

Language and the Poetics of Emotions

Sarah Lawrence College

Intermediate Seminar

Spring 2015

ANTH 3818-R-1

*Meeting Time: **Tuesday** 9:30-am 12:30 pm (normally meets at 10:30, exceptionally at 9:30 with prior notice)*

*Location: **PAC 2***

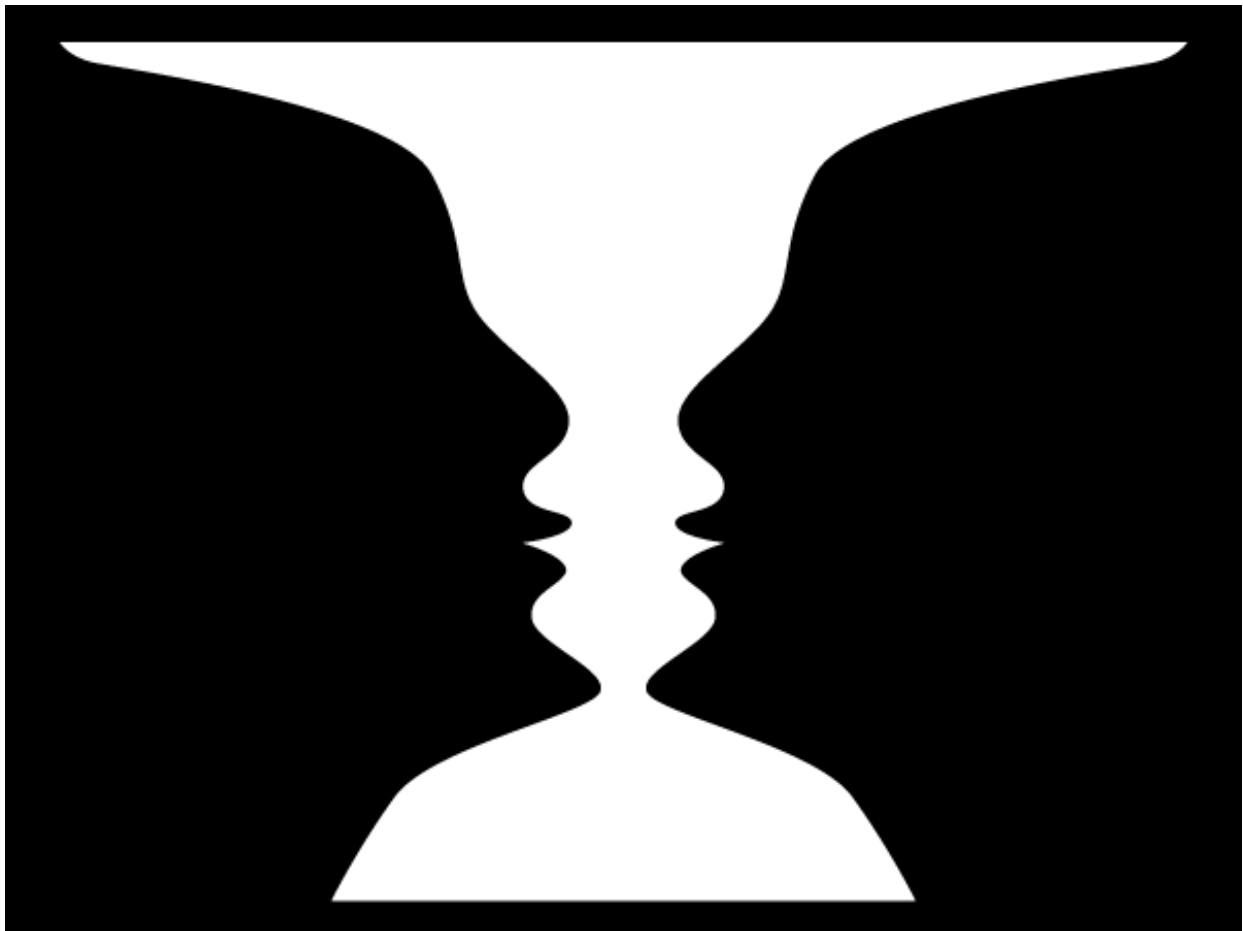
Conferences on B Weeks of: **02/02, 02/16, 03/02, 03/30, 04/12, 04/26.**

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Course description

How do language and communicative practices shape emotional experience? What are emotions and how can we study them ethnographically? How do our everyday ways of interacting create emotional meaning? This course focuses on the role of language and communicative dynamics in mediating and shaping emotional experience.

Since the early 1990s, influential works in linguistic and cultural anthropology have questioned universalizing views of emotion, advocating the idea that emotions are linguistic and sociocultural constructs grounded in historical and local specific contexts. These studies have challenged approaches to emotions based on binary oppositions (i.e. mind versus body and emotion versus reason), as reflected for example in popular and scholarly tendencies of associating emotions with stereotypical images of femininity, seen in opposition and hierarchical relations to reason (or rationality). Another line of research has explored the co-articulation between the linguistic expression of emotions and the process of subject-formation, highlighting how certain ways of speaking may generate or challenge moral dispositions, domains of experience, and structures of feelings.

Throughout the semester students will engage a series of ethnographic case studies aimed at exploring the nexus between language, emotions, and everyday cultural practices. Ranging from the relation between ideologies of gender and linguistic styles of affective expression in the Pacific to the intersection between romantic love, marriage practices, and the development of literacy in Nepal; from the connection between emotional ethos and styles of religious devotion in Indonesia and Mexico to the poetic expressions of resistance in Egypt and Nigeria; and from the analysis of the emotion in doctor-patient interactions to the study of dynamics of popularity and exclusion among American teenagers, this course will explore the linguistic constitution of emotional experience and subjectivity. Our aim will be to explore the linguistic poetics of emotions and the cultural politics of affect to expand our understanding of the significance of language in shaping our world.

Course prerequisites

This course requires a background in anthropology and the social sciences.

Course objectives

Through a series of readings and ethnographic exercises, this course aims at building a critical understanding of how communicative practices shape affective experience and how language partakes in the production and reproduction of structures of feeling. Students will be encouraged to ethnographically observe how they themselves speak, interact, and engage intimate relations.

These ethnographic exercises may be connected to the development of one's individual conference project or simply constitute single experiences.

Conference projects will have an ethnographic focus.

The emphasis on ethnography entails a focus on developing an ability to listen and understanding without jumping to conclusions and without imposing our pre-conceived ideas and values on the ethnographic materials that we will gather or examine. This ethnographic structure of attention is aimed at understanding the subtleties and complexities of human experience, which may also lead to new discoveries about ourselves.

Mid-term Papers on “Love in the time of Facebook”

- a) **Due dates: 03/10 at 11 am.**
- b) **Prompt:** Drawing on the readings done so far in class (with a special, but not exclusive focus on the readings for class #5) discuss with concrete examples of your choice how digital technologies and social networks have affected the contemporary modes of experiencing of romantic love. How have our romantic imaginations and lives been impacted by new modes of CMC (computer mediated communication) and by new forms of sociality generated through social networks? How are neoliberal protocols of interaction and new technologies affecting

human sociality? What can the study of the virtual intimacies teach us about new forms of relations and new models of humanity generated by late capitalist transformations?

- Your paper (4-5 page 1500-2000 word long) will draw on the readings you have done so far.
 - Please bear in mind that you should elaborate on my prompts *by discussing the literature you read for class* as well as by providing concrete examples from the empirical data you gathered for this project. **One of the main goals of the essay is to prompt you to establish connections between the different readings done in the first half of the Semester.** So the more connections you will be able to make in your reflections, the better. *This will entail quoting the literature covered in this course (Please follow the detailed guidelines provided on MySLC handout tab in the document entitled "How to format your texts").* You are free to refer to other sources if you want, but you will need to prioritize the readings and discussions done for this course.
 - In case there were thematic overlaps and congruencies, you may, if you wish, utilize some of the work (theoretical and/or empirical) done for your mid-term essay for your conference paper and project.
- c) **Submission:** You will **upload** your essay on **MySLC** Assignment tab (naming it YourName_Midterm_Paper) by the due date and bring a hardcopy to class on **03/10**.
- d) **Presentation:** You will present the findings of your **midterm** papers on 05/12 during a 8 minutes presentation. Multimedia technologies (including usage of audio, video, pictures) are welcome.

NOTE : Syllabus is subject to slight changes depending on the progresses and interests of the class.

1. A Week- Introduction: Locating Emotions

January 27

- Wilce, James M. 2009. "Chapter 1", "Chapter 2". In *Language and emotion*. Volume 25: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 19-54.
- Ochs, E. and B Schieffelin. 1989. Language has a heart. *Text* 9(1): 7-25.
- Weidman, A. (2011). Anthropology and the Voice. *Anthropology News*, 52(1), 13-13.
- Raymond Williams. 1977. "Structures of Feeling," *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, pp. 128-35.

NO Web Post Required

2. B Week- Anthropological and Ethnographic Approaches

February 3

- Lutz, Catherine A. 1988. "The Cultural Construction of the Emotions," "Emotion, Thought, and Estrangement: Western Discourses on Feeling," *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge to Western Theory*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. pp. 3-13, 53-80.
- Weidman, Amanda. 2012. The Ethnographer as Apprentice: Embodying Sociomusical Knowledge in

- South India. *Anthropology and Humanism*, 37(2), 214-235.
- Renato Rosaldo. 1996. "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage". In *Anthropological theory: An introductory history*, McGee, R Jon, and Richard L Warms (eds.): Mayfield Publishing Company
 - Throop, C. Jason. 2010. "Latitudes of loss: On the vicissitudes of empathy." *American Ethnologist* 37.4 (2010): 771-782.

Web Post Required

Optional

- Wilce J. 2004. Passionate scholarship: recent anthropologies of emotion. *Rev. Anthropol.* 33:1–17
- N. Besnier (1990). Language and Affect. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19: 419-451.

3. A Week- *Emotions as Culturally and Linguistically Constructed*

February 10

- Abu-Lughod, L., Lutz, C. A., 1990, "Introduction: emotion, discourse, and the politics of everyday life", in *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, New York, Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-23.
- Abu-Lughod, L. 1990. "Shifting politics in Bedouin love poetry". In *Language and the politics of emotion*, L. Abu-Lughod and C.A. Lutz (eds.). Cambridge University Press. PP. 24-45.
- Hirschkind, Charles. The Ethics of Listening: Cassette-Sermon Audition in Contemporary Egypt. *American Ethnologist* 28.3 (2001): 623-649.
- Lyon M. 1995. Missing emotion: the limitations of cultural constructionism in the study of emotion. *Cult. Anthropol.* 10(2):244–63

Web Post Required

Optional

- Lutz C, White G. 1986. The anthropology of emotions. *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.* 15:405–36
- Wilce, James M. 2009. "Chapter 4. In *Language and emotion*. Volume 25: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 19-54. [on reserve in the library]

4. B Week- *Semiotics of Affect and Ideologies of Language*

February 17

- Ochs, Elinor. 1992. "Indexing gender". In *Rethinking context: language as an interactive phenomenon*. A. Duranti & C. Goodwin (eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Irvine J. T. 1990. "Registering Affect: Heteroglossia in the Linguistic Expression of Emotion". In L. Abu-Lughod and C. A. Lutz, (Eds.), *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, New York, Cambridge University Press, pp. 126-185.
- Harkness, Nicholas. 2011. Culture and interdiscursivity in Korean fricative voice gestures. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 21(1), 99-123.
- Lutz, C.A. 1990. Engendered emotion: Gender, power, and the rhetoric of emotional control in American discourse. In Abu-Lughod, L., and C.A. Lutz (eds.). Cambridge University Press. Pp. 69-72.

- Kulick, Don. 1998. "Anger, gender, language shift, and the politics of revelation in a Papua New Guinean village." In *Language ideologies: Practice and theory*. Pp. 87-102.

Web Post Required

Optional

- Wilce, James M. 2009. "Chapter 8". In *Language and emotion*. Volume 25: Cambridge University Press. **[on reserve in the library]**
- Inoue, Miyako. 2002. Gender, language, and modernity: Toward an effective history of Japanese women's language. *American Ethnologist* 29(2):392-422.
- Kroskrity, Paul V. 2004. "[Language ideologies](#)" (pp. 496-518). In *Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. A. Duranti (ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kiesling, Scott. 2006. "Playing the straight man: Displaying and maintaining male heterosexuality in discourse". In "The Language and sexuality Reader", D. Cameron & D. Kulick (eds.): Routledge. Pp. 118-131.
- Irvine, JT, and S Gal. 2009. [Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation](#). In *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*. Ed. A. Duranti. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.

5. A Week- Ideologies, Embodied Emotions, and Digital Spaces

February 24

- Del Pinal, Eric Hoenes. 2011. Towards an Ideology of Gesture: Gesture, Body Movement, and Language Ideology Among Q'eqchi'-Maya Catholics. *Anthropological Quarterly* 84.3: 595-630.
- Gershon, Ilana. 2010. Media ideologies: An introduction. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20.2: 283-293.
- Gershon, Ilana. 2010. Breaking up is hard to do: Media switching and media ideologies. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20.2: 389-405.
- Gershon, Ilana. 2011. Un-friend my heart: Facebook, promiscuity, and heartbreak in a neoliberal age. *Anthropological Quarterly* 84.4 (2011): 865-894.
- Weidman, Amanda J. 2003. Guru and gramophone: Fantasies of fidelity and modern technologies of the real. *Public Culture* 15.3 453-476.

Web Post Required

Optional

- Gershon, Ilana. 2013. Publish and be damned: New media publics and neoliberal risk. *Ethnography*:1466138113502514.

6. B Week- Ethnography of Sounds and Sensoriality

March 3

- Harkness, Nicholas. 2013. *Songs of Seoul: An Ethnography of Voice and Voicing in Christian South Korea*. University of California Press.

Web Post Required

7. *A Week-*

Language and Emotion Work

March 10

- Hochschild A. 1983. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press pp. 3-23.
- Cameron, Deborah. 2000. Styling the worker: Gender and the commodification of language in the globalized service economy. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4(3):323-347.
- Hall, Kira. 1995. Lip service on the fantasy lines. In Hall, Kira, and Mary Bucholtz, eds. *Gender articulated: Language and the socially constructed self*. Routledge. Pp. 183-216.
- Inoue, Miyako. 2012. Neoliberal Speech Acts: The Equal Opportunity Law and Projects of the Self in a Japanese Corporate Office. In *Global Futures in East Asia*, Ann Anagnost, Andrea Arai, and Ren Hai, eds. Stanford University Press. Pp. 197-221.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1979. Emotion work, feeling rules, and social structure. *American journal of sociology* 85(3): 551-575.

Web Post Required

Optional

- Chaput, Catherine. 2010. Rhetorical circulation in late capitalism: Neoliberalism and the overdetermination of affective energy. *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 43(1):1-25.
- Urciuoli, Bonnie, and Chaise LaDousa. "Language Management/Labor." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42 (2013): 175-190.
- Pedwell, Carolyn. 2010. Economies of empathy: Obama, neoliberalism, and social justice. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30(2):280-297.

Spring Break

March 13-30

8. *B Week-*

Workshop on conference papers drafts

NB- this class will be a 3 hours class

March 31

9. *A Week-*

Workshop on conference papers drafts

NB- this class will be a 3 hours class

April 7

10. B Week-

Workshop Coda & Writing Desire

NB- this class will be a 3 hours class

April 14

Ahearn, Laura M. 2001. *Invitations to love: Literacy, love letters, and social change in Nepal*: University of Michigan Press.

Web Post Required

11. A Week-

Public Intimacies of Voice

April 21

Kunreuther, Laura. 2014. *Voicing Subjects: Public Intimacy and Mediation in Kathmandu*. University of California Press.

Web Post Required

12. B Week-

Anticipatory regimes of Affect

April 28

- Adams V. et al. 2009. Anticipation: technoscience, life, affect, temporality. *Subjectivity* 28:246–65
- Lefkowitz, Daniel. 2003. Investing in emotion: Love and anger in financial advertising. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 13.1: 71-97.
- Molé, Noelle J. 2010. Precarious subjects: Anticipating neoliberalism in northern Italy's workplace. *American Anthropologist* 112.1: 38-53.
- Klima, Alan. 2004. Thai love Thai: Financing emotion in post-crash Thailand. *Ethnos* 69.4: 445-464.

Web Post Required

Optional

- Wilce, James M. 2009. "Chapter 5". In *Language and emotion*. Volume 25: Cambridge University Press. **[on reserve in the library]**

05/02 conference paper due

13. A Week-

Concluding Remarks

May 5

- Richard, Analiese, and Daromir Rudnycky. 2009. Economies of affect. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15(1):57-77.
- McElhinny, Bonnie. 2010. The audacity of affect: Gender, race, and history in linguistic accounts of legitimacy and belonging. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39:309-328.

Web Post Required

Film Screening

- *Ghosts and Numbers*. (2009). By Alan Klima. 67 minutes. (On the aftermath of the Thai financial crash) <http://www.der.org/films/ghosts-and-numbers.html>

14. B Week-

Presentations of Midterm Papers

NB- this class will be a 3 hours class

May 12