

POETICS AND PERFORMANCE

Anthropology 423/623
Spring 2010

TIME/ROOM

SYLLABUS SUBJECT TO CHANGE PRIOR TO THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASSES.

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Course Description:

This seminar will examine the social structuring effects of poetic and performative elements of communication and will make a case for the infrastructural (i.e. non-trivial) properties of performance and poetics generally. We will define the poetic in terms of two broad intellectual genealogies which: 1) consider the 'poetic function of language' as the performative framing or stipulating (i.e. metapragmatic) function of communicative events generally; and 2) consider the poetic as the culturally and historically singular nexus of music and mythology in any society. Participants will consider major scholarly discussions of poetics and performance in philosophy (John Austin, Roman Jakobson), anthropology (Richard Bauman, Charles Briggs, Steven Caton, Steven Feld, James Fernandez, Paul Friedrich, Lila Abu Lughod, Michael Silverstein), and critical theory (Judith Butler, Friedrich Kittler). Ultimately, the seminar will explore how poetic and performative aspects of communication provide critical insights into world-building processes within political practice, the performance of gender identity, and the structuring of large scale social organization and its imaginaries.

Course Requirements:

A. *Weekly Précis and Seminar Participation (60%)*. Participants will thoroughly engage the assigned readings for each class session and be prepared to discuss them critically. Each participant will provide a short (c. 1,000 word) critical précis of the text(s) assigned for each session which s/he will post on the 'Discussion' page of the Classes ServerV2 for this course no later than 9 AM the day before the session for which they are due (i.e. Monday). A **critical précis** should include a thematic and topical overview of the piece as well as a critical assessment of it making reference to the major themes of the seminar. Please compose your précis with the intention of informing someone who hasn't read the piece or of reminding yourself at some later date the important elements of it along with your assessment.

***NB¹**: Précis will be due beginning Week II. You will be responsible for 10 submissions, which means you may choose to take two weeks off over the course of the semester (with the exception of those weeks marked with an ***asterisk**).*

***NB²**: The only criterion for assigning grades for précis will be the **good-faith and on-time** submission of them. We will handle all other considerations – quality of writing and scholarship – in qualitative assessments of your work and in suggestions for improvement. A **'good faith'** submission is one that provides a reasonable overview of*

the piece in question along with your critical assessment of it. Failure to submit assignments on time is not an option. The late or non-submission of a précis will result in a grade reduction as a proportion of 60% of the overall grade (i.e. 5.45% per précis). There will be no exception to this rule. Should extraordinary circumstances prevent you from completing your assignment on time, please provide a Dean's excuse.

B. Seminar Presentation (10%). Following the first few weeks, selected participants will be responsible for a presentation to the seminar and leading the discussion for that session. During weeks in which you are leading discussion, you need not write and submit a précis. But you will be encouraged to read carefully and respond thoughtfully to the précis submitted by the other seminar participants.

C. Individual Term Papers (30%): Each **undergraduate participant** will complete a 10-15 page term paper based on a topic to be agreed upon in consultation with the instructor. A rough draft – or thesis statement and detailed outline – with bibliography will be due on the last day of ninth week (**DATE**); a final draft will be due on the final day of classes for the semester (**DATE7**). Participants are encouraged to schedule a meeting with me prior to the first draft submission in order to discuss topics and goals. Though you may use outside materials, the paper topic may be drawn largely from the readings assigned and covered in class. The idea is to expand upon one or more of the issues that are raised in the seminar.

Graduate students will complete a somewhat longer paper (20-30 pages) applying the concepts of the seminar to the problems/areas of their dissertation research.

Critical Due Dates (Term Paper):

RoughDraft OR Thesis Statement/Outline:	DATE, 4:30PM
Final Draft:	DATE, 4:30PM

***NB:** The amount of preparation for the rough draft or thesis statement/outline is entirely up to you. Bear in mind that this is an opportunity to receive detailed feedback from me prior to receiving a grade. The more you do initially, the more feedback I can give and the less you will have to do at the end of the semester. I will set aside time during the week following your submission to review your work and discuss it in detail, if you wish. Given my own time constraints and in fairness to others, I will not be able to offer detailed feedback after that time.*

Books to Purchase (Labyrinth Books, York Street)

- Austin, J.L. 1962. *How to Do Things with Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila 1990. *Veiled Sentiments. Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Bowen, John R. 1991. *Sumatran Politics and Poetic: Gayo history, 1900-1989* [DS632 G3 B687 1991]
- Butler, Judith 1997. *Excitable Speech: a Politics of the Performative*. New York: Routledge.
- Caton, Steven 1990. *"Peaks of Yemen I summon" : poetry as cultural practice in a North Yemeni tribe*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. [SML PJ8007.2 C38 1990]

- Goffman, Erving 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Boston: Northeastern University Press (Selections)
- Feld, Steven 1982. *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Fernandez, James 1986. *Persuasions and Performances: The Play of Tropes in Culture*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press
- Kittler, Friedrich A. 1999. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Translated with an Introduction by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Other Texts Possible

- Basso, Keith 1996. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.
- Hymes, Dell 1981. *"In Vain I Tried to Tell You": Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. [ISBN: 0812278062] [[ISBN 0-5851-7266-8](#) (electronic bk.)]
- Hymes, Dell 2003. *Now I Know Only So Far: Essays in Ethnopoetics*. University of Nebraska Press. [ISBN: 0803273355]
- Keane, Webb 1997. *Signs of Recognition: Powers and Hazards of Representation in Indonesian Society*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press
- Kittler, Friedrich A. 1990. *Discourse Networks, 1800/1900*. Trans. Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. [ISBN: 0804720991]
- Miller, Flagg 2007. *The Moral Resonance of Arab Media: Audiocassette Poetry and Culture in Yemen*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Narayanan, Vasudha 1994. *The Vernacular Veda: Revelation, Recitation, and Ritual*. University of South Carolina Press.
- Prasad, Leela 2007. *Poetics of Conduct: Oral Narrative and Moral Being in a South Indian Town*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ramanujan, A.K. 1986. *Poems of Love and War*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rothenberg, Jerome 1985 [1968]. *Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poetries from Africa, America, Asia, Europe, and Oceania*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Schechner, Richard 2003[1988]. *Performance Theory*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Stallybrass, Peter, and Allon White 1986. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Tedlock, Dennis 1983. *The spoken word and the work of interpretation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. [ISBN 0-8122-1143-X (pbk.)].
- Tedlock, Dennis 1999. *Finding the center: The art of the Zuni storyteller* (2nd. ed.). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press [ISBN 0-8032-9440-9 (pbk.)]
- Warner, Michael 2002. *Publics and Counter Publics*. New York: Zone Books.
- Yelle, Robert A. 2003. *Explaining Mantras: Ritual, Rhetoric, and the Dream of a Natural Language in Hindu Tantra*. New York and London: Routledge.

Other Materials and Articles:

All other materials will be placed on the Resources page of the ClassesV2 server for this course.

CALENDAR OF READINGS

Week 1 Introduction I

Bauman, Richard and Charles Briggs 1990. 'Poetics and Performance as Critical perspectives on Language and Social Life.' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19:59-88.

*Week 2 Poetics and everyday language

Jakobson, R. 1987[1960]. 'Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics.' *Language in Literature*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap/Harvard University Press, pp. 62-94.

Jakobson, R. 1987[1976]. 'What is Poetry?' *Language in Literature*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap/Harvard University Press, pp. 368-78.

Hymes, Dell 1995 [1962]. 'The Ethnography of Speaking.' In Blount, Ben G., ed. *Language, Culture and Society: A Book of Readings* (Second Edition). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, pp. 248-82.

*Week 3 The Poetic Function/Framing/Metapragmatics

Goffman, Erving 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Boston: Northeastern University Press (Selections)

NB: DOUBLE SESSION: EXTRA EVENING SESSION THIS WEEK TBA

*Week 4: Austin, performatives, and the problem of things and words

Austin, J. L. 1975[1962] *How to do Things with Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (Selections)

Rosaldo, Michelle Z. 1982 "The Things We Do with Words: Ilongot Speech Acts and Speech Act Theory in Philosophy," in *Language and Society* 11: 203-235.

Searle, John. 1969. "What is A Speech Act?" In *Speech Acts*.

Tambiah, Stanley. "The Magical Power of Words." *Man* NS, 3:175-208.

NB: DOUBLE SESSION: EXTRA EVENING SESSION THIS WEEK TBA

*Week 5 Poetics, performance, and the metapragmatic calibration of reality

Silverstein, Michael 1976. 'Shifters, Linguistic Categories, and Cultural Description.' In Basso, Keith and M. Selby, eds., *Meaning in Anthropology*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, pp. 11-56 [Also in Blount, ed. 1995, pp. 187-221].

Silverstein, Michael 1993. 'Metapragmatic Discourse, Metapragmatic Function' In J. Lucy (ed), *Reflexive language: Reported speech and metapragmatic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 33-58.

NB: DOUBLE SESSION: EXTRA EVENING SESSION THIS WEEK TBA

*Week 6 Poetic language and the imagination

- Friedrich, Paul 1979a. 'The Symbol and Its Relative Non-Arbitrariness.' In his *Language, Context and the Imagination*. Edited by Anwar S. Dil. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 1-61.
- 1979b. 'Poetic Language and the Imagination: A Reformulation of the Sapir Hypothesis.' In his *Language, Context and the Imagination*. Edited by Anwar S. Dil. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 441-512.
 - S.t. from the *Language Parallax?*
- Week 7 The play of tropes in expressive culture
- Fernandez, James 1986. *Persuasions and Performances: The Play of Tropes in Culture*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, and 11.
- Friedrich, Paul 1990. 'Polytropy.' In Fernandez, James, ed., *Beyond Metaphor*. Austin: University of Texas Press, pp.
- Burke, Kenneth 'Four Master Tropes.'
- Week 8: Poetry as cultural and political practice
- Caton, Steven 1990 *"Peaks of Yemen I summon": poetry as cultural practice in a North Yemeni tribe*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Week 9 Gender and the poetics of honor
- Abu-Lughod, Lila 1986. *Veiled sentiments: honor and poetry in a Bedouin Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [ISBN: 0-520-22473-6; (CCL) DT72 B4 A28 1986]
- Week 10 The poetics of self and the world: Kaluli song and weeping
- Feld, Steven 1982. *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Week 11 Gayo History, Politics and Poetics (Sumatra, Indonesia)
- Bowen, John R. 1991. *Sumatran politics and poetic: Gayo history, 1900-1989*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Week: 12 A Politics of the Performative
- Butler, Judith 1997. *Excitable Speech: a Politics of the Performative*. New York: Routledge.
- *Week 13 Discourse Networks
- Kittler, Friedrich A. 1999. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Translated with an Introduction by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bibliography:

On the anthropology of Doing Things with Words:

- Basso, Keith. "Stalking with Stories: Names Places and Moral Narratives among the Western Apache. In Western Apache Language and Culture, pp.138-73.
- Bauman, Richard 1975. "Verbal Art as Performance" In Duranti Reader, pp. 165-188.
- Bauman, Richard and Charles Briggs 1992. Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life. Annual Review of Anthropology 19:59-88.
- Duranti, Alessandro. 1997. "Speaking as Social Action." In Linguistic Anthropology, pp. 214-244.
- Furani, Khaled 2008. 'Rhythms of the secular: The politics of modernizing Arab poetic forms.' *American Ethnologist* 35(2):290-307.
- Grice, H.P. 1975. "Logic and Conversation". In Syntax and Semantics, vol. 3, Speech Acts, pp. 41-58. Academic Press. Reprinted with editing in The Discourse Reader, A Jaworski and N. Coupland (eds.) London: Routledge. Pp. 76-88.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1935. Coral Gardens and their Magic, Vol. 2, part 4.
- Miller, Flagg 2005. 'Of songs and signs: Audiocassette poetry, moral character, and the culture of circulation in Yemen.' *American Ethnologist* 32(1):82-99.
- Rosaldo, Michelle. 1982. "The Things We do with Words: Ilongot Speech Acts and Speech Act Theory in Philosophy." *Language in Society* 11:203-37.
- Searle, John. 1969. "What is A Speech Act?" In Speech Acts.
- Tambiah, Stanley. "The Magical Power of Words." Man NS, 3:175-208.