

Syllabus for Linguistics 295g

The Ancient Near East: Culture, Archaeology, Texts

Early Technologies of Literacy and Literacies of Technology

Spring Semester, 2006

General Information:

Class Location: GFS 228

Time: Tuesday, Thursday, 11:00-12:20 PM

One Required Discussion/Lab

Lab Location: Institute for Multimedia Literacy (Egg 104)

Possible Times:

Lab1: Tuesday, 9-10:30

Lab2: Tuesday, 9-10:30

Lab3: Tuesday, 4-5:30

Lab4: Tuesday, 4-5:30

Instructors:

Bruce Zuckerman, Professor, School of Religion

Anne Balsamo, Professor, Interactive Media and Gender Studies

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Teaching Assistants:

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Office Hours:

Zuckerman: Tuesday and Thursday, 10-11 AM, 355B Taper Hall and by appointment

Balsamo: By appointment, IML

Shanklin: Tues 5.30-6.30 PM, at IML, & Thurs 4.30-5.30 PM, in MHP B5C (*basement*)

Course Prospectus:

The Technology of Literacy and the Literacy of Technology

The cradle of the world's earliest known civilizations and its earliest writing systems are to be found in the Ancient Near East—popularly known as the “Fertile Crescent”—stretching from Mesopotamia on the East, then northwest through Anatolia (Turkey) and down into Canaan and Israel on the Mediterranean coast, and then further south into Egypt. Over the last 200 years, this region has been the focus of intense study, both in terms of its ancient material culture and its literary heritage. It is usual to consider these two aspects of Ancient Near Eastern civilization largely in isolation from one another. By contrast, the aim of this course will be to consider the interrelationships between (1) the rise of civilization in the ancient Mediterranean world and the diversity of its cultures and (2) the origins and diffusion of literacy, and its impact on all subsequent experience in that literate culture. A particular emphasis of the course will be the conceptual connection between the consideration of early practices of reading and writing with contemporary practices of writing and reading using digital technologies to produce media-rich documents.

The course will emphasize the archaeological remains of cultures in the Ancient Near East (in its broadest sense). Class discussions will consider how these archaeological remains inform our thinking about the development of the notion of “literacy” in this early phase of human culture. We will also reflect on how contemporary “literacies” (media, digital, and technological) augment our understanding and interpretation of the documents unearthed through archeological investigation. Further, the course will consider the nature of literacy, culture, and civilization, not only as preserved in the ancient record, but also in terms of their ability to help us see our own cultural practices from an ancient perspective and in the context of the depth of time of human history.

Course Requirements:

Reading Assignments:

There is simply no comprehensive textbook or set of textbooks that can adequately be utilized as the basis for this course. This is because the best materials, especially in English translation, are scattered over a wide variety of (often expensive!) publications that are generally not easily accessible. For this reason, reading materials will be supplied in photocopy. The procedure for distribution of photocopied materials will be discussed at the first class meeting.

Examinations/Assignments:

Midterm examination, March 9, 2006, during class period	20%
Final Examination, May 9, 2006; 11 AM to 1 PM	30%
Individual Research Assignment, January 31, class time	10%
Multimedia Group Project/Assignments	40%

Discussion/Lab Sessions

This course requires that all students participate in a weekly discussion/lab session at the Institute for Multimedia Literacy (EGG). Activities during these sessions will include discussion of reading material, instruction in relevant media theory, and multimedia authoring exercises.

The graded project assignments for this course involves the production of two different types of digital documents: 1) a collectively authored image/text Wiki, and 2) a single episode for an interactive wall. To enable students to gain digital authoring skills and to develop their technological literacy, this course includes several sub-assignments that lead to the production of a final Multimedia Group Project. The list of assignments is included below; the syllabus for discussion/lab session is included at the end of this syllabus. The first lab meets on January 17, 2006. Attendance at lab sessions is mandatory.

Assignment List for the Multimedia Group Project: Due dates will be outlined on the Lab Syllabus

Assignment #1: Group Project Initial Report posted on class Wiki

Assignment #2: Storyboards for Group's Wall Episode

Assignment #3: Animate Group's Wall Episode

Assignment #4: Final Group Research Report posted on class Wiki (Due 4/27/06)

Course Participation Expectations:

The midterm, final exam, *all* project assignments, and the Final Project must be completed to receive a grade for the course. Any examination or project assignment left unfulfilled at the course's conclusion risks an automatic failing grade.

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) EACH semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure that the DSP letter is delivered to the instructors of the course as early as possible in the semester and in any case before the first exam. DSP (Janet Eddy, Director) is located in STU 301 and is open Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM-5:00 PM. Their phone number is (213) 740-0776.

All students agree, by signing up for this course, that their written and digital work and projects may be published and reedited without limitation by the Institute of Multimedia Literacy, the USC Archaeological Research Collection, the West Semitic Research Project and/or any other appropriate university venue. Students wishing to employ images supplied to them by the West Semitic Research and Inscriptifact projects must sign the InscriptiFact user agreement (see www.inscriptifact.com) and agree to follow its stipulations and are also responsible for getting appropriate permissions, as required.

The standards of the university with regard to academic integrity as addressed in the student handbook are strictly followed in this course. Anyone who violates the

university's standards of academic integrity—especially in terms of cheating on exams or quizzes or in terms of plagiarism with regard to papers/projects—will automatically fail the course.

Course Schedule:

Week 1

January 10, 12

Introduction To Course

Lecturer: Professor Balsamo

Topics:

The Literacy of Technology and the Technology of Literacy

The Interactive Digital Wall

Reading:

A. Robinson: 18-67

Daniels in Daniels and Bright: 1-32.

Visit and review the West Semitic Research Project Educational Website:

http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/educational_site/

Visit and review the USC Archaeological Research Collection Website:

http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/religion/arch_res.html

Visit and review the InscriptiFact Website:

<http://www.inscriptifact.com/>

Download, sign and return “Use Agreement”

Week 2

January 17, 19

Getting the Big Picture Geographically, Linguistically, and Theoretically

Lecturers: Professor Zuckerman (Tuesday) and Professor Balsamo (Thursday)

Topics:

An Overview of the Civilizations of the “Fertile Crescent” from Mesopotamia to Egypt

The concept of communication: “In the Beginning Was the Word”

What does it mean “to put it in writing”?

Language and Linguistics: defining our terms

What does visual thinking have to ancient documents?

Overview of Multimedia Literacy

The Mediation of History

Reading:

Roaf: 14-73

Baines and Malek: 12-55

Arlotto: 1-63

Gleason: 51-64, 239-270

Robertson in Houston: 17-68

Week 3

January 24, 26

The Earliest Writing: Mesopotamia and Elam

Lecturer: Zuckerman

Topics:

The development of cuneiform writing: when and where.

The strengths and weaknesses of the "Token Theory"

The abstraction and simplification of concept and dimension

From bookkeeping to aurality

Reading:

Sampson: 46-61

Michalowski in Daniels and Bright: 33-72

Cooper in Houston: 71-99

Walker: 7-32

Nissen, Damerow and Englund: 1-54

Edzard in Sasson: 2107-2116

Week 4

January 31, February 2

The Earliest Writing: Egypt

Lecturer: Zuckerman (Tuesday)

Guest Lecturer: Cale Johnson (Thursday)

Topics:

The nature of Egyptian writing in contrast to Mesopotamian writing

The origins of Egyptian writing: Who came first?

Forms of Egyptian writing

The use of the acrophonic principle in Egyptian writing

Reading:

On-line article on early writing:

<http://virtual.park.uga.edu/~hypertext/040699sci-early-writing.html>

Cruz-Uribe in Redford: vol. 3, 192-198

Goldwasser in Redford: vol. 3, 198-203

Silverman in Redford: vol. 3 pp. 204-206

Wente in Redford: vol. 3, 206-210

Johnson in Redford: vol. 3, 210-214

Callahan in Redford: vol. 3, 214-218

Baines in Houston: 150-189

Davies in Hooker: 75-135

Explore the website "The Ethnologue": <http://www.sil.org/ethnologue/>

Week 5

February 7, 9

Sorting Things Out: Typology and Paleography

Lecturers: Zuckerman (Tuesday) and Balsamo (Thursday)

Topics:

What is typology and why is it important?

Paleography and its impact on the development of alphabetic scripts

The materiality of writing

Reading:

Cross: 121-136

Zuckerman and Swartz Dodd: 89-133

Week 6

February 14, 16

Alphabetic beginnings

Lecturers: Zuckerman (Tuesday) and Balsamo (Thursday)

Topics:

When and Where? The Wadi el Hol and Serabit Inscriptions.

The systemization of acrophony

Why is the Semitic alphabet consonantal?

Is the Semitic alphabet *really* an alphabet?

The Alphabet as a Technology of Socialization

Reading:

Darnell, Dobbs-Allsopp, Lundberg, McCarter and Zuckerman (complete)

Healey 1-26

Yardeni (complete)

McCarter (complete)

Sacks: 1-41

Week 7

February 21, 23

Literary Hybrids: Amarna and Ugaritic texts

Lecturer: Zuckerman

Topics:

A mingling of traditions from Mesopotamia and Egypt

The Amarna letters and their window on early Canaan and Canaanites

The city of Ugarit: a place of literacy *par excellence*

Ugarit and Ugaritic

The nature of Ugaritic as a hybrid script

The Ugaritic alphabets

The Ugaritic narratives and their relation to the Bible

Reading:

Moran in in Redford vol. 1: 65-67.
Izre'el in Sasson: 2411-2419
Curtis: 18-65
Craigie: 44-66
Day in Kaltner and McKenzie: 223-241
Dietrich and Loretz in Watson and Wyatt: 81-89

Week 8

February 28, March 2

Early Northwest Semitic Scripts and Languages

Phoenician, Old Aramaic, Sam'alian, Trans-Jordanian

The Tel Zayit and Kefar Veradim inscriptions and their significance

Lecturers: Zuckerman (Tuesday) and Balsamo (Thursday)

Topics:

The spread of the alphabet in the West Semitic world
The Phoenician alphabet as the apparent template
The Aramaic and other more localized scripts
The newly discovered Tel Zayit and Kefar Veradim inscriptions and their impact on dating methods
The first spread of alphabetic writing in to the west
Social networks of writing and reading

Reading:

Sampson: 77-98
Parker in Sasson: 2399-2410
O'Connor in Daniels and Bright: 88-107
Parker in Kaltner and McKenzie: 43-60
Sass: 13-74

Week 9

March 7, 9

Midterm Examination: March 9

Note: Tuesday's class will be a review session

No reading assignment this week.

No quiz this week.

Spring Recess: Monday, March 13-Saturday, March 18

Week 10

March 21, 23

Aramaic: The Language of Empires

Lecturers: Zuckerman (Tuesday) and Balsamo (Thursday)

Topics:

The adoption of Aramaic by the Assyrians and the Persians

The diffusion of Aramaic throughout the Persian Empire

The range of Aramaic: North, South, East and West

Jewish Aramaic: The Archive of Elephantine

Writing as Power: The Ordering of the World

Reading:

Pitard in Hoerth, Mattingly and Yamauchi: 207-230

Naveh in *ABD* vol. 1: 342-345

Goerwitz: in Daniels and Bright 487-498

Porten in *ABD* vol. 2 pp. 445-455

Week 11

March 28, 30

From Semitic to Greek Alphabet

Lecturer: Zuckerman

Topics:

The Greek alphabet: when and where?

The Greek adaptation of the Semitic consonants

The Greek systemization of vowels

Why did the Greek alphabet conquer the world?

Reading:

Kitzinger: in Grant and Kitzinger vol. 1, 397-419

Sampson: 99-119

Swiggers: in Daniels and Bright 261-270

Threatte: in Daniels and Bright 271-280

Woodard: 133-203

Week 12

April 4, 6

What Happens Next?: Latin, Arabic and the Invention of the Codex

Lecturer: Zuckerman (Tuesday) and Balsamo (Thursday)

Reading:

Diringer: 149-177

Sass: 96-132

Roberts and Skeat: 1-76 (entire)

Week 13

April 11, 13

Project Presentations I

Reading:

Sacks: 44-171

Week 14

April 18, 20

Project Presentations II

Reading:

Sacks: 172-266

Week 15

April 25

Project Presentations III

April 27

Course Summary and Review

Reading:

Sacks: 267- 367

Topics for Individual and Group Projects

Group 1:

Introduction to Paleography: The Basis of an Interdisciplinary Imagination

Individual Topics:

Typology: What is it and how does it work?

Paleography as Typology: What is their relationship?

Typing scripts: How is it done?

The types of alphabetic scripts: How and when did they develop?

Group 2:

Early Writing Systems: Cuneiform Texts

Individual Topics:

The “token theory”; its strengths and weaknesses

The cylinder seal and its role in the advancement of literacy

How does cuneiform writing work?

From mnemonic to syllabic: the auralization of cuneiform writing

Group 3:

Early Writing Systems: Egyptian Texts

Individual Topics:

Which came first? The case for the primacy of Egyptian writing

The nature of Egyptian writing: Why are “hieroglyphs” holy?

The types of Egyptian writing: hieroglyphic, hieratic and demotic

The acrophonic principle and how it is used in Egyptian writing

Group 4:

Origins of the Alphabet: Wadi El Hol Serabit el Khadm and other exemplars

Individual Topics:

The Alphabet: the systematic use of the acrophonic principle

Alphabet versus “abjad”; is the Semitic alphabet *really* an alphabet?

The Wadi el-Hol inscriptions: why are they so important?

The Serabit Inscriptions in light of Wadi el-Hol

Group 5:

El Amarna and Ugaritic Texts: Egypt meets Mesopotamia

Individual Topics:

What are the El Amarna texts and why are they important?

Ugarit and Ugaritic? What are they?

Is there more than one alphabetic tradition?

Literacy at Ugarit: the importance of Ugaritic literature

Group 6:

Early Early Linear Alphabetic Inscriptions with special emphasis on Tel Zayit and Kefar

Veradim

Individual Topics:

What and where are the earliest alphabetic inscriptions after Ugaritic?
How early is early? What is the basis for dating alphabetic inscriptions after Ugarit?
The discovery and significance of the Tel Zayit inscriptions
Other early inscriptions: Kefar Veradim

Group 7:

The development of national scripts: Phoenician, Aramaic and Hebrew; the development of Jewish scrip

Individual Topics:

Who are the Phoenicians and where do we find Phoenician script?
Who are the Arameans and where do we find Aramaic script?
Hebrew script: When and where can we isolate it as distinctive?
Other scripts: Ammonite, Moabite, Edomite, Deir Alla

Group 8:

From Semitic to Greek

Individual Topics:

Transference of the Alphabet from the Near East to West: where and when and by whom?
The Greek systemization of vowels: how and why?
The first “true” alphabet?
Other Greek additions and adaptations of alphabetic writing

Group 9:

The two dominant western alphabets: Latin and Arabic

Individual Topics:

The Role of the Etruscans in the transition from Greek to Latin alphabet
The adaptations of the Latin alphabet from Greek
The origin of Arabic script
The adaptations of Arabic

Group 10:

Old and New Technologies

Individual Topics:

The Invention of the Codex: when and where
What is a codex and how is it made?
New technologies and ancient texts: The West Semitic Research Project
New ways to distribute the data: The InscriptiFact Project

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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