

**BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY**  
Myra Kraft Transitional Year Program

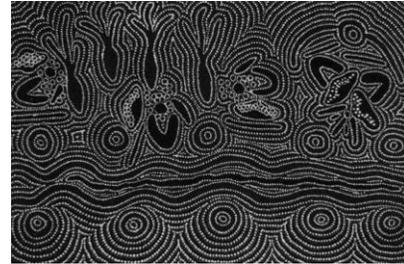
**TYP 9a: Writing  
Spring 2015**

**INTRODUCTION TO ETHNOGRAPHY:  
WRITING ABOUT GENDER, KINSHIP,  
AND RELIGION**

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Class Meeting Time: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 6:30-7:20 PM  
Location: Olin-Sang American Civilization Center, Room 104



**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this semester we continue our development of writing skills through the medium of ethnographic inquiry. Our focus will center on three domains of social life traditionally considered separate—gender, kinship, and religion—but which are more interrelated than they may at first appear. We will read anthropological accounts of alternative gender classification systems, modes of reckoning kinship (i.e., who is related and what significance this relatedness has for social organization), and religious beliefs and practices. With these materials we will develop the ability to write analytic essays that are both organizationally sound and grammatically adherent to the standards of academic American English. We will practice writing the final two essays types that constitute the Brandeis writing program: the lens essay and the research essay. The lens essay will hone your ability to analyze one course text with the conceptual tools offered by another, while the research essay will require extensive library and/or primary research and will develop a unique argument that contributes to the anthropological literature. Your work in this course will prepare you for the intellectual rigors of writing throughout your college experience.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

The following required books are provided by the program. All other required and optional readings will be available online via the course site, LATTE.

Françoise Dussart, *The Politics of Ritual in an Aboriginal Settlement: Kinship, Gender, and the Currency of Knowledge*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press. 2000.

Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*, Sixth Edition with 2009 MLA and 2010 APA Updates. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. 2010.

William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*, Fourth Edition. London: Longman. 1999 [1918].

## **COURSE GOALS:**

By the end of this semester, you should be able to

- Write increasingly well-organized academic essays
- Produce written work without substantial grammatical error
- Argue insightful, non-obvious, and well-motivated theses in your papers
- Practice the techniques of anthropological fieldwork
- Master the skills needed to write a Brandeis lens essay
- Formulate creative yet realistic research questions
- Develop a research project that makes a unique contribution to the ethnographic literature
- Understand anthropological approaches to conceptualizing gender and sexuality and question simple gender and sex binaries
- Articulate the foundation that kinship provides for social organization
- Appreciate the role of religion in multiple dimensions of human life
- Recognize the interconnected quality of gender, kinship, and religion across cultures

## **CLASS POLICIES:**

In order to create the most effective learning environment possible and for the consideration of your fellow students, please follow these simple guidelines while in class:

1. Arrive on-time having read the assigned readings and completed any written work due that day. If you come to class after the designated starting time, you will have to produce a convincing excuse, on the spot, related to the day's readings (or the previous day's, if no new readings are due for that class).
2. Turn off all cell phones and other electronic communication devices. If you absolutely need to have your cell phone on (e.g., you are waiting for an important call), please let me know at the start of class.
3. Always have a notebook and writing utensil in front of you. We will be writing in *every class*, and having quick access to something with which to jot down notes will help cultivate a habit of writing, which will serve you well in other coursework.
4. Allow for an atmosphere of respectful academic discourse. This course—and anthropology in general—engages in potentially controversial themes on which many people (including me) have strong opinions. Try your best to debate respectfully and sympathetically, even when you disagree with your classmates or with me. We want to allow everyone to express his or her perspective in a safe yet academically critical setting. You may find it helpful to think of it this way: We are going to debate *ideas*, not other people.
5. Ask questions about anything (terms, concepts, history, etc.) you do not know or are unsure of. Even if it seems like a silly question, chances are that other people have the same uncertainty.

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

Your primary requirements for this class include two major papers: a lens essay and a research essay. The first assignment is similar to the lens assignment you completed in the fall semester but will address a different topic. This essay of six to seven double-spaced pages should use one of our theoretical readings

on gender to examine another course reading more closely or in a different light. The second assignment consists of an extended research project, for which you will conduct library and/or primary research to make a novel contribution to the ethnographic literature. The final version of this project will be at least ten double-spaced pages. More detailed guidelines for both of these assignments will be handed out closer to their due dates.

Since editing is the heart of good writing, the editorial process for each of these main papers will last longer than the initial writing of it. Each project requires you to submit a pre-draft assignment: For the lens essay, this will take the form of a formal outline, which should be as detailed as possible; for the research essay, this will be a one- to two-page proposal outlining the question(s) you intend to investigate further, along with a brief description of your methodology (i.e., how you will find your information). A first (albeit *complete*) rough draft will be due three or four weeks before the final version is to be turned in. After I provide feedback on the **ethnographic content** of your writing (including the organization of ideas, depth of argument, etc.), you will produce a second rough draft. I will also be grading this second rough draft and returning it to you to correct **grammatical and mechanical errors**, after which you will submit a polished final version. Since there are only two major essays to write in this class and you will have a significant amount of time to work on each one, my expectations are high. I will provide support at each stage of the process to help you meet these expectations.

In addition to the two primary assignments, you will be asked to write four “mini-essays.” These one- to two-page assignments will be scrutinized less intensively than the lens and research essays. They are an opportunity for you to practice your writing skills and to reflect back on course themes. There will also be an in-class midterm exam covering the course material discussed in the first half of the term. You will have the full class period to complete a series of short-response and essay prompts.

## **PAPER FORMAT AND SUBMISSION:**

The presentation of your written work is an important component of college writing that we will develop in this course. *All* written assignments (with the exception of in-class exercises and exams), even rough drafts, will be expected to follow the following guidelines. These rules may seem arbitrary or complicated, but they will enhance the professionalism of your work. (We will discuss how to format each one in class.)

Papers must be typed and checked for spelling and grammatical mistakes to the best of your ability. They should be printed on white 8 ½-by-11 inch paper with **1-inch margins**, stapled in the upper left-hand corner, double-spaced, and in 12-point Times New Roman font. Even though Microsoft Word automatically adds extra space after each paragraph, kindly remove these before printing your paper. Please also include your last name and the page number in the header of each page. All references to material not your own **MUST** be cited according to MLA format both in the text and at the end (i.e., a “Works Cited” list). Every submitted work should list at the top of the first page, in order, your name, your instructor’s name, the course number, the date you *finished* it, and a unique title. A sample of this format is available on LATTE.

The notation found in the class schedule tells how each draft ought to be submitted. The letter “P” indicates a hard, printed copy is required at the *beginning* of class. The letter “E” means that an electronic copy is **due to LATTE by 12:00 NOON** that day. Note that this is several hours before class meets, so make sure you allow enough time to get it in punctually. If for some reason you have difficulty submitting

through LATTE, send it to me by email. (As usual, assume I did *not* receive it if you do not get a confirmation back from me.)

For each day (or portion thereof) that your paper is late, your grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter (e.g., from B+ to a B). This rule applies to both the rough drafts and the final version. You have plenty of time to prepare each draft, so I recommend that you start early and avoid beginning the paper the night before. I've read countless assignments and essays; I can tell immediately when students rushed through the writing process at the last minute. (This means *please* remember to read through your entire draft *at least* once before printing it!) If I do not think you have spent a reasonable amount of time on a draft, your lack of effort will be reflected in your grade.

### **READINGS:**

In this as in other college classes, you are expected to come to class having carefully read *all* the assigned materials. Due to our small class size, I expect everyone to contribute to discussion at each class meeting. If you have not closely read the materials for the day, it will be noticeable, and your participation grade will be affected. Since most of our readings will be available electronically on LATTE, many students find it helpful to print them out to annotate while they read and to refer to during class. While you are not *required* to print out all the readings, if you do not have them in front of you during class, I expect you to have taken notes on some of the important passages, and I may call on you to answer questions about them. On a lighter note, I want you to see the readings for this course not as a burden but as a chance to explore new worlds; ethnographic writing can be a lot of fun, and I hope you enjoy yourselves as we tackle fascinating topics!

### **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:**

Attendance at all classes is expected as a basic requirement of the course. You cannot learn this material if you are not present in class, since the core of what we will be covering will be brought out through discussion and many important points are not covered in the readings. If you cannot attend a class session—regardless of whether you have a legitimate excuse or not—you are expected to write a response *at least two full double-spaced pages long* that (a) summarizes the readings for the day (or the topics discussed in class if no new readings were assigned) **and** (b) demonstrates some critical engagement with the material. This paper should follow all guidelines for other submitted work and is due one week following the missed class. If I do not receive your make-up paper, your attendance grade will be reduced by one full letter grade for each missed class. Multiple absences will be addressed with Erika Smith, the MKTYP director. Furthermore, while attendance will play a crucial part of your grade, there is more to being “present” than simply showing up. Your mental presence at and participation in each class period is a crucial component of this class and your participation grade.

### **WEEKLY TUTORIALS:**

Each student's writing is unique, and to address your strengths and weaknesses as a writer, you will meet with the assigned tutor individually for a half-hour each week. This is considered part of the requirements for this course, and your absence at these sessions will be considered as serious as an absence from class. If you must miss a meeting, you and the tutor can coordinate to reschedule for another time later in the

week or the following week. However, multiple missed, rescheduled, or tardy meetings will result in a reduction of your attendance/participation grade. Please come to each session with copies of your recent and/or current assignments so that you will have material to work with.

**GRADING:**

You will be evaluated based on the quality of your assignments, the degree of improvement throughout the semester, and the value of your participation in class. Each component of the course will be weighted as follows:

Lens Essay.....	20%
Research Essay.....	35%
Midterm Exam.....	10%
Mini-Essays and In-Class Assignments.....	15%
Attendance/Participation (including class <i>and</i> tutorials).....	20%

Your final grade will be calculated based on the average score of all these categories and will fall on the following scale, as defined by the university:

A.....	High Distinction (for exceptional work)
A-	
B+	
B.....	Distinction (for very good work)
B-	
C+	
C.....	Satisfactory (for acceptable work)
C-	
D+	
D.....	Passing, but Unsatisfactory (for poor work)
D-	
E.....	Failing Grade

**EXTRA CREDIT:**

This semester the anthropology department is offering an opportunity to explore the topics of our course in greater depth. The Brandeis Anthropology Research Seminar (BARS) is a weekly lecture series in which leading anthropologists are invited to campus to present cutting-edge research on a diverse variety of themes along with members of our own department. Fortuitously, this spring’s lineup closely parallels the structure of our course; therefore, a chance for extra credit is being offered in conjunction with these events. You may attend one or more of the lectures and write a two-page reflection paper not just summarizing the speakers’ points but analyzing and engaging them. If you have given serious thought to the topic, you will receive either three extra points on the midterm exam OR an increase of one-third of a letter grade on one of your mini-essays. You may also use this paper to excuse an absence in lieu of the standard make-up paper. The seminar meets most Fridays from 3:00-5:00 in Schwartz Hall, room 103. Here is a link to the complete list of speakers and dates:

<http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/anthro/BARS%20Brandeis%20Anthropology%20Research%20Semina.html>

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the university's policies on academic integrity and plagiarism (see <http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai>). Faculty may refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions, including but not limited to failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences.

## WRITING CENTER:

One of the best resources at Brandeis to improve your writing is the on-campus Writing Center, located in the Goldfarb Library, room 107. They offer free 45-minute sessions to help improve the organization, conciseness, and impact of your essays. (They will also work, to a lesser extent, on recurring grammatical concerns.) To register for a session, go to

<http://www.brandeis.edu/writingprogram/writingcenter/register.html>

or stop by during their evening drop-in hours (Monday through Thursday). If you make an appointment, please be sure to keep it, since they have had problems with some students not showing up in the past. Students who attend a full session (remember to ask for a sheet of paper confirming you were there!) will receive a 24-hour extension on ONE of their drafts (either rough draft or final). On a final note, you will occasionally find me working in the Writing Center. While you may sign up with me, note that this will not count for the 24-hour extension, and I discourage it. A big part of the Writing Center is to get as many *different* perspectives on your writing as possible. (Remember you can make an appointment with me whenever you would like.)

## CLASS SCHEDULE:

<i>Class Unit</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Reading Due</i>	<i>Writing Due</i>
<b>Week 1: Prologue – Transitioning to Gender, Kinship, and Religion</b>	January 12	None	None
	January 14	Syllabus  William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, <i>The Elements of Style</i> , Introduction, Rule 5, and Principle 17	
	January 15	Françoise Dussart, <i>The Politics of Ritual in an Aboriginal</i>	Media Articles Exercise

		Settlement, Acknowledgements and Introduction	
<b><u>PART I: Gender and Sexuality</u></b>			
<b>Week 2: Introduction to Sex and Gender</b>	January 21	Alma Gottlieb, “Interpreting Gender and Sexuality: Approaches from Cultural Anthropology”	Mini-Essay – Ethnographic Fieldwork (E)
	January 22	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , Review A2 and MLA-1	
<b>Week 3: Alternative Gender Schemes</b>	January 26	Sarah Lamb, <i>White Saris and Sweet Mangoes</i> , pp. xi-xiii, 1-8, 181-212	
	January 28	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , G3-d and W1 (special attention to affect/effect, bad/badly, could care less, could of, hopefully, however, its/it’s, kind of/sort of, mankind, raise/rise, set/sit, suppose to, than/then, that/which, there/their/they’re, utilize)	Mini-Essay – Sex vs. Gender (E)
	January 29	Françoise Dussart, <i>The Politics of Ritual in an Aboriginal Settlement</i> , Chapter 5 (pp. 177-184 and 207-211 required; rest of the chapter optional)	
<b>Week 4: Challenging Sex Binaries</b>	February 2	Katrina Karkazis, <i>Fixing Sex</i> , Introduction	
	February 4	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , E4, C1-d, G2-c, G2-d, and G2-f	Mini-Essay – Field Notes as Evidence (E)
	February 5	Will Roscoe, “‘Strange Country This’: An Introduction to North American Gender Diversity”	
<b>Week 5: Sexuality</b>	February 9	Jennifer Terry, <i>An American Obsession</i> , Chapter 1	
	February 11	Roger Lancaster, “On Homosexualities in Latin America (And Other Places)”  Review Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , MLA-5	Lens Essay Outline (E)

	February 12	Timothy Dailey, “The Slippery Slope of Same-Sex Marriage” (required sections: “Homosexuality is Unnatural” and “Gay Marriage: A No Show in History”)  Charles Burrell, “Scientists Counter Bush View / Families Varied, Say Anthropologists”	
<b><u>PART II: Kinship</u></b>			
<b>Week 6: Fundamentals of Kinship Organization</b>	February 23	John Monaghan and Peter Just, “Fernando Seeks a Wife: Sex and Blood”  Robert Lavenda and Emily Schultz, <i>Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology</i> , Chapter 9 (Chapter 10 recommended)  Bruce Knauff, <i>The Gebusi</i> , Chapter 4	
	February 25	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , A3 and A4 (review A2)	Lens Essay First Rough Draft (E)
	February 26	Françoise Dussart, <i>The Politics of Ritual in an Aboriginal Settlement</i> , Chapter 1	
<b>Week 7: Alternative Family Structures</b>	March 2	Cai Hua, <i>A Society without Fathers or Husbands</i> , Chapter 7 (special emphasis on pp. 117-128, 140-147, and Figure 7.3) and beginning of Chapter 8	
	March 4		
	March 5	MIDTERM EXAMINATION	
<b>Week 8: Segmentary Kinship</b>	March 9	E.E. Evans-Pritchard, <i>The Nuer</i> , Chapter 5, Sections I-VI, XIII	
	March 11	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , W3 (review W5)  William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, <i>The Elements of Style</i> , Principles 14, 15, and 16	Lens Essay Second Rough Draft (P)

	March 12		
<b>Week 9: “Mutuality of Being”</b>	March 16	Marshall Sahlins, <i>What Kinship Is—And Is Not</i> , Preface, pp. 1-11, 19-24, 58-72, and 86-89	
	March 18	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , R1-a and R1-b	Lens Essay Final Draft (P,E)
	March 19	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , Rest of R1	
<b><u>PART III: Religion</u></b>			
<b>Week 10: Introduction to Theories of Religion</b>	March 23	Émile Durkheim, <i>Elementary Forms of the Religious Life</i> , pp. 1, 9-10, 36-47, and 299-308 (plus 444-447 if you’re looking for a provocative argument)	
	March 25	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , R3 and R4; skim MLA-2	Research Essay Proposal (E)
	March 26	Clifford Geertz, “Religion as a Cultural System,” Sections I and III; skim II	
<b>Week 11: Religion and Ritual</b>	March 30	Françoise Dussart, <i>The Politics of Ritual in an Aboriginal Settlement</i> , Chapter 2	
	April 1	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , G2-f  William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, <i>The Elements of Style</i> , Principle 21	Research Essay First Rough Draft (E)
	April 2		
<b>Week 12: The Politics of Ritual</b>	April 13	Françoise Dussart, <i>The Politics of Ritual in an Aboriginal Settlement</i> , Chapters 3 and 4	
	April 15	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , R2	
	April 16		
<b>Week 13: Exploring Ethnographies of Religious Life</b>	April 20	E.E. Evans-Pritchard, <i>Nuer Religion</i> , Chapter 1, Section 1 and Chapter 13  OR  Clifford Geertz, <i>The Religion of Java</i> , Introduction and pp. 355-365	

		OR David Noble, <i>The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention</i> , Introduction and Chapter 6	
	April 22	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer's Reference</i> , G5 and G6	Research Essay Second Rough Draft (P)
	April 23	Doug Bafford, "God's Visuality, Epistemology, and Politics: Toward an Anthropology of Creationist Knowledge"	
<b>Week 14: Conclusion – Connecting Gender, Kinship, and Religion</b>	April 27	Françoise Dussart, <i>The Politics of Ritual in an Aboriginal Settlement</i> , Chapters 6 and 7	Research Essay Final Draft (P,E)
<b>Final Exam Week: Epilogue</b>	TBD		Mini-Essay – Reflections on Writing (E)

**\*\*\*NB: This schedule and syllabus are subject to change as we move through the semester.\*\*\***

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