

**Narrative and Times of Trouble**  
Anthropology 297 – Winter 2009  
Thursday 2:00 – 4:50 pm, Haines 314

Instructors:

Elinor Ochs ([eochs@anthro.ucla.edu](mailto:eochs@anthro.ucla.edu))  
Office Hours: Haines 318A, 310.825.0984  
Tues 11:30-1PM & by appointment

Linda Garro ([lgarro@anthro.ucla.edu](mailto:lgarro@anthro.ucla.edu))  
Office Hours: Haines 316A, 310.206.6249  
Mon 12:00 -1PM & by appointment

**Course Description:**

This seminar explores how linguistic and psychological/medical anthropology inform each other in relation to narrative and times of trouble. Topics explored include narrative sense-making in response to illness and misfortune; the phenomenology of time; narrative, healing and experience; remembering through narrative; narrative subjectivity; and narrative and selves in motion. The seminar is designed for graduate students in linguistic and psychological/medical anthropology. It explores the linkages and tensions that inhere in bridging the methodologies and analytic perspectives of the two sub-disciplines. *Students must obtain the permission of the instructors to enroll.*

**Texts:**

- Barker, Pat. *Regeneration*. Plume Books, 1991.
- Bruner, Jerome. *Making Stories: Law Literature Life*. Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Capps, Lisa & Ochs, Elinor. *Constructing Panic*. Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Mattingly, Cheryl. *Healing Dramas and Clinical Plots*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Mattingly, Cheryl & Garro, Linda, eds. *Narrative and the Cultural Construction of Illness and Healing*. University of California Press, 2000.
- Ochs, Elinor & Capps, Lisa. *Living Narrative*. Harvard University Press, 2001.  
(The books are available at the UCLA bookstore)
- Additional required readings available on the class website:  
<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/09W/anthro297-8/>

**Course Requirements:**

Class sessions will consist of a group discussion based on the assigned readings. Every participant is also expected to bring to class a proactive orientation – active participation in class discussions is essential to the success of this course.

Specific requirements:

**1. Whole Class Commentaries.** For selected weeks, you are expected to write a brief “reaction” paper of no more than 1 page in length (typed double-spaced in a 12 point font, 1" margins; include your name, page numbers, and identified by date of assignment). Unless otherwise directed in the syllabus, your “reaction” papers should list questions the reading(s) raised for you and issues you would like to have aired in class discussion (or that may have been previously raised in class discussion but you would like to see revisited in class). You are encouraged to critically evaluate the ideas, the methodology, and/or the findings/data as presented in the readings and link your reflections, when appropriate, to other readings in the course. If you quote or refer to a specific statement in the reading, please provide a page number. These individual reaction papers are to be **submitted to the instructors by email no later than 3 p.m. on the Tuesday before each class session**. Please provide a unique file name for each

commentary using your last name and the week's theme (e.g., "Smith\_on\_Sufferer\_Perspective"). The individual commentaries will not be graded, but they do count toward your final grade. Late commentaries will not receive full credit. Reaction papers must be turned in, even if you are not going to be in class.

**2. Team Presentations.** On other weeks, team-work is required, and advance preparation for group presentations is expected. In class group presentations will involve a discussion of narrative with one data example. Where possible and appropriate, use audio and/or video-recorded narrative data. Audio and video recordings should be digitized and transcribed. Transcripts and videos should be displayed in PowerPoint/Keynote, and transcripts also reproduced on handouts for all seminar participants. (**\*\*\*Bring a digital file of the data with you to class on a USB drive, keyed to the beginning of the data segment, to be copied onto a Mac laptop for presentation.**) Weekly topics are listed in the syllabus. Presentations, including showing of the data itself, should be **limited to 15 minutes**.

**3. Final Paper.** Students are expected to write a final 10-12 page (double spaced, 12 point font, 1" margins on all sides) paper or proposal that lays out how narrative analysis can illuminate a research topic of interest to you. (The 10-12 pages do not include the bibliography.)

### **Grading Structure:**

Students are graded based on three criteria:

- 1) Reaction papers and participation in seminar discussions – 30%
- 2) Team presentations related to the readings – 30%
- 3) Final paper – 40%

### **Schedule**

January 8

#### **Week 1 – Introduction**

January 15

#### **Week 2 – Making Stories**

Readings:

- Bruner, Jerome. 2003. *Making Stories: Law, Literature, Life*.
- O'Brien, Tim. 1990. "How To Tell a True War Story" in *The Things They Carried*, pp. 67-85

#### **Assignment:**

Write a reaction paper discussing ways in which the two readings bring different perspectives on the role of narrative in configuring lived experience.

January 22

#### **Week 3 – Narrative Sense-Making**

Readings:

- Garro, Linda and Cheryl Mattingly. 2000. "Narrative as Construct and Construction" in Cheryl Mattingly and Linda Garro, eds. *Narrative and the*

- Cultural Construction of Illness and Healing*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.1-49.
- Ochs, Elinor and Lisa Capps. 2001. "Chapter 1: A Dimensional Approach to Narrative" in *Living Narrative*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp.1-58.
  - Labov, William. 1972. "The Transformation of Experience in Narrative Syntax." *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, pp. 354-396.

**Assignment:**

Together with your team, find a **brief (under 2 minutes)**, naturally occurring audio or video-recorded narrative of personal experience (from your own data or from another source). Analyze the structure and meaning of narrative in terms of the three approaches to narrative in the readings. Present an analysis of the narrative using PowerPoint and hard copy transcripts, as indicated in the Course Requirements (see above in the syllabus).

January 29

**Week 4 – Remembering Through Narrative**

Readings:

- Good, Byron and Mary-Jo Del Vecchio Good. 2000. " 'Fiction' and 'Historicity' in Doctors' Stories." In Cheryl Mattingly and Linda Garro, eds. *Narrative and the Cultural Construction of Illness and Healing*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.50-69.
- Garro, Linda. 2000. "Cultural Knowledge as Resource in Illness Narratives" in Cheryl Mattingly and Linda Garro, eds. *Narrative and the Cultural Construction of Illness and Healing*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.70-87.
- Kramer, Jane. 1995. "The Politics of Memory" in *The New Yorker*, August 14, pp.48-65 (reprinted in *The Politics of Memory: Looking for Germany in the New Germany*, Random House, pp.257-293).
- Cole, Jennifer. 2003. "Narratives and Moral Projects: Generational Memories of the Malagasy 1947 Rebellion." *Ethos* 31: 95-126.

**Assignments:**

Together with your team, find a **brief (under 2 minutes)**, naturally occurring audio or video-recorded narrative of personal experience (from your own data or from another source). Analyze how remembering is narratively configured using one or more of the approaches to narrative in the readings. Wherever possible relate your observations to moral positionings that narrators adopt for themselves or others. Present your analysis using PowerPoint and hard copy transcripts, as indicated in the Course Requirements (see above in the syllabus).

February 5

**Week 5 – The Phenomenology of Time in Narrative**

Readings:

- Ricoeur, Paul. 1981. "Narrative Time" in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed. *On Narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp.165-186

- Morson, Gary Saul. 1994. "Prelude" in *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp.17-41.
- Ochs, Elinor and Lisa Capps. 2001. "Chapters 4 and 5: The Unexpected Turn; Experiential Logic" in *Living Narrative*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp.130-200.

**Assignment:**

Together with your team, find a **brief (under 2 minutes)**, naturally occurring audio or video-recorded narrative of personal experience (from your own data or from another source). Analyze narrative temporality in terms of the three approaches to narrative in the readings. Present an analysis of the narrative using PowerPoint and hard copy transcripts, as indicated in the Course Requirements (see above in the syllabus).

February 12

**Week 6 – Narrative Fragmentation I**

Readings:

- Barker, Pat. 1991. *Regeneration*.
- Jackson, Michael. 2006. "Preface" (selection) and "The Stories that Shadow Us." *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression, and Intersubjectivity*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, pp. 11-23; 39-64.

**Assignment:**

1. Write a reaction paper in which you formulate an issue or question arising from the two readings that will generate an interesting discussion about narrative fragmentation.

2. **Turn in a 1-page Paper Proposal, plus provisional bibliography.** Proposal should include:

- a. the theoretical issues you will examine relevant to narrative;
- b. the narrative corpus that you will examine;
- c. the specific ways you intend to address the issues and analyze the narrative(s).
- d. attached provisional bibliography (1-2 pages, maximum)

February 19

**Week 7 – Narrative Fragmentation II**

Readings:

- Capps, Lisa and Ochs, Elinor. 1995. *Constructing Panic*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

**Assignment:**

Together with your team, find a **brief (under 2 minutes)**, naturally occurring audio or video-recorded OR WRITTEN narrative of personal experience (from your own data or from another source) reflecting narrative fragmentation.

Analyze narrative fragmentation in terms of this and previous weeks' readings. Present your analysis of the narrative using PowerPoint and hard copy transcripts, as indicated in the Course Requirements (see above in the syllabus).

February 26

### **Week 8 – Narrative Fragmentation III**

Readings:

- Kirmayer, Lawrence. "Broken Narratives: Clinical Encounters and the Poetics of Experience." In Cheryl Mattingly and Linda Garro, eds. *Narrative and the Cultural Construction of Illness and Healing*, pp. 153-181.
- Briggs, Charles L. 1997. "Sequentiality and Temporalization in the Narrative Construction of a South American Cholera Epidemic." *Journal of Narrative and Life History* 7(1-4): 177-183.
- Briggs, Charles L. and Clara Mantini-Briggs. 2003. Selections from *Stories in the Time of Cholera*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-17, 59-80, 224-255.

#### **Assignment:**

Write a reaction paper in which you formulate an issue or question arising from the readings that will generate an interesting discussion about narrative fragmentation.

March 5, 2009

### **Week 9 – Narrative, Healing and Experience**

Readings:

- Mattingly, Cheryl. 1998. *Healing Dramas and Clinical Plots*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Class Guest: Cheryl Mattingly, USC.

#### **Assignment:**

Formulate an issue or question arising from a claim in the reading (include relevant page numbers) and send it as a text in the body of an e-mail message and as an attachment (no more than one page) to [mattingl@usc.edu](mailto:mattingl@usc.edu) and to the instructors for class discussion. This should be done by **Tuesday, March 3, 3 pm**.

March 12, 2009

### **Week 10 – Selves in Motion**

Readings:

- Garro, Linda. 2003. "Narrating Troubling Experiences" *Transcultural Psychiatry* 40: 5-44.
- Shohet, Merav. 2007. "Narrating Anorexia: 'Full' and 'Struggling' Genres of Recovery." *Ethos* 35(3): 344-382.
- Broyard, Anatole. 1992. "Intoxicated By My Illness," "Toward a Literature of Illness," "The Patient Examines the Doctor," "Journal Notes May–September 1990," "A Style for Death" in *Intoxicated by My Illness: And Other Writings on Life and Death*. New York: C. Potter, pp.3-7, 11-30, 33-58, 61-68, 85-88.

- Gates, Henry Louis. 1996. "White Like Me" *The New Yorker* 17 June, pp.66-81 (reprinted as "The Passing of Anatole Broyard" in H. L. Gates, Jr. *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man*, 1997, pp.180-214).

Class Guest: Merav Shohet, UCLA.

**Assignment:**

Formulate an issue or question arising from a claim in the readings (include relevant page numbers) and send it as a text in the body of an e-mail message and as an attachment (no more than one page) to [mshohet@ucla.edu](mailto:mshohet@ucla.edu) and to the instructors for class discussion. This should be done by **Tuesday, March 10, 3pm.**

**Final paper DUE Monday, March 16, 3 pm, hard copy and e-mail as an attachment to both instructors.**