

## LRC 595a, Spring 2013

Topics in Language, Reading & Culture: **Oral Traditions Across Societies**

Thursdays: 4:15 - 6:45 p.m. – COE Rm. 530

Instructor: Sheilah E. Nicholas  
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### Course Description

*All intangible cultural heritage domains – from knowledge about the universe to rituals, performing arts to handicrafts – depend on language for their day-to-day practice and inter-generational transmission. In the domain of oral traditions and expressions, language is not only a vehicle of intangible heritage, it is their very essence.*  
(UNESCO webpage)

Oral traditions are viewed as the myriad transmission mechanisms used by traditionally oral cultures to convey conceptions of a particular constructed universe and its fundamental ideologies and principles. As transmission mechanisms, the oral traditions of a particular group are comprised of an array of communication forms and symbols systems—talk, prayer, chant, ritual, song, dance, narratives, storytelling, visual expressions and mundane daily activities—all which hold different levels and types of influence in cultural societies (Heath in Ochs, 1966). Oral traditions not only keep alive the thoughts, experiences and stories of a particular people through the process of “language as cultural practice” (Nicholas, 2008), but are kept alive as oral modes of thought and expression that touch many domains.

The course focuses on Indigenous oral traditions which have survived numerous “cycles of conquests” (Evers & Molina, 1996) evident in the persistence and vitality of Indigenous societies throughout the world. We will explore and examine the oral traditions of (primarily local: AZ, and the Southwest) Indigenous cultures in order to illuminate our understanding of how language, inherent in oral traditions—language as cultural practice, functions in transmitting symbolic codes of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, behavior, and shape identity. A focused attention on the myriad channels of human discourse opens a window to the cultural concepts of and orientations to both the social and geographic realities (Basso, 1992) of particular societies, and to the influence they exert in developing an unwavering allegiance to one’s heritage culture.

In addition, for the Spring 2013 semester, we will have the opportunity to engage in an academic exchange with students enrolled in the course, Indigenous Oral Traditions and Research (CCS693), at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks with Assistant Professor Dr. Beth Leonard. This exchange allows us to consider Indigenous epistemologies/ontologies, Indigenous knowledge as conveyed through oral traditions as having significant implications for constructing theoretical frameworks and methodology for research as well as classroom teaching.

### Course Format

The class will follow a graduate seminar format. Students will contribute to and actively engage in whole class or small group discussions based in assigned readings and topics, questions, and issues raised from the course materials and activities. It is an expectation that students will take leadership roles in conducting class discussions. The purpose of weekly response journals, course projects, and self-evaluations is to engage each student in pursuing intercultural understanding in the context of globalization.

### Course Texts:

Witherspoon, G. (1977) *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe*.

Basso, K. (1996). *Wisdom Sits in Places*.

Evers, L. & Molina, F. (1996). *Yaqui Deer Songs*.

Griffin-Pierce, T. (1992). *Earth is My Mother Earth, Sky is My Father*.

Articles and supplementary readings hard copies or on D2L noted in Schedule with [\*]

### Course Requirements:

#### 1. Participation and attendance

Your regular attendance and active participation in class discussions, written responses, and class activities is essential to personal and collective outcomes of this course. If missing a class session is unavoidable, leave a message for me in advance at the LRC office (621-1311) or on e-mail. Contact a class member so that you are fully prepared for the next class meeting. **More than one absence or excessive tardiness/leaving early will affect your grade for the course.** (If there are extenuating circumstances that will result in missing a number of classes, please schedule a meeting with me as soon as possible.)

#### 2. Reflection Journal

The Reflection Journal is for you to engage in *meaningful and critical* reflection on course readings, films, class discussions, guest presentations and performances as well as instructor presentations. Record your developing understandings—new insight/knowledge, questions about, and connections to what are likely to be unfamiliar topics and experiences; do not write summaries. The journal has several functions: 1) the means to contribute and engage in class discussion; class discussions will be a vital aspect of the course; 2) allows a written dialogue with the instructor—to clarify, expand on, and assist in your personal as well as our collective growth in understanding on this topic; and 3) will provide the substance for your final paper *and* inform your final project (See Course Requirement #4).

You will hand in your Journal every week. A total of 10 Reflection Journals (2-3 pgs.) are expected. You may utilize the subheadings of: new insight(s)/knowledge; questions; and connections as a guide to writing your reflections/responses. The course exchange experience explained below will be submitted as a Response Journal.

### 3. UA-UAF Moodle and Video Course Exchange - March 5 to April 5, 2013

The logistics of the UA-UAF course exchange is and will be ongoing between Dr. Leonard and I as the UAF course is scheduled for Tuesday from 5:15 – 8:15 p.m. including a one hour time difference. We have selected March 5 to April 5, 2013 as the exchange period. A Guideline Handout providing information will be provided. Briefly, over this period, UA and UAF students (12) will utilize the Witherspoon and Basso course texts for this exchange project. Students in both courses will be engaged in developing questions for these texts and posting them on Moodle to elicit discussion with and between students via this forum vehicle. The opening assignment for all students is to draft and post a brief introduction including your academic/research interest(s), and synopsis of your final course project. The exchange will include student scheduled videoconferencing including the session agenda via Skype, Google Hangouts, or audio (TBD). As stated, your weekly engagement during this exchange will be incorporated into your Reflection Journals.

This exchange is a wonderful opportunity for students in both courses to “connect” and share common interests as well as engage in discourse in the field of Indigenous Knowledge, Epistemology, and Language.

### 4. Mid-Term – Self-evaluation: Due Date

Self-evaluation and reflection are essential aspects of learning and growth in understanding of the topics covered. Your mid-term will be a 2-3 page self-evaluation in which you *restate* what you hoped to learn and gain, and reflect on the process in reaching those outcomes as well as your own progress within the process and particularly in relation to research and/or classroom teaching.

### 5. Final Paper and Oral Tradition Presentation:

There will be two components to the Final Course requirement: 1) 12-15 page paper (double-spaced, minimum of 10 references—includes any of the resources used in the course); and 2) class presentation of, or on a form of cultural/culture’s oral tradition. Students will submit a proposal outlining the inquiry process.

*Final paper:* In your final paper, you will articulate a rationale/argument on the topics of orality, oral traditions, Indigenous epistemologies/ontologies, Indigenous knowledge and the implications for development of a theoretical and research methodological framework for “documenting, examining, and authentically re-presenting Indigenous oral traditions” (CCS693 Syllabus). You will need to determine and conduct an inquiry into a cultural/culture’s form of oral tradition which may become the focus for developing your rationale/argument; for example the Hopi practice of “planting corn by hand.” Your final paper will be informed by the examination of Indigenous scholarship of Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors (both course and additional material), course discussions, Reflection Journals, your inquiry into an oral tradition form. Thus, the final paper articulates a highly personal perspective on the topic. We

will incorporate this into our ongoing discussions throughout the semester. In addition, Dr. Leonard, as a guest presenter, will address this aspect of the course.

*Final Oral Tradition Presentation:* Your inquiry into a cultural/culture's form of oral tradition will be the focus of this assignment. The presentation format will be negotiated and can take a myriad forms: telling a story; singing a song, performing a dance, a powerpoint presentation of a cultural practice etc. The presentation will also include a presentation/ interpretation of the oral tradition form and function as a vehicle for transmitting a culture's world view, values, assumptions, etc.

### **Course Grade**

Your final grade will be based on both your own and my evaluation of your growth in understanding the topics covered, the quality of your written work, your attendance, participation, preparation for, engagement with, and contribution to all aspects of the course.

### **Grading Scale**

Attendance/Participation	30 points	93 – 100 pt = A
Reflection Journals	20	85 - 92 = B
Mid-Term	5	77 - 84 = C
Moodle Exchange	15	69 - 76 = D
<u>Final Paper/Presentation</u>	<u>30</u>	
Total	100	

Incompletes will not be given for the course except in extreme situations and only with prior approval by the instructor. (See University Policy on Incompletes below.)

### **University Policies**

- Approved Absences: All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion, Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) will be honored.
- Incompletes (please read carefully)  
University of Arizona policy states that a grade of **I** may be awarded only at the end of a term, when all but a minor portion of the course work has been satisfactorily completed. I intend to follow this policy; consequently, I strongly discourage incompletes and will allow them only for extreme emergencies. However, if you do need an incomplete, you must inform me of this by December 1, and have completed all work except the final project. Students who receive incompletes can expect to earn only a grade of B or below.

- Students with Disabilities: If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you are registered with Disability Resources (621-3268; [drc.arizona.edu](http://drc.arizona.edu)) and that you notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations

Policies against plagiarism. See the Student Code of Academic Integrity  
<http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies>

Policies against threatening behavior by students. See the university policies at  
<http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies/cai1.html>

### **Schedule of Course Topics/Readings/Assignments**

NOTE: Depending on student interests, and at the instructor's discretion, there may be changes to the schedule of readings and assignments

January 10    Introduction to the Course  
                   Due: Student Survey  
                   Video: Paths of Life (30 min.)  
                   Instructor Presentation: Theoretical Framework/World View

Readings for 1/17

\*Ortiz, A.: pp. 135-140, Ritual Drama and the Pueblo World View  
 \*Nicholas: Ch. 9: Language as Cultural Practice  
 Witherspoon: Acknowledgements & Introduction  
 Griffin-Pierce: Chapters 1 & 2

17            Landscape of Home – Center of a Peoples' World View  
                   Due: Reflection Journal #1/Discussion on Readings RJ#1  
                   Video: Eyanopi—The Heart of the Sioux (Black Hills)  
                   Introduction of Assignment: Demographic Profile of AZ Tribes  
                   (Include reflection on experience in RJ#2)

Readings for 1/24:

Griffin-Pierce: Foreword by Momaday  
 Basso: Preface, Chapters 1, 3, & 4  
 \*Whiteley & Masayesva: Paavahu and Paanaqso'a: The Wellsprings of Life and the Slurry of Death, pp. 188-197.

- 24 Place – Origin/Creation/Emergence; Relationships; Cosmology  
 Due: Reflection Journal #2/Discussion  
 Due: Demographic Profile of AZ Tribes/Sharing  
 Videos: Discussion of videos
- Emergence—A Creation Myth Derived from Navajo Chants (15 min.)
  - Ga: S Hui So: Son (10 min.)
  - Apache Mountain Spirits

Readings for 1/31:

Evers, L. & Molina, F.: Chapter 2 (Yaqui)

\*Nequatewa: How the Hopi People Came Out of the Underworld (Hopi)

\*Johnston, B.: The Vision of Kitche Manitou (Ojibway)

- 31 Indigenous Languages: Expression and Perception (Ortiz, S.)  
 Due: Reflection Journal #3/Discussion  
 Video: Hawaiian Pidgin Creole/Discussion

Readings for 2/07:

\*Watahomigie, L. “The native language is a gift: a Hualapai language autobiography”

\*Ortiz, S.: Song/Poetry and Language—Expression and Perception  
 Witherspoon: Chapters 1-3

Basso, K.: Chapter 2

\*Hinton, L.: Upriver, Downriver: The Vocabulary of Direction

- February 7 Indigenous Languages: Ritualized Performance – Dance and Song  
 Due: Reflection Journal #4/Discussion  
 Video: Dances of Life/Discussion (Vision Maker Media—Trailers)

Readings for 2/14:

Molina & Evers: Chps. 3 & 4

Witherspoon: Ch. 4, pp. 151-160

\*Sekaquaptewa & Washburn: *They Go Along Singing: Reconstructing the Hopi Past from Ritual Metaphors in Song and Image*

- 14 Field Trip: Hālau Hula of Leoliani Galla (Details forthcoming)  
 Due: Reflection Journal #4 (Turn in via dropbox)  
 D21 discussion of 2/07 readings/Hawaiian Hula experience

Readings for 2/21:

\*Silva: Hawaiian Chant: Dynamic Cultural Link or Atrophied Relic?

\*Keany: Voices of the Kupuna

21 Ritualized Performance: Hawaiian Hula

Guest speaker: Dr. Candace kaleimamoowahinekapu Galla

February 21 TLS Colloquy – Afternoon program COE; evening program Ed North  
*In support of the TLS/LRC Student Colloquy, our 2.21 class session will include attending the Student Colloquy. I strongly encourage each of you to view this as an opportunity to engage with members of the department and significant scholars in the field; I hope that each of you will attend the full Colloquy program. Further information will be posted on d21.*

28 Stories, Storying, Narratives

Due: Reflection Journal #5/Discussion

Due: **Mid-Term Reflection Paper**

Readings for Exchange: Review of Witherspoon & Basso

Readings for 3/07:

\*Marmon-Silko:

- Interior and Exterior Landscapes: The Pueblo Migration Stories
- Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective

**UA – UAF Course Exchange: March 5 – April 5**

**March 4 – 8:**

- **Moodle registration**
- **Post bios and review UAF student bios**
- **Both classes develop initial questions – post by March 8**

March 7 Oral Tradition: Stories, Storying Narratives

Due: Student Bios for Moodle posting

Due: Reflection Journal #6/Discussion

Discussion: Final Project Presentations

Reading for Exchange: Witherspoon & Basso

Readings for 3/21:

\*Leonard: Indigenous Pedagogies in the Oral Traditions of Belle Deacon

Witherspoon: Conclusion

Basso: Epilogue

Griffin-Pierce: Chapter 8, Conclusion

**Spring Break: March 11 – 15, 2013**

**March 18: Moodle discussion forum opens**

**March 19: First student scheduled videoconferencing**

**March 22: Initial responses to questions posted March 8**

21 Narratives

Due: Reflection Journal #7/Discussion (including Moodle comments to posts)

Guest Presenter: Dr. Beth Leonard

Reading for Exchange: Witherspoon & Basso

Reading for 3/28:

\*Marmon-Silko:

- Hunger Stalked the Tribal People
- Storyteller

**Week March 25: Small group meetings via video (Skype or Google Hangouts), audio, and/or chat – day, timeframe and agenda to be decided by each student group (include introductions/interest areas, discussions around initial posts and responses, topics relevant to both courses).**

28 Due: Reflection Journal #8/Discussion

Due: **Presentation Proposal**

Guest Reader: Tessie Naranjo (Santa Clara)

Life as Movement: A Tewa View

Reading for Exchange: Witherspoon & Basso

Reading for 4/04:

\*Black: Maidens and Mothers: An Analysis of Hopi Corn Metaphors

**Week of Apr 1:**

- **Small group meetings via video (Skype or Google Hangouts), audio, and/or chat (day, timeframe and agenda to be decided by each student group).**
- **Final week for posting to the Moodle forum, however continued student exchange beyond the designated period is highly encouraged.**

April 4 Ritualized Practices: Planting Corn by Hand – “People are Corn”  
Due: Reflection Journal #9/Discussion including videoconferencing  
Video: Songs of the Hopi Fourth World

Readings for 4/11:

Apache Female Puberty Ceremony/Sunrise Ceremony

\*Yupanqui Tika, (1999): Becoming Woman

\*The Sunrise Dance

\*Mandy Begay

Hopi Naming Ceremony

\*Whiteley: Ch. 4—Hopitutungwni: “Hopi Names” as Literature

11 Cultural Institutions: Rites of Passage

Due: Reflection Journal #10

Videos: The Sunrise Dance (Apache)

Kinaaldá (Diné)

Readings for 4/18:

\*Sekaquaptewa: Hopi Indian Ceremonies

\*Sekaquaptewa, Hill, & Washburn: Hopi Katsinas

\*McCoy: Bring in the Clowns

\*Sekaquaptewa: One More Smile for a Hopi Clown

Griffen-Pierce: Chps. 3 & 4

18 The Spiritual World—Ceremonies/Ritual Drama

Discussion

Video: Ritual Clowns

(Optional reading: Ortiz, A. Ritual Drama and the Pueblo World View)

Readings for 4/25:

Witherspoon: Chapter 4, pp. 160-178

Griffin-Pierce: Navajo Sand Painting, Chapter 5 – 8:

25 Visual Perceptions, Expressions

Videos: Siskyavi: The Place of Chasms—Hopi Pottery-making

Hopi Pottery: A Handmade Heritage

Readings for 4/30:

\*Four Hawaiian language autobiographies

\*Parker, E. “Daddy’s Language”

\*Deontie, D. “My Algonquin Vocabulary

\*Kirkpatrick, J. (Editorial): “Allow doomed languages to die with dignity.”

30 Indigenous Language Shift/Loss ~ Language Reclamation/Revitalization

**Due: Final Paper/Project**

Video: Transitions—Destruction of a Mother Tongue (Blackfeet)

**May 7 Oral Traditions Presentations**

Additional Resources:

- 1) Yaqui Lent and Easter Ceremonies: Old Pascua
- 2) Videos:
  - a) Ten Thousand Years of Learning—Traditional Athabaskan skills (Nicholas)
  - b) Earl's Canoe: A Traditional Ojibwe Craft (Library)
  - c) Hand Game: The Native North American Game of Power & Chance (Library)
  - d) Lighting the Fire: Spearfishing—Chippewan Prophecy (Library)
  - e) Ribbons of the Osage (Library)
  - f) Redskins, Tricksters, and Puppy Stew (Library)
  - g) True Spirit of the Mask (Library)
  - h) People of the Buffalo (Library)
  - i) Loon's Necklace (Library); The Dawn's Horse (Library)