
NARRATING LIVES

Theoretical Perspectives on Life History as Ethnographic Method & Text

Course: ANTH 205 (2); Graduate Seminar in Ethnology
Day/Time: T 5:00-7:50
Location: MND 4005
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I. **Catalog Description**

ANTH 205. Ethnology. Seminar is designed for students to develop a working knowledge of anthropological approaches to a number of major issues in ethnology. The focus is on the analysis of case studies. 3 units.

II. **Course Description and Objectives**

This course examines life history as ethnographic method and text. Readings are drawn from a range of genres, disciplinary specializations (including medical and applied anthropology), and socio-historical contexts of elicitation and narrative production. We will read a combination of life histories—primarily American Indian—along with a corpus of scholarly articles chosen not simply for the theoretical and methodical insights they offer, but also for their capacity to broaden the scope of our ethnographic lens. These articles explore the elicitation, interpretation and/or analysis of life narratives featuring street children, junkies, Holocaust survivors, anthropologists, African-American Gulf Coast fishermen, recent retirees, and the like. It is my hope that each of you will find some context for relating the course content to your own research interests and projects.

III. **Required Readings** (*available on SacCT*)

A. **Articles**

Agar, Michael

1980 Stories, Background Knowledge and Themes: Problems in the Analysis of Life History Narrative. *American Ethnologist* 7(2):223-239.

Arndt, Grant

2010 The Making and Muting of an Indigenous Media Activist. *American Ethnologist* 37(3):499-510.

Bateson, Mary Catherine

1980 Continuities in Insight and Innovation: Toward a Biography of Margaret Mead. *American Anthropologist* 82(2):270-277.

- Blackman, Margaret B.
1991 The Individual and Beyond: Reflections on the Life History Process. *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly* 16(2):56-62.
- Blount, Ben and Kathi R. Kitner
2007 Life on the Water: A Historical-Cultural Model of African American Fishermen on the Georgia Coast (USA). *NAPA Bulletin* 28(1):109-122.
- Brandes, Stanley
1979 Ethnographic Autobiographies in American Anthropology. *Central Issues in Anthropology* 1(2):1-17.
- Cook-Lynn, Elizabeth
1995 Review: Life and Death in the Mainstream of American Indian Biography. *Wicazo Sa Review* 11(2):90-93.
- Domínguez, Virginia R.
1991 How the Self Stacks the Deck. *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly* 16(1):12-15.
- Fischer, Michael M.J.
1991 The Uses of Life Histories. *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly* 16(1):24-27.
- Frank, Geyla
1979 Finding the Common Denominator: A Phenomenological Critique of Life History Method. *Ethos* 7(1):68-94.
- Gengenbach, H.
1994 Truth-Telling and the Politics of Women's Life History Research in Africa: A Reply to Kirk Hoppe. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 27(3):619-627.
- Hoppe, Kirk
1993 Whose Life Is It, Anyway?: Issues of Representation in Life Narrative Texts of African Women. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26(3):623-636.
- Jacklin, Michael
2008 Consultation and Critique: Implementing Cultural Protocols in the Reading of Collaborative Indigenous Life Writing. *In* *Indigenous Biography and Autobiography*. P. Read, F. Peters-Little, and A. Haebich, eds. Pp. 135-145. Canberra: ANU E Press.
- Kroeber, A.L.
1945 A Yurok War Reminiscence: The Use of Autobiographical Evidence. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 1(3):318-332

- Kroeber, Karl and Clifton Kroeber, eds. (*Selected Chapters*)
2003 *Ishi in Three Centuries*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Kroeber, Theodora
1963 *About History*. *Pacific Historical Review* 32(1):1-6.
- Lockhart, Chris
2008 *The Life and Death of a Street Boy in East Africa: Everyday Violence in the Time of AIDS*. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 22(1): 94-115.
- Luborsky, Mark R.
1987 *Analysis of Multiple Life History Narratives*. *Ethos* 15(4):366-381.
- Ochs, E., and L. Capps
1996 *Narrating the Self*. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25:19-43.
- Ortiz, Karol R.
1985 *Mental Health Consequences of Life History Method: Implications from a Refugee Case*. *Ethos* 13(2):99-120.
- Parson, Nia
2010 *Transformative Ties: Gendered Violence, Forms of Recover, and Shifting Subjectivities in Chile*. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 24(1):64-84.
- Ramirez, Renya K.
2009 *Henry Roe Cloud: A Granddaughter's Native Feminist Biographical Account*. *Wicazo Sa Review* 24(2):77-103.
- Rapport, Frances and Graham Hartill
2010 *Poetics of Memory: In Defence of Literary Experimentation with Holocaust Survivor Testimony*. *Anthropology and Humanism* 35(1): 20-37.
- Waterston, Alisse and Barbara Rylko-Bauer
2006 *Out of the Shadows of History and Memory: Personal Family Narratives in Ethnographies of Rediscovery*. *American Ethnologist* 33(3):397-412.
- Willms, Dennis G., et al.
1990 *A Systematic Approach for Using Qualitative Methods in Primary Prevention Research*. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 4(4):391-409.

B. Life Narratives (* available via SacCT)

- Bahr, Diana
2010 *Viola Martinez: California Paiute Living in Two Worlds*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

- *Colson, Elizabeth, editor
1974 *Autobiographies of Three Pomo Women*. Berkeley: University of California Archaeological Research Facility.
- Hopkins, Sarah Winnemucca
1994 *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*. Reno: U of Nevada Press.
- Horne, Esther Burnett and Sally McBeth
2002 *Essie's Story: The Life and Story of a Shoshone Teacher*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Kroeber, Theodora (with New Foreword by Karl Kroeber)
2002 *Ishi in Two Worlds: a Biography of the Last Wild Indian of North America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- *Michelson, Truman
1933 Narrative of an Arapaho Woman. *American Anthropologist* 35(4):595-610.
- *Murphy, Edith V. A. and Lucy Young
1941 *Out of the Past: A True Indian Story Told by Lucy Young, of Round Valley Indian Reservation*. *California Historical Society Quarterly* 20(4): 349-364.
- *Radin, Paul
1963 *The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian*. New York: Dover.
- Sarris, Greg
1994 *Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Shipek, Florence Connelly, ed.
2003 *Delfina Cuero: Her Autobiography—An Account of her Last Years and her Ethnobotanic Contributions*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Shostak, Marjorie
1981 *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*. New York: Random House, Inc.
- Shoup, Lawrence and Randall Milliken
1999 *Inigo of Rancho Posolmi: the Life and Times of a Mission Indian*. Morongo: California: Malki Museum Press.
- *Steward, Julian H.
1935 *Two Paiute Autobiographies*. Berkeley: University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, Volume 35(5): 423-438.
- *Wright, Marcia
1984 *Women in Peril: Life Stories of Four Captives*. Lusaka, Zambia: NECZAM.

C. Recommended Reading *(some of these may be deployed as "secondary readings" as needed)*

Crapanzano, Vincent

1984 Life-Histories. *American Anthropologist*. 86(4):953-960.

Johnson-Hanks, Jennifer

2002 On the Limits of Life Stages in Ethnography: Toward a Theory of Vital Conjunctions. *American Anthropologist* 104(3):865-880.

Keesing, Roger M.

1985 Kwaio Women Speak: The Micropolitics of Autobiography in a Solomon Island Society. *American Anthropologist* 87(1):27-39.

Willms, Dennis G., et al.

1990 A Systematic Approach for Using Qualitative Methods in Primary Prevention Research. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 4(4):391-409.

IV. Seminar Format and Evaluation

The class is based on intensive reading, discussion, and writing. We will spend the first hour of each seminar session talking about the featured life history. The remainder of the time will be dedicated to discussing the primary and secondary readings as they relate to the life history and to one other. Evaluation is based upon three components:

A) **Attendance** and active **participation** is required. To ensure that discussions are lively and relevant, students will prepare four discussion questions based upon the assigned life history and three questions based on the primary reading (for a total of 7 questions). These must be emailed to me by 3 pm, on the day of class. Please do not send these via SacCT email, but to my regular saclink account. These requirements—attendance, discussion, and preparation of questions—count for 25% of your grade.

B) **Seminar facilitation:** each student is required to lead two, one-hour seminar sessions based upon a secondary reading. Assignments will be made the first day of class and presentations will begin on January 31. Facilitators will be required to prepare and submit (at the start of class) an essay summarizing (with page citations, etc.) the article's main argument and points and any relevance it holds to the other readings for that week (life narrative and/or primary reading). Summaries should be approximately three-four double-spaced pages. Facilitators will not prepare a weekly essay (see below) when they are facilitating discussion of a secondary reading. Scores for facilitation and summary papers will be averaged to count for 25% of your grade.

C) **Weekly essays** (two double-spaced pages) count for 50% of your grade. These will concisely and critically analyze the substantive, methodological and/or theoretical relevance of the primary reading to the life narrative. The format for these essays will be posted to SacCT. I will mark your papers for both style and content, and will expect to see progress in both as the semester progresses. Please to consult this site for help understanding my editorial marks. <http://webster.commnet.edu/writing/symbols.htm>

V. Academic Dishonesty—Plagiarism will result in a score of zero on the assignment in question and may result in your permanent dismissal from the class. See this link: <http://www.csus.edu/umannual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm>.

VI. SSWD—Students who need disability accommodation are urged to approach me early in the semester. <http://www.csus.edu/sswd/services/policies/LD-Policy.html>.

VII. Course Schedule (subject to change at the instructor's discretion)

Date	Life Narrative(s)	Article (P=Primary; S=Secondary)
Jan. 24		
Jan. 31	Narrative of an Arapaho Woman — Two Paiute Autobiographies	(P) Brandes (1979)
		(S) Fischer (1991)
Feb. 7	The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian	(P) Kroeber (1945)
		(S)
Feb. 14	Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman [Intro-chpt. 9]	(P) Frank (1979)
		(S) Dominguez (1991)
Feb. 21	[chpts. 10-Epilogue]	(P) Agar (1980)
		(S) Luborsky (1987)
Feb. 28	Women in Peril: Life Stories of Four Captives — Out of the Past: A True Indian Story told by Lucy Young of Round Valley Indian Reservation	(P) Rapport and Hartill (2010)
		(S) Hoppe (1993)
		and (S) Gengenbach (1994)
March 6	Inigo of Rancho Posolmi	(P) Lockhart (2008)
		(S)
March 13	Delfina Quero	(P) Ortiz (1985)
		(S)
Spring Break		
March 27	Ishi in Two Worlds	(P) Kroeber & Kroeber: chpts. 14, 15, 16, 17
		(S) Kroeber & Kroeber: chpt. 11
April 3	(No life narrative) Kroeber & Kroeber: 1, 2 4 & Part Two (5 – 10)	(P) Waterston and Rylko-Bauer (2006)
		(S) Bateson (1980) and
		(S) T. Kroeber (1963)
April 10	Autobiographies of Three Pomo Women	(P) Blount (2007)
		(S)
April 17	Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream	(P) Jacklin (2008)
		(S) Ochs and Capps (1996)
April 24	Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims	(P) Arndt (2010)
		(S) Ramirez (2009)
May 1	Essie's Story: The Life and Story of a Shoshone Teacher	(P) Blackman (1991)
		(S) Cook-Lynn (1995)
May 8	Viola Martinez: California Paiute Living in Two Worlds	(P) Parson (2010)
		(S)