of the palefaces. It gives birth to trouble and fighting. The Great Spirit talks. We hear him in the thunder, in the sound of the wind, and in the water. He never writes.

This course is intended to examine various issues involving orality and literacy and its consequences for ourselves and the others whose lives we wish to understand. We will begin with several important questions: Does it matter to one's thoughts and one's life whether one is raised in a primarily oral culture or a highly literate one? How, when, where and why did

writing and recording systems begin? How can writing be used to effectively convey anthropological knowledge both within and beyond the discipline?

Course Requirements

Your grade in this course will be based on assignments and class participation. Late completion of assignments and unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade. In taking this course for credit it is assumed (under the honor code) that you will complete all the reading assignments for the assigned dates.

Should there be any question of "writing style" in the completion of research assignments, refer to the Style Guidelines of the journal, American Anthropologist. A copy of these guidelines is available on the web site of the Rhodes Writing Center. Late papers and assignments will not be accepted except in the case of very extenuating circumstances. Should such a case arise permission to turn in a late assignment needs to be obtained before the due date.

Failure to adequately complete any assignment or to take any exam will result in a failing grade for the course. Unexcused absences and/or failure to participate in class can lower your grade up to one letter grade. In the case of a significant number (3 or more) of unexcused absences a failing grade will be assigned for the course. You are asked to self-report on absences. The self-reporting will take the form of writing in the attendance book under your name the date of the absence and the reason for the absence.

Incompletes are not normally given in this class. In the rare case where an incomplete may be in order, the student must obtain permission from the instructor and complete all paper work for the Registrar before the day of the final exam.

Class participation.....	10%
I--short essays on McTaggart and Ong.....	10%
II--telling a story.....	5%
III--Ancient writing systems & scripts.....	10%
IV--Non-Western autobiography.....	15%
V—Reaction paper to Getting to Know Waiwai	5%
VI--short essays on Snyder and Momaday.....	15%
VII--Fiction and anthropological knowledge.....	10%
VIII--Final Project.....	10%
Write up on final project.....	10%



There is no final exam in this course



DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	READING
Aug 28	Introduction to course	Begin reading McTaggart, finish by Sep 4th
Sep 2 4	Speech as act The adventures of McTaggart	McTaggart
Sep 9 11	Orality and Literacy Autobiographies chosen by today Orality and Literacy cont. Assign. I: take home questions on McTaggart and Ong, due Sep 16 th	Ong (Chaps 1-3) Ong (Chaps 4-7)
Sep 16 18	"Angano, Angano" -- Telling of Tales Begin reading autobiography, assignment due Oct. 14 Individual readings assigned for next session Narrative -- we are all tellers of tales Assignment II discussed; Choose writing script	Individual assigned readings
Sep 23 25	Telling our tales (Assign. II presentations) Preparation for final assignment, choosing working groups Origins of writing and recording systems	
Sep 30 Oct 2	Origins of writing cont. Various scripts -- (Assign III. presentations) Individual readings from Goody assigned	
Oct 7 9	Implications of writing/ literacy for society Alternative Realities Begin reading Getting to Know Waiwai Updates on final projects	Individual readings - Goody
Oct 14 16	Autobiographies of "the others" (Assign. IV presentations) What should we be trying to say? How should we say it? "Popularizing" anthropology Discussion of Waiwai through page 85.	
Oct 21 23	RECESS Discussion of Waiwai to end of book Assign. V Short reaction paper to Waiwai assigned, due Oct 30 th Begin Snyder	
Oct 28 30	Discuss Snyder through page 97 Discuss Snyder through end of book Begin Momaday Individual readings assigned from Ortiz and Coltelli	

Nov	4	Native American Authors	<u>Individual readings from Ortiz and Coltelli</u>
	6	Discussion of <u>House Made of Dawn</u> by Momaday	Section 1& 2 "The Longhair" and "The Priest of the Sun"
Nov	11	Cont. discussion of <u>House Made of Dawn</u>	Section 3 & 4 "Night Chanter" and "Dawn Runner"
		Assign. VI (essay questions on Snyder and Momaday, due Nov 18th)	
		Begin reading LeGuin (finish for Dec 18)	
	13	Individual and group consultations on final projects	
Nov	18	Discussion of Left Hand of Darkness	
		Assign VII (a little bit of anthropological fiction)	
	20	Scientist or poet? - Taking stock	
Nov	24	Reading stories (Assign. VII) and Contemporary Issues of literacy	
		Individual readings assigned for next class period	
	26	THANKSGIVING	
Dec	2	Contemporary issues of literacy	<u>Assigned readings from assorted sources</u>
	4	Final project presentations (Assign. VIII)	
Dec	9	Final project presentations continued & concluding remarks	

Required Texts

TO BE PURCHASED

McTaggart, Fred - WOLF THAT I AM

Ong, Walter - ORALITY AND LITERACY

Campbell, Alan – GETTING TO KNOW WAIWAI

Snyder, Gary - THE PRACTICE OF THE WILD

Momaday, N. Scott - HOUSE MADE OF DAWN

LeGuin, Ursula - THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS

Additional readings will be assigned from

Goody, Jack, THE LOGIC OF WRITING AND THE ORGANIZATION OF SOCIETY, Cambridge : Cambridge U, 1989.

Coltelli, Laura, WINGED WORDS: AMERICAN INDIAN WRITERS SPEAK,
Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1990.

Ortiz, Simon (ed.), SPEAKING FOR THE GENERATIONS: NATIVE
WRITERS ON WRITING, Tuscon: University of Arizona, 1998

Since there are several books to read, decisions to be made about assignment topics and various dates for assignments to be turned in or presented here is a:

LISTING OF DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

Sep 4th	Finish reading McTaggart - <u>Wolf that I am</u>
Sept 9th	Finish reading chapters 1-3 of Ong - <u>Orality and Literacy</u> Autobiography chosen by this date
Sept 11th	Finish reading chapters 4-7 of Ong - <u>Orality and Literacy</u>
Sept 16th	Assignment I is due
Sept 23rd	Assignment II presentations; preparation for final project
Oct 2nd	Assignment III presentations
Oct 9th	Update on final projects
Oct 14th	Assignment IV presentations
Oct 16th	Finish reading Campbell through page 85
Oct 23rd	Finish reading Campbell to end
Oct 28th	Finish reading first 1/2 of Snyder -- <u>Practice of the Wild</u>
Oct 30th	Assignment V due , Finish reading second 1/2 of Snyder -- <u>Practice of the Wild</u>
Nov 6th	Finish reading Momaday – Sections 1 & 2
Nov 11th	Finish reading Momaday – through end
Nov 18th	Assignment VI is due; Finish reading LeGuin - <u>Left Hand of Darkness</u>
Nov 24th	Assignment VII is due
Dec 4th	Assignment VIII, final project presentations

ASSIGNMENT I - Literate and non-literate cultures

Due September 16th

You will be asked to write a short response (3-5 pages) to a take home question(s) concerning McTaggart's book, WOLF THAT I AM and Ong's book, ORALITY AND LITERACY.

ASSIGNMENT II - Telling a tale

Due September 23

You are asked to recite a tale to the class. This tale can either be a classic story/folk tale (to which you bring a new twist in interpretation) or a story from your own experiences.

ASSIGNMENT III - Ancient writing and recording systems and scripts

Due October 2nd

This assignment will give you a chance to become acquainted with an early recording or writing system. Choose a system from the following list.

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Egyptian hieroglyphics | Runes/Futhark (Scandinavia) | Elamite |
| Hebrew script | Arabic script | Canaanite |
| Aramaic script | Amharic (Ethiopia) | Korean |
| Cyrillic script (Slavic) | Cuneiform (Mesopotamia) | Berber & Tifinagh |
| Indus script | Quipu of the Inca | |
| Maya script and glyphs | Chinese script | |
| Aztec recording system | Japanese script | |
| Phoenician & Aramaic script | Linear A and Linear B and Cypriotic script (Crete) | |
| An Indian script (e.g., Brahmi, Tamil, Tibetan, etc.) | | |

Be sure to keep clear the distinction between script and language

You should produce a paper of 5-7 typewritten pages and be prepared to give a class presentations of 10 minutes on your research. The paper should contain both an

informative/descriptive section and a thought provoking conclusion. BE SURE TO INCLUDE USEFUL ILLUSTRATIONS OF YOUR SCRIPT.

In the former section you might attempt to answer the following questions. When and where do scholars believe the writing system you are investigating was developed? What is the earliest evidence of this system? Has the system been deciphered? If yes, how and by whom? If no, why not? How consistent is the system in its early use? What writing or recording materials were used? Did such materials influence any aspect of the system (e.g., shape of symbols, direction of writing, etc.)? Was or is the system used to record more than one language? How effective is this particular system for recording various languages?

In the latter section of your paper you should discuss some issue that came to mind when you were doing research for this paper that you thought was stimulating and thought provoking, perhaps an issue that would never have crossed your mind had you not done research into a recording system other than Roman script.

ALTERNATIVE THEMES FOR ASSIGNMENT III

(1) Handwriting analysis -- what is it about and how credible is it?

(2) A Cherokee syllabary was invented by Sequoyah. It took 12 years of labor and was completed in 1819. After this writing system was accepted by a group of Cherokee elders, the Cherokee became literate in a few years. By 1880 the Cherokee has a higher level of literacy than the Whites in their immediate area.

ASSIGNMENT V -- Another life

Class presentations October 14th

Anthropologists have generated numerous scholarly texts (ethnographies and ethnologies) on other cultural systems. Yet, for the most part these are works written by OUTSIDERS on cultural GROUPS. Anthropologists have often encouraged non-Western individuals to write their own life histories so that we might also have texts written by INSIDERS on their INDIVIDUAL cultural experiences. Choose an autobiography or biography of a non-Western individual (some suggestions are given below) and write a 7-10 page paper on the following theme: the challenge and difficulty of understanding the lives and culture of another. Remember Geertz's remark that we are all born with a capacity to live a 1,000 different lives but we end up living only one.

One might choose to focus on some aspect of perception, emotion/motivation, cognition or the idea of "person" that is involved in the experiencing and understanding of the culture of the individual writing the autobiography and that provides a challenge to someone outside the culture. One might discuss an aspect of "lives as lived" (e.g., chronic hunger, illness, childbirthing, life on a tropical island, etc.) that puts the focus on "experience" versus "intellect"

in understanding other cultures. Or one might explore in detail some element of the difference between oral and literate cultures and the nature of belief and understanding in such contexts. Consider, for instance, the following remark of Crick:

Can anthropologists adequately conceive of how rituals, speech, and action form the pattern of meaning in non-literate societies...? Can anthropologists really sense what it is like to think without knowledge being stored in written language? This is an important question.... (Crick 1982:292)

Further details of the assignment will be discussed in class.

A selection of AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Simmons, Leo (ed.)

SUN CHIEF: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A HOPI INDIAN

Momaday, N. Scott

THE NAMES: A MEMOIR

Gatheru, R. Mugo

CHILD OF TWO WORLDS: A KIKUYU'S STORY

Bizarro Upjan, Ignacio

SON OF TECUN UMAN: A MAYA INDIAN TELLS HIS LIFE STORY

Blackman, Margaret B.

DURING MY TIME: FLORENCE EDENSHAW DAVIDSON, A HAIDA WOMAN

Black Hawk, Sauk chief

BLACK HAWK: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Black Elk

BLACK ELK SPEAKS

Crow Dog, Mary

LAKOTA WOMAN and her sequel --- Brave Bird, Mary OHITIKA WOMAN

Shostak, Marjoria

NISA: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF A !KUNG WOMAN

Ongka

ONGKA: A SELF-ACCOUNT BY A NEW GUINEA BIG-MAN

Left Handed

LEFT HANDED, A NAVAJO AUTOBIOGRAPHY

- Lurie, Nancy
MOUNTAIN WOLF WOMAN, SISTER OF CRASHING THUNDER
- Mokgatle, Naboth
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN UNKNOWN SOUTH AFRICAN
- Ngabidj, Grant
MY COUNTRY OF THE PELICAN DREAMING
- Radin, Paul
CRASHING THUNDER: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN AMERICAN INDIAN
- Saitoti, Tepilit Ole
THE WORLDS OF A MAASAI WARRIOR
- Savala, Refugio
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YAQUI POET
- Said-Ruete, Emily
MEMOIRS OF AN ARABIAN PRINCESS
- Sugimoto, Etso
A DAUGHTER OF THE SAMURAI
- Fools Crow
FOOLS CROW (Oglala Indian)
- Sewid, James
GUESTS NEVER LEAVE HUNGRY: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JAMES SEWID,
A KWAKIUTL INDIAN
- Yogananda, Paramhansa
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI.
- Mithcell, Frank
NAVAJO BLESSINGWAY SINGER: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF FRANK
MITCHELL
- Katsu, Kokichi
MUSUI'S STORY: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A TOKUGAWA SAMURAI.

Morning Dove
MOURNING DOVE: A SALISHAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Rojas, Juan
I SPENT MY LIFE IN THE MINES: THE STORY OF JUAN ROJA, BOLIVIAN TIN MINER.

Sekaquaptew, Helen
ME AND MINE: THE LIFE STORY OF HELEN SEKAQUAPTEWA AS TOLD TO LOUISE UDALL

ASSIGNMENT V -- How well did you get to know Waiwai?

Due October 30th

Short take home essay on Getting to Know Waiwai.

ASSIGNMENT VI -- Momaday and listening to the tales of another; Snyder and the power of poetry.

Due November 18th

You will be asked to write a short response to take-home questions on some themes or questions that arose in our class discussion of Momaday, Snyder and related works.

ASSIGNMENT VII -- Write a poem or a tale (Science Fiction or fiction short-story) with an anthropological punch line.

Presentations due November 18th

ASSIGNMENT VII -- Anthropology made available for the young.

Presentations due December 4th .

As an individual or as a group you will create a small book to make available "other ways" (from anthropological insights) and/or "others' ways" of being in the world to a younger audience. More details of the assignment will be offered in class.

Grading will be based on both the finished "book" and on an individual written component that accompanies the book.