

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
Myra Kraft Transitional Year Program

**TYP 9a: Writing
Spring 2016**

**WRITING CULTURE:
THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER,
KINSHIP, AND COSMOLOGY**

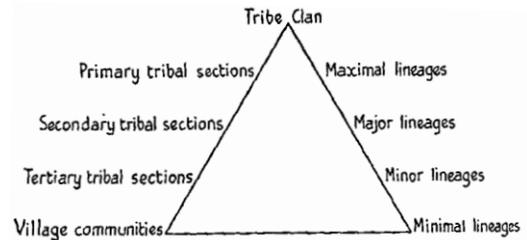
Instructor: Doug Bafford

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Office Location: Brown Social Science Center, Room 322a

Office Hours: Tuesdays 6:30-7:30 PM and
Thursdays 12:30-1:30 PM

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Class Meeting Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:00-6:20 PM

Location: Brown Social Science Center, Room 224

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 cosmology—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 cosmological systems and beliefs (e.g., religion, science, and other seemingly distinct worldviews). With these materials we will develop the ability to write analytic essays that are both organizationally sound and grammatically adherent to the culture of academic American English. We will practice writing the final two essay types that constitute the Brandeis writing program: the lens essay and the research essay. The lens essay will hone the 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.

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
- Sharpen email-writing skills to enhance professional self-presentation
- 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
- Provide a working definition of “cosmology”
- Appreciate the role of cosmological systems in multiple dimensions of human life
- Recognize the interconnected quality of gender, kinship, and cosmology 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.
6. If you have any concerns with anything in the course, please see me as soon as possible. Concerns that build over the course of the semester become more difficult to address; it will be much easier to deal with them as early on as possible. I am always available to find a solution that works best for you, regardless of what issues come up.

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 a theoretical reading about the emergence of modern Western notions of sexuality 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 are available on LATTE and will be discussed in class.

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. Hard copies 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 3:00 PM** that day. Note that this is two hours before the 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. *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. Extensions are granted *automatically* for circumstances outside your control equal to the number of study days lost, provided you let me know ahead of the due date. If the new date falls outside our class meeting days and you need to submit a paper copy, you may (1) place it in my mailbox or (2) email it to me and submit a paper copy the next time we meet.

READINGS:

In this as in other college classes, you are expected to come to class having carefully read *all* the assigned materials. Readings connected to each day’s topics that are supplementary and therefore optional are indicated on the class schedule by a wavy underline. Although you are not required to read them, you may find them useful when conducting independent research for your essays.

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. Each student will begin with an A in attendance. After the first missed class, each subsequent absence will result in lowering your attendance grade by one-third of a letter (e.g., to an A-, then to a B+, etc.). However, I realize that unexpected things may come up during the semester (e.g., illness, family concerns, etc.) that may prevent you from being in class. Therefore, if you come see me during office hours to talk about the course content that you missed, this reduction will be waived. Habitual absences will be addressed with Dr. 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, which will be determined separately from your attendance grade. You cannot earn an A for this component simply by showing up; you must earn it through consistent, careful, thoughtful, and enthusiastic engagement in class discussions. Careful preparation does not necessarily exclude taking risks; feel free to try new ideas without fear of being wrong. Your participation grade is a function not of correctness but of intellectual boldness and effort exerted. Finally, I understand that outgoing conversation or debate is not a style suited to all learners. Therefore, if you feel you are not able to participate rigorously during class, please let me know so that we can figure out an alternative mode of participation, whether through office hour visits or other activities, such as the discussion forum available at the top of the LATTE page.

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 the course, and your absence at these sessions will be considered 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.

EXTRA CREDIT:

The anthropology department offers an opportunity to explore many of 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. You may attend one or more of the lectures and write a two-page reflection paper analyzing and engaging with the speaker's points. If you have given serious thought to the topic, you will receive either four 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 coming to office hours. The seminar meets most Friday afternoons from 2:00-4:00 PM in Schwartz Hall, room 103. Here is a link to the complete list of speakers and dates:

<http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/anthro/events.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.

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%
Research Presentation	5%
Midterm Exam	5%
Mini-Essays and In-Class Assignments	15%
Attendance and 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

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 232 on the upper level. They offer free 45-minute sessions to help improve the organization, conciseness, and impact of your essays. (They also offer 30-minute sessions devoted to patterns of grammatical concerns, but these sessions are only available *as a final resource*, after you have already finished editing your paper to correct more substantial issues.) 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. On a final note, you will occasionally find me working in the Writing Center. While you may sign up with me, 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'd like.)

CLASS SCHEDULE:

<i>Class Unit</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Reading Due</i> (<u>wavy underline</u> = supplementary reading)	<i>Writing Due</i>
Week 1: Prologue – Transitioning to Gender, Kinship, and Cosmology	January 14	None	None
<u>PART I: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality</u>			
Week 2: Introduction to Sex and Gender	January 19	Syllabus Alma Gottlieb, “Interpreting Gender and Sexuality: Approaches from Cultural Anthropology”	
	January 21	William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, <i>The Elements of Style</i> , Introduction, Rule 5, and Principle 17	
Week 3: Alternative Gender Schemes	January 26	Sarah Lamb, <i>White Saris and Sweet Mangoes</i> , pp. xi-xiii, 1-8, 181-212 <u>Will Roscoe, “‘Strange Country This’: An Introduction to North American Gender Diversity”</u>	Mini-Essay – Ethnographic Fieldwork (E)
	January 28 <i>Begins at 7:00</i>	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , Review A2 and MLA-1	
Week 4: Challenging Sex Binaries	February 2	Katrina Karkazis, <i>Fixing Sex</i> , Introduction <u>Julie Scelfo, “A University Recognizes a Third Gender: Neutral”</u>	
	February 4	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 – Field Notes as Evidence (E)

Week 5: Sexuality	February 9	<p>Jennifer Terry, <i>An American Obsession</i>, Chapter 1</p> <p><u>Roger Lancaster, “On Homosexualities in Latin America (And Other Places)”</u></p> <p><u>Timothy Dailey, “The Slippery Slope of Same-Sex Marriage”</u></p> <p><u>Charles Burress, “Scientists Counter Bush View / Families Varied, Say Anthropologists”</u></p> <p><u>Rich Juzwiak, “Who’s the Man? How Being Versatile in Bed is a Way of Life”</u></p>	
	February 11	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , E4, C1-d, G2-c, G2-d, and G2-f	Mini-Essay – Sex and Gender (E)
<u>PART II: Kinship</u>			
Week 6: The Fundamentals of Kinship Organization	February 23	<p>John Monaghan and Peter Just, “Fernando Seeks a Wife: Sex and Blood”</p> <p>Robert Lavenda and Emily Schultz, “Relatedness: Kinship and Descent” and “Marriage and Family”</p> <p><u>Bruce Knauff, “Getting Along with Kin and Killers”</u></p>	Lens Essay Outline (E)
	February 25	<p>Review Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i>, MLA-5</p> <p>Françoise Dussart, <i>The Politics of Ritual in an Aboriginal Settlement</i>, Acknowledgements and Introduction</p>	
Week 7: Alternative Family Structures	March 1	Cai Hua, <i>A Society without Fathers or Husbands</i> , Chapter 7 (special emphasis on pp. 117-	Lens Essay First Rough Draft (E)

		128, 140-147, and Figure 7.3) and beginning of Chapter 8	
	March 3	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer's Reference</i> , A3 and A4 (review A2)	
Week 8: Segmentary Kinship	March 8	E.E. Evans-Pritchard, <i>The Nuer</i> , Chapter 5, Sections I-VI, XIII <u>E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Nuer Religion</u>	
	March 10	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	
Week 9: "Mutuality of Being"	March 15	Marshall Sahlins, <i>What Kinship Is—And Is Not</i> , Preface, pp. 1-11, 19-24, 58-72, and 86-89	List of Three Possible Research Topics (E or P)
	March 17	MIDTERM EXAMINATION	
<u>PART III: Cosmology</u>			
Week 10: Considering Cosmology	March 22	Michael Herzfeld, "Cosmologies"	Lens Essay Second Rough Draft (P)
	March 24	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer's Reference</i> , R1-a and R1-b Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer's Reference</i> , Rest of R1	
Week 11: Religion and Ritual	March 29	Émile Durkheim, <i>Elementary Forms of the Religious Life</i> , pp. 1, 9-10, 36-47, 299-308, and 444-447	Lens Essay Final Draft (E,P)
	March 31	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer's Reference</i> , R3 and R4; skim MLA-2 Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," Sections I and III; skim II <u>Clifford Geertz, <i>The Religion of Java</i></u>	

		<u>E.E. Evans-Pritchard, <i>Nuer Religion</i></u>	
Week 12: The Politics of Ritual	April 5	Françoise Dussart, <i>The Politics of Ritual in an Aboriginal Settlement</i> , Chapter 6 and Conclusion <u>Françoise Dussart, “‘It Is Hard to Be Sick Now’: Diabetes and the Reconstruction of Indigenous Sociality”</u>	Research Essay Proposal (E)
	April 7	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , G2-f, G5, and G6 William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, <i>The Elements of Style</i> , Principle 21	
Week 13: Religion and Science as Cosmologies	April 12	Douglas Bafford, “Religion and Science”	Research Essay First Rough Draft (E)
	April 14	Diana Hacker, <i>A Writer’s Reference</i> , R2	
Week 14: Wrapping Up	April 19	David Noble, <i>The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention</i> <u>Doug Bafford, “Confiding in ‘God’s Word,’ Confirming through ‘Man’s Word’”</u>	Research Essay Second Rough Draft (P)
Final Exam Week: Epilogue	TBD		Research Essay Final Draft (E,P) Mini-Essay – Reflections on Writing (P)

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

Source for Image on First Page: Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* 248