

ORAL SOURCES

ANTH 470; ANTH/NORS 670

Fall 2011 – Thursday 6-9 pm

David Koester

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TA: Andreas Droulias

The aims of this course are to examine the meaning and multiple uses of oral communication, especially for research in anthropology, history and folklore. This course looks at the production and reception side of oral sources, their meaning in context and their uses as data. Students will be introduced to methods for recording, processing, analyzing and organizing oral data from performances, interviews and orally organized events. Most of the course will consist of discussions and writing assignments dealing with the peculiarities and characteristics of the oral world and the ways in which oral sources are used in research. Students will be expected to discuss the required reading for each class period in light of examples from their own experience, oral recordings or other readings. In some cases, discussion questions will be handed out or posted on ERes a week in advance.

Course Goals:

- To better understand the nature of oral communication, especially as it relates more generally to culture and history
- To better appreciate the nature and importance of stories
- To learn how to use and contribute to the University of Alaska Oral History Collection and Project Jukebox
- To learn about the ethical and legal requirements of research with oral sources

Syllabus

WEEK 1 -September 1 - Introduction

WEEK 2 – September 8 – Orality, the nature of oral communication

Ong, Walter – “The Orality of Language,” in Orality and Literacy, pp. 5-15

Finnegan, Ruth, Oral Poetry, pp. 134-160

Quinn, Judy - “From Orality to Literacy in medieval Iceland” in Old Icelandic Literature and Society, pp. 30-60

WEEK 3 - September 15 – Signature stories; Introduction to the UAF Oral History Archive, *visiting speaker, Bill Schneider*

Horne, Esther Burnett and Sally McBeth - Essie’s Story: The Life and Legacy of a Shoshone Teacher, pp. 1-27

Mandelbaum, David The Study of Life History: Gandhi. Current Anthropology 14(3):177-196

Signature story – TBA

WEEK 4 - September 22 – Using Oral Sources

Grele, Ronald – “Oral History as Evidence” in History of Oral History, pp. 33-91

Echo-Hawk, Roger C. – “Ancient History in the New World: Integrating Oral Traditions and the Archaeological Record in Deep Time”

Mather, Elsie – “With a Vision Beyond Our Immediate Needs: Oral Traditions in an Age of Literacy”

Vilanova, Mercedes – “Case Study: Oral History and Democracy: Lessons from Illiterates” pp. 65-74, OHOH
Rosaldo, Michelle – “Knowledge, passion and the heart” Ch 2 in Knowledge and Passion, pp.31-60

WEEK 5 - September 29 – Life History

Horne, Esther Burnett and Sally McBeth - Essie’s Story: The Life and Legacy of a Shoshone Teacher, pp. 28-end

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara – “Authoring Lives.” In Life History as Cultural Construction/Performance, pp.133-178

WEEK 6 – October 6 - Techniques in Oral History Interviewing, *visiting speaker* Karen Brewster

Yow, Valerie Raleigh – “Interviewing Techniques” in Recording Oral History, pp. 92-120

Horne, Esther Burnett and Sally McBeth - Essie’s Story: The Life and Legacy of a Shoshone Teacher, pp. xi-xlii

Brewster, Karen – The Whales, They Give Themselves, pp. 3-71

WEEK 7 - October 13 – Transcribing, using ELAN

Mazé, Elinor A. – “The Uneasy Page: Transcribing and Editing Oral History” in History of Oral History, pp. 227-261

Martin, Richard & Bill Pfisterer - Kaiiroondak – Behind the Willows - selections

WEEK 8 –October 20 – Research Ethics, *visiting speaker* Bill Schneider

Neuenschwander, John A. – “The Legal Ramifications of Oral History” pp. 351-371 in OHOH
Informed consent and release statement due in class

WEEK 9 – October 27 - Orality and Memory

Green, Anna – “Can Memory Be Collective?” in OHOH, pp. 96-111

WEEK 10 – November 3 – Oral Sources as Documentation for Social and Historical Analysis

Lukashkina, Tatiana Petrovna - Unpublished text in progress; to be posted on ERes.

Boyd, Doug – “Achieving the Promise of Oral History in a Digital Age” in OHOH, pp. 285-302

WEEK 11 – November 10 – Cross-cultural interviewing, *visiting speaker* Bill Schneider

Schneider, William – “Interviewing in Cross-Cultural Settings” in OHOH, pp. 51-64

Lukashkina, Tatiana Petrovna - Unpublished text continued

WEEK 12 – November 17 – Using the Oral History Archive – Andreas

WEEK 13 – November 24 – Thanksgiving

WEEK 14 – December 1 – Analytical techniques

Presentations of interview projects

WEEK 15 – December 8

Presentations of archive projects and discussion of analyses