

Linguistic Anthropology and Literary and Cultural Studies

A Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar, 2018-2019

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This seminar aims to explore the potential of a set of concepts, tools, and critical practices developed in the field of linguistic anthropology for work being done in the fields of literary and cultural criticism. The beginnings of this transdisciplinary dialogue can already be seen in works by scholars such as Michael Lucey, Michael Warner, Virginia Jackson, and Michael Allan, who engage figures from linguistic anthropology, including Michael Silverstein, Susan Gal, Asif Agha, William Hanks, Elinor Ochs, and Nicholas Harkness, among others.¹ The seminar will have two halves. In three sessions in Fall 2018, we aim to create a common frame of reference by introducing and elaborating recent linguistic anthropological thought about an interlinked set of topics that are also currently prominent in literary and cultural studies: translation/transduction, sound, and publics. The four sessions of the second half of the seminar, in Spring 2019, will be spent exploring how those topics are, or could be deployed, in interdisciplinary and intercultural work that investigates discourses and practices of sexuality, religion, and politics. A final segment of the seminar provides an occasion, in the light of the earlier work of the seminar, to investigate the history, and the political and ethical commitments of the field of linguistic anthropology itself.

Central questions to be pursued throughout the seminar include: How might attunement to language's dynamic use—the shifts in meaning as words and utterances travel in different contexts—alter our conceptions of texts as primarily referential objects? What can we learn of literary forms when we consider them as the effects of a series of ritualized performances

¹ See also the special issue of *Representations*, no. 137 (Winter 2017), edited by Michael Lucey, Tom McEnaney, and Tristram Wolff, on “Language-in-Use and the Literary Artifact.”

rather than transhistorical norms? What can attention to sound's social functions teach us about how sounds hail, divide, or otherwise create communities of all kinds?

Methods and concepts drawn from linguistic anthropology can not only help discover new readings of literary classics, they can also reveal the way in which literary texts and other forms of cultural production participate in and help define the rituals, formation, and meaning of publics and counterpublics, religious or secular communities as well as political ones, and sexualities of various kinds.² Michael Allan, for example, has recently shown how the anthropology of religion (e.g. the work of Talal Asad, Charles Hirschkind, and Saba Mahmood, among others) brings into focus the changing definitions of “literature” in colonial Egypt, and how these competing definitions separated how people read, what they considered as objects to be read, and how those objects constituted or delimited religious belief.³ Virginia Jackson has used linguistic anthropological ideas in a similar fashion to challenge presupposed conceptions of what constitutes “lyric” poetry.⁴ There is other work in historical poetics and the history of translation that has a kinship to linguistic anthropological inquiry without always explicitly referencing it (e.g the work of Meredith Martin, Paula Backscheider, and Yopie Prins).⁵ Approaches to the analysis of cultural fields that take inspiration from the work of Pierre

² Cf. Michael Lucey, “Proust and Language-in-Use,” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 48, no. 2 (2015): 261-279; “A Literary Object’s Contextual Life,” in Ali Behdad and Dominic Thomas, eds., *A Companion to Comparative Literature*, (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011): 120-35; “Simone de Beauvoir and Sexuality in the Third Person,” *Representations* 109 (Winter 2010): 95-121; Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002).

³ Michael Allan, *In the Shadow of World Literature: Sites of Reading in Colonial Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

⁴ Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson’s Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁵ Meredith Martin, *The Rise and Fall of Meter: Poetry and English National Culture, 1860-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Paula R. Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry: Inventing Agency, Inventing Genre* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Yopie Prins, *Ladies’ Greek: Victorian Translations of Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

Bourdieu also share relevant preoccupations. We're also intrigued by what Frankfurt School critical theory would bring to this conversation. Much of the work that interests us shows diverse forms of commitment to the "political," and part of our goal for the seminar would be collectively to refine our sense of what different kinds of objects and practices can be treated as political, how such understandings vary across disciplines and across cultural locations, and what new kinds of analysis of the political potentials of the contemporary moment can arise from the disciplinary and methodological crossings we hope to encourage.

Linguistic anthropologists listen to and observe language as it is used in order to "hear" culture happening. One consequence is that they do not always "hear" precisely the same things going on in language that ordinary users of language (or literary critics) do. As Michael Silverstein puts it, "discursive interaction brings sociocultural concepts into here-and-now contexts of use--that is, . . . interaction indexically 'invokes' sociocultural conceptualizations--via emergent patternings of semiotic forms." Cultural concepts emerge as people exchange language, but often they emerge without being directly referenced. Silverstein continues: "[I]ntegral to the very act of denoting with particular words and expressions, it turns out, is the implicit invocation of certain sociocultural practices which, in the context of discourse, contribute to how participants in a discursive interaction can and do come to stand, one to another, as mutually significant social beings."⁶ Culture happens and people find places within it as they exchange language, but not exactly -- or not primarily -- through the acts of denotation, reference, communication, narration, poetic figuration, or even what are known in humanistic circles as "performative speech acts" that are often the major features of language examined by scholars in the humanities.

In contrast to the linguistic terminologies of "signification" and "performativity" most familiar to literary critics, linguistic-anthropological studies of language-in-use have developed precise ways of thinking about social indexicality, "the indexical modes that link speech to the wider

⁶ Michael Silverstein, "'Cultural' Concepts and the Language-Culture Nexus," *Current Anthropology* 45, no. 5 (2004): 622.

system of social life.”⁷ These indexical modes often have little to do with the referential content of the language use in question. They allow us to dismantle and rebuild text artifacts, by examining each as an “interactive text” produced in a shared “real time” involving the poetic construction of context by an array of participants. Context, in this understanding of it, is construed as a constantly renegotiated product of dynamic, on-going processes of contextualization or entextualization. Seeing literature as language-in-use, for example, entails readings focused on the interactivity of literary texts within a broad range of social affiliations and cultural processes. Such “pragmatic” reading involves shifts in attention from solidified text-artifacts to ongoing interactive processes of utterance and uptake, or from the semantic or representational to the pragmatic and social indexical. Linguistic anthropologists, like many novelists and other writers, are interested in what could be called “the social life of language,”⁸ in how culture happens when humans use language to interact, and in how the social world’s existence is maintained through multifarious particular acts of language use. Through concepts such as indexicality, interactivity, entextualization, enregisterment, field, and habitus, linguistic anthropology and practice-based sociologies of culture can, in our view, provide literary critics and theorists with new tools to recognize both how language works in the worlds of texts and how texts work in and on the world.

Session 1, September 11-13, 2018: Translation/Transduction

We begin the conversation between linguistic anthropologists and scholars from the humanities with a consideration of ways of thinking about translation. Translation is a central topic and practice in the field of linguistic anthropology; within literary and cultural studies there is a special area known as translation studies. And yet work in translation studies seems mostly unaware of the work on translation in linguistic anthropology (if we are to judge, for instance, by the bibliography in the second edition (2004) of the *Translation Studies Reader*

⁷ Silverstein, “Shifters, Linguistic Categories, and Cultural Description,” in *Meaning in Anthropology*, ed. Keith H. Basso and Henry A. Selby (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976): 53.

⁸ Silverstein, “The Voice of Jacob: Entextualization, Contextualization, and Identity,” *ELH* 81, no. 2 (2014): 492.

edited by Lawrence Venuti or by that of his 2013 volume, *Translation Changes Everything*). The reverse, on the other hand, is interestingly not the case. One reason for the strong differences between the two fields may well be that translation studies arises out of an examination of translation practices mostly between western European languages that are reasonably proximate to each other, whereas the thinking about translation that has occurred in linguistic anthropology arises out of the translation of highly divergent languages, e.g. the effort to translate between indigenous languages of the Americas or Australia and European languages. From the outset, then, translation in linguistic anthropology has had to deal with languages whose formal features do not easily map onto the formal features of the target language. To worry about semantic relations of particular words and phrases (as often happens in literary translation studies) seems like a luxury when the forms of meaningfulness that require translation from one language to another happen on an entirely different semiotic level to that of denotation. For this reason, linguistic anthropologists such as Michael Silverstein have elaborated the idea of *transduction*. If transduction often refers to the conversion of one kind of energy (say moving water) into another (electricity), transduction between languages has come to mean finding a way of mapping or expressing meanings from one language based on (for instance) its own systems of deixis to meanings in another language that structures deixis differently. Alternatively, if one were to think about insults, obscenities, curses, or the like, instances of language use that point to and condense larger cultural structures that could then be said to be immanent in such an utterance, transduction as a practice means finding a way to account for those immanent cultural structures in the act of translation. “How does one capture the ‘tone,’ i.e., indexical penumbra, of a word or expression in a source text by one in a target language used in a highly distinct culture?” Michael Silverstein asks. “Clearly, something on the order of a cultural analysis of both systems of usage is a prerequisite to finding a route of transduction, in analytic terms that reveal both the similarities and the differences, so as to be able to navigate a proper transduction from the source to the target.”⁹

⁹ Silverstein, “Translation, Transduction, Transformation: Skating ‘Glissando’ on Thin Semiotic Ice,” in Paula G. Rubel and Abraham Rosman, eds., *Translating Cultures: Perspectives on Translation and Anthropology* (Oxford: Berg, 2003): 89.

Session 2, October 9-11, 2018: Sound

As Silverstein's discussion of "tone" gestures toward, sound remains an especially vexing but also rich site for a number of interdisciplinary approaches that aim to understand sounds as something more than a mere limit or surplus to language, solely musical (or musicological) objects of analysis, or semantic meaning in another form ("sound symbolism"). Recent work from scholars in media studies (Mara Mills, Roger Moseley, Jonathan Sterne), literary and cultural studies (Ana María Ochoa Gautier, Mark Goble, Jennifer Lynn Stoeber, Tom McEnaney), linguistic anthropology (Nicholas Harkness, Paja Faudree), and other fields has sought to reveal sound's importance in the development of new media technologies, compression algorithms, physio-capital exploitation (*perceptual coding*), ritualized speech, racial, sexual, and gender representation, and political and theological discourse. Despite this apparently eclectic set of approaches and interests, transduction and translation have become keywords to consider sonic meaning. In Jonathan Sterne's work, for instance, "transduction" references both the conversion of sonic energy from the human voice to microphones or cassette tapes, as well as the conveyance of pragmatic meaning in the voice's different sounds heard through different media.¹⁰ Moreover, linguistic anthropologists like Asif Agha have helped specify narratological notions of "voice" as a social position indexed by a specific vocabulary (i.e. a "register"), while Nicholas Harkness has defined the "phonosonic nexus," which connects figurative or tropic understandings of the voice (i.e. the voice of the people, the writer's voice, etc.) and physiological or material sound production to allow us to hear how sound functions socially, and narratologically.¹¹

¹⁰ Jonathan Sterne, "The Enemy Voice," *Social Text* 96, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Fall 2008): 79-100. See also Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia UP, 2006).

¹¹ Asif Agha, "Voice, Footing, Enregisterment," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, Vol. 15, Issue 1 (2005): 38-59. Nicholas Harkness, *Songs of Seoul: An Ethnography of Voice and Voicing in Christian South Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014). Harkness, "Transducing A Sermon, Inducing Conversion: Billy Graham, Billy Kim, and the 1973 Crusade in Seoul," *Representations* 137 (Winter 2017): 112-142.

Linguistic anthropology's nuanced notion of sound's role in translation, narrative, and everyday speech alike should enable scholars in multiple fields to develop more fine grained analyses about literacy, oral storytelling (including audiobooks and podcasts), political discourse, and performativity. Studies of the relationship between lisps and sexual identity, reports on "vocal fry" as gendered and generational struggles over sonic-social norms of speech, and analyses of spoken racial identity that examine how visual versus acousmatic speech can affect how we hear race, confront us with the need to understand the sonic aspects of speech as politically potent negotiations of individual and collective identity formation with macrosocial consequences. As linguistic anthropology points out, meaning accrues to sounds through their use and context. Our hope is that the Sawyer Seminar can build on these methods and vocabulary to help us better hear these meanings through a multidisciplinary engagement that would develop a shared set of terms to interpret language-in-use.

Session 3, November 13-15, 2018: Publics

Mikhail Bakhtin is a figure familiar both to linguistic anthropologists and to scholars in the humanities. The way his work has been taken up within the field of linguistic anthropology brings out the more sociolinguistic aspects of his thought. In a lapidary formulation in the late essay, "The Problem of Speech Genres," Bakhtin writes, "An essential (constitutive) marker of the utterance is its quality of being directed to someone, its *addressivity*."¹² Developing tools for understanding this feature of language-in-use, how it encodes a sense of the public (large or small) to which it is directed, has been an important feature of some the linguistic anthropological work that is of particular interest to us. Linguistic anthropologists often turn simultaneously to Bakhtin and to the sociologist Erving Goffman, in particular his classic essay "Footing," to help launch an inquiry into the features of language use that produce the phenomenon of address. One of the important things Goffman did in "Footing" was to demonstrate that the assumption that the roles of "speaker" and "hearer" are key elements in

¹² M. M. Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986): 95.

a scene of linguistic exchange is not analytically refined enough to produce an understanding of what is at stake in the use of language to address a person or a public. In dealing with the role of “hearer,” for instance, Goffman makes an initial distinction between “official status as a ratified participant” and “the process of auditing.”¹³ From this simple yet potent distinction, it is possible to develop a line of thinking about how language use produces publics (ratified participants), counterpublics (non-ratified, alternative, subordinate participants), and also various forms of exclusion (those who are unaddressed). The concept of *register*, as elaborated by Agha for instance, carries this line of thinking a step further. The ability to speak in a given register marks you as a member of a particular group both for people within the group and for people not in the group who recognize the register; yet, it makes no difference to people who are unable to recognize that register.¹⁴ Registers are part of the means by which people understand whether and in what manner they are being addressed.

Problems of register and address have clear relevance to how cultural artifacts themselves find their audience(s), their publics. Registers and knowledge of them are pragmatic features of language, produced out of lexical and syntactic choices as well as out of various uses of sound or of orthography. They have social ranges and trajectories. They require translation but are difficult to translate. Translation has an impact, we could say, on an utterance’s register and therefore also on its addressivity. Translation fundamentally alters the public to which an utterance seems to be addressed. It demonstrates that the public for an utterance (assuming that it exists in a medium that preserves it and allows it to circulate, or that it is somehow repeated) is in a perpetual state of development. We could also say that publics and the utterances that circulate and address them are interactive. A public shapes the ongoing uptake of an utterance even as the utterance, through its addressivity, calls a public into being.¹⁵

¹³ Erving Goffman, “Footing,” in *Forms of Talk* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981): 131.

¹⁴ Cf. Agha, *Language and Social Relations* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 171-88.

¹⁵ See Michael Warner, “Publics and Counterpublics,” *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 49-90.

These three topics, *translation/transduction*, *sound*, and *publics*, are all, as we hope we have made clear, interrelated, and their interrelations provide a rich framework within which to investigate the three social phenomena we have selected for the second half of the seminar, the discourses and practices of religion, sexuality, and politics.

Session 4, February 5-7, 2019: Religion

Many of the key studies we have already mentioned depend on religious objects, rituals, or encounters to help illuminate those pragmatic aspects of discourse that might be more easily concealed in our everyday routines. Perhaps the more obviously ritualized structures of religious life can account for why the anthropology of religion has provided some of the most exciting challenges to familiar notions of subjectivity, linguistic practice (literature, reading, preaching), and ethics with implications far beyond religious thought and practice. Studies of early Christian preaching (Warner), pious Muslim subjecthood (Asad, Mahmood), Sanskrit's secularization (Sheldon Pollock), ethical listening (Hirschkind), and literature's colonial functions (Michael Allan) all point to the politics embedded in cultural translation that transduction aims to account for. To take one example of such work, Niklaus Largier's study of medieval mysticism demonstrates how the secular emerged "as an institutional context that is meant to contain and limit the use that can be made of the scriptures and of scriptural exegesis." Secularity, in other words, cannot be taken to be the neutral emergence of rationality against mystical belief; it is more a structure that "establishes itself as the universal order of the social world in its temporal state, defining a rational economy of governance and subjection that conceals its origin, namely the exclusion of specific hermeneutical possibilities and their force in community-formation." Largier's interest, we might say here, is in the different metapragmatic functions that govern or could govern the various entextualizations of writing and the communities which it hailed or excluded. Secularism, and, we can add, a certain model of secular reading, is not just a stable term to denote textual objects, but a dynamic category that helps invoke specific audiences and modes of reading and disqualify others. What a term denotes is not the sole (or even the primary) consideration. There remains the question as to

what kinds of social worlds are bound up with a word or a language, and how words and language are deployed to entail transformations in the social field. Transduction accounts for these divisions between “the language of gods in the world of men,” and the necessary limits between certain forms of language that would evade semantic translation alone.

Session 5, March 12-14, 2019: Sexual Cultures and the History of Sexuality

If we take as a starting place that sexuality and gender are in part social facts, that while they often feel intensely personal and interior, they are nonetheless to a great extent collective phenomena, involving collective representations that are produced through human interaction, and that they are enacted by means of social forms – combinations of collective representations, sets of practices and inclinations that become institutions, differentially distributed across a social field, subject to modification both by external forces and by the cumulative effect of individual actions --, then we can see easily enough why they are variable across time and space in unpredictable ways, and why, when we deal with these social facts and forms in our interactions with others, we are necessarily involved in ongoing acts of negotiation, contestation, and translation – not only between languages, but also often between implicit arrays of cultural concepts that we use to make the world intelligible to ourselves.

Linguistic anthropological work demonstrates how socio-conceptual structures of various kinds are immanent in, implicit in, everyone's speech; we could say that those structures are indexed by or invoked through what we say. If something of our social world is shared by our interlocutor, if our interlocutor can reconstruct something of the point of view from which we speak, our implicit invocation of various conceptual structures will be part of what makes us intelligible to them, despite whatever implicitness may be involved in our utterances. Speech about gender and sexuality can serve as a vehicle for conveying a large array of cultural concepts, for staking a point of view on the social world at large. This has practical implications for different kinds of translation, even translation understood in the very basic sense of translating a passage from a memoir or a passage from a novel in which sexuality is in question

from French into English – when clearly what must be (but really cannot adequately be) translated is not exactly the words in question so much as the point of view on the social world that those words index. “Is there,” Michael Silverstein has asked, “a *sociocultural unconscious* in the mind—wherever that is located in respect of the biological organism—that is both immanent in and emergent from our use of language? Can we ever profoundly study the social significance of language without understanding this sociocultural unconscious that it seems to reveal? And if it is correct that language is the principal exemplar, medium, and site of the cultural, then can we ever understand the cultural without understanding this particular conceptual dimension of language?”¹⁶

We could say that there is a complex calculus involved in perceiving sexuality even within the bounds of a single culture, and this is because sexuality is often simultaneously a pertinent sociological characteristic in its own right and also the *effect* of the structural relations between a considerable array of other pertinent sociological variables (age, class, education, regional, national or other geographic affiliations, language(s) spoken, race, ethnicity, religion, etc.). Sexuality is a variable, and a multivariable effect simultaneously. As such, a good deal of information about sexuality is communicated through non-referential, non-denotational linguistic channels. When we think of the *translation* of sexuality then suddenly what needs to be translated are often not words themselves but the implicit conceptual structures that lie behind them; not the words, but the effects they produce (effects often related to sound), effects that arise not from the words themselves, but from the specific value given to the words by the relations between all the pertinent properties that were in play when the writer or speaker composed or uttered them.

Session 6, April 2-4, 2019: On “Politics” and the Circulation of Political Discourse

¹⁶ Silverstein, “‘Cultural’ Concepts,” 622.

The circulation of political discourse depends on linguistic forms and maneuvers, different media platforms, and specific and often competing publics. Once again, linguistic anthropology's methods have borrowed from literary theory (and thus opened the field for reciprocal relations) in order to enable us to study how instances of political talk are social processes that reside at and respond to the intersection of these issues. Michael Silverstein's work on political "messaging" (and the meta-messaging political campaigns use to deny their own branding), for instance, draws on literary narrative theory and the sociology of culture (Bourdieu; Raymond Williams) to reveal the ways campaigns craft "emblems of identity" to distinguish their candidates as characters they can position within the political field.¹⁷ Political talk, as Silverstein interprets it, does not describe the world (as it is or might be). Rather, "message"-ing, especially in its negative forms, indexes and reinforces stereotypical associations to wrap around and constrain an opposing candidate. In doing so, political talk carries out an agonistic battle to highlight the contrast between character / candidates, and to place them within the voting publics' imaginaries as one or another set of possible social personae. This pragmatic approach moves away from politics as solely the consumption or rejection of ideological tokens, and towards a lively intersectionality that understands "ideology" as a more nuanced and ongoing positionality in discourse that requires constant maintenance.

Drawing on more traditional figures within literary studies, Tristram Wolff's recent writing on 19th century political debate in England and the ways in which William Hazlitt's essays criticized political oratory for its failure to achieve the spontaneous and lively rhetoric he displayed on the page, also reveals the many ways political discourse gets entextualized (whether on the floor of Parliament or in the pages of a newspaper, novel, or other platform), framed, and passed on through circuits of readers, viewers, and listeners sculpting a phrase or gesture's meaning, and gathering different audiences (or publics) to adhere to its message.¹⁸ Likewise,

¹⁷ Michael Silverstein, "The 'Message' in the (Political) Battle," *Language and Communication*, Vol. 31, Issue 3 (2011): 203-216.

¹⁸ Tristram Wolff, "Talking with Texts: Hazlitt's Ephemeral Style," *Representations* 137 (Winter 2017): 44-67.

Flagg Miller's study of the physical and discursive pathways of Osama Bin Laden's audio cassette tapes, or Francis Cody's analysis of the limits of print capitalism in Tamil politics add to these emphases on use and uptake in meaning production.¹⁹ After all, political discourse, as Silverstein argues, *is* poetics, and thus requires a semiotics to perceive why certain messages travel while others do not, how certain media accrue political capital and enable the circulation of particular political-discursive objects but not others, and how cultural communities (publics and counterpublics) negotiate and produce meaning at different loci of reception, while sending those meanings back into the discourse network for further interpretation and use.²⁰ Translation and transduction are also key here, not only in the translation between national languages or dialects, but also the translation across media and ideological communities. Without a theory of translation paired with transduction, we would lose the cultural processes involved in these circuits of political discourse.

Session 7, April 30 and May 1-2, 2019: The Politics and Ethics of Linguistic Anthropology

At the end of the trajectory of this seminar, we thought it would be interesting to give linguistic anthropologists (and their interlocutors from literary, cultural, and ethnic studies) the occasion to reflect upon the historical, ethical, and political stakes of their own discipline, and to speculate about the future of the discipline and of various interdisciplinary conversations.

Thematic Threads of the Seminar

¹⁹ Flagg Miller, *The Audacious Ascetic: What the Bin Laden Tapes Reveal About Al-Qa'ida* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015). Francis Cody, "Populist Publics: Print Capitalism and Crowd Violence Beyond Liberal Frameworks," in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2015): 50-65.

²⁰ Silverstein, "The Poetics of Politics: 'Theirs' and 'Ours'," *Journal of Anthropological Research*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Spring 2005): 1-24.

The topics of the first half of the seminar -- the ways linguistic anthropologists deal with translation/transduction, sound, and language's constitutive addressivity, its production of publics through the simple act of its use -- all carry through each of the areas to be investigated in the second half of the seminar: discourses and practices of religion, the intricacies of sexual cultures in their geographical and temporal diversity, and the ways discourses and practices of politics happen through the use of language across many modes. The tradition in linguistic anthropology that we engage with here is a fundamentally pragmatic one. Its roots are in the semiotics of Peirce and Jakobson. As such, its critical attitudes and practices have a somewhat uneasy relation to many critical modes familiar in the humanities, often grounded in a less semiotically dynamic Saussurean theory of the sign, or in the somewhat critically underdeveloped ideas about "performativity" that Austin put forth, or in ideas about language and the unconscious that arise in critical traditions rooted in psychoanalysis or marxism. It is the productive tensions between this pragmatic linguistic anthropology and these other traditions that we hope our seminar will engage and explore.

Format of the seminar sessions.

Each seminar session will include two public events on a Wednesday and a Thursday evening. Each such event will include two or three speakers -- bringing linguistic anthropologists together with scholars from the humanities -- with each speaker presenting a twenty-minute paper that address the general organizing theme for that session: translation / transduction, sound, etc. Speakers from either night are encouraged but not required to attend the paired session. Our hope is that this format will foster dialogue among the speakers and the audience, and will encourage a cross-disciplinary conversation that addresses the productive intersections, specific limits, and different construction of text artifacts among all participants. A local "working group" will meet on the Tuesdays of each seminar week to read and discuss the presenters' work, along with other relevant background texts, in preparation for the week's sessions. There will be two dissertation fellows and one postdoctoral fellow associated with the

seminar, who will participate in the working group as well as in one or more of the seminar's public events.