

# LIN 4784 Writing Systems

Spring 2013

MWF 7<sup>th</sup> period (1:55-2:45) Anderson 32

Section 098H

<http://lss.at.ufl.edu/>

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## Course overview

In this course we study the scripts and orthographies of human languages worldwide. We approach the technology of writing from the following perspectives:

- Script types
  - Morphographic, phonographic
- Script evolution
  - Borrowing and adaptation
- Script selection and modification
  - Scripts for unwritten languages; script and nation; scripts in bilingual contexts
- Script and identity display
  - Deviation from standard orthographic practices for social purposes

At the end of this course, you will have gained a nuanced understanding of the ways in which signs have linked to the representation of words and speech throughout history, the advantages and disadvantages of different script types in the advancement of literacy and in the preservation of cultural heritage, the socio-cultural and linguistic factors that bear on selection of a script for unwritten languages, and the ways in which individuals and communities deviate from standard practices of orthography to achieve social and political goals.

## Required texts

1. **Rogers**, Henry. 2005. *Writing Systems: A Linguistic Approach*. Oxford: Blackwell. ISBN 978-0631234647.
2. **Sebba**, Mark. 2007. *Spelling and Society: The Culture and Politics of Orthography around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0521-300759.
3. **Articles and Book Chapters on online Course Reserves**, UF Library, <http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/>. These readings are indicated by “CR” in the Daily schedule.

How to access:

- Select “Course Reserves” from left menu, log on, select “Main Menu,” and click on course number for readings. Select assigned reading to read online, save, or print.
- If you are off campus, you need to log into the UF VPN Client first, before accessing the internet. See <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/login/vpn.html> for information on downloading and installing the VPN Client.

## Assignments and Grading

1. **Exercises** (10%): These are problem sets related to scripts discussed in Rogers. Prepare along with the assigned readings, and submit to instructor at the end of class on the date the assignment appears in the daily schedule.
2. **Group Presentations** (15%): Select one of the following topics based on your L1/L2 expertise, or your interests, to present the main points of the assigned reading. You should illustrate, critique and add to those points by introducing supplementary materials and information. Sign up for your selection in "Sign Up" on Sakai. Each group should have 3-4 members. Submit one copy per group of the slides or other visual support to Assignments in Sakai prior to or on the date of your presentation.
  - a. **Topics**
    - i. 01/18/13 Friday, Orthographic variation in Japanese
    - ii. 01/25/13 Friday, Cuneiform
    - iii. 02/01/13 Friday, Hebrew
    - iv. 02/04/13 Monday, Arabic
    - v. 02/22/13 Friday, Indian devanagari script (Hindi, Sanskrit)
    - vi. 03/01/13 Friday, Invented script of your choice
    - vii. 03/18/13 Monday, Case of orthography as social practice, your choice
    - viii. 04/01/13 Monday, Digraphia in South Asia and elsewhere
    - ix. 04/03/13 Wednesday, Russian script and orthography; Russian writing in immigrant contexts
    - x. 04/22/13 Monday, Issues in orthographic reform
  - b. **Evaluation:** Your presentation will be evaluated according to these parameters.
    - i. Engagement with assigned reading
      1. Key concepts are clearly identified
    - ii. Provision of new and supporting material
      1. New data that enhances our understanding of the script and/or issues in question
    - iii. Exposition and style
      1. All members of the group participate
      2. Visual aids are clear, interesting, and creative
      3. Presentation flows well
    - iv. Posing and handing questions
      1. Group members pose questions that stimulate class discussion
      2. Group members respond to questions and moderate effectively
3. **Research paper** (25%), 10-12 pages: This paper should address an issue related to script or orthography, and may include data analysis. The topic is completely up to you, but must be cleared by the instructor. Some past examples have included (a) script choice for computer-mediated communications (CMC) in a case where there is no established script or orthography, (b) techniques to facilitate ease of expression in work contexts, or in CMC contexts, (c) secret languages and private scripts, (d) scripts and dyslexia, (e) graffiti styles, (f) history of orthography of a given language (e.g., Xhosa). Your paper will be evaluated along the following parameters:
  - a. Organization and coherence
    - i. Topic is clearly stated in introductory paragraph. Subsequent paragraphs develop and support arguments that illustrate and explain the topic. Concluding paragraph provides summing up of major findings, and a statement of issues that remain for future research.
  - b. Critical thinking

- i. An interesting question(s) is posed, the answer(s) to which involves probing and varied inquiry that relies on scholarly sources, as well as your own observations, analysis, and conclusions.
  - c. Data analysis
    - i. There is identification of relevant data; analysis is sound.
  - d. Style and mechanics
    - i. Careful attention to word choice; sentences display complexity and ease of readability.
    - ii. Paper is free of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.
    - iii. Paper is double spaced, with 11 or 12-point fonts, and follows an established style (such as *Linguistic Inquiry*, see Resources in Sakai).
  - e. Deadlines
    - i. Submit **topic** to instructor in Assignments by **Friday, February 1, 2013**. Provide a brief description of your proposed topic, and a brief explanation of why you are interested in it. You are welcome to discuss possible topic with me at any time.
    - ii. Submit **First draft** to instructor on or before **Friday, March 15, 2013**. This draft must contain a list of References.
    - iii. Submit **Final version** to Assignments in Sakai by **Friday, April 19, 2013**.
    - iv. Late submissions will be downgraded by 5 percentage points per day.
- 4. **Exams (40%)**: There will be two exams and each will be preceded by a review session that will focus on key concepts and question types (multiple choice, true-false, matching, essay, data analysis).
  - a. **Exam 1**: 02/15/13 (Friday)
  - b. **Exam 2**: 04/12/13 (Friday)
  - c. Make-up Exams: Prior notification to [awehmeve@ufl.edu](mailto:awehmeve@ufl.edu), or 273-2961, and written documentation of illness or family emergency is required. Consult with instructor to schedule the make-up exam.
- 5. **Attendance and participation (10%)**: Attendance will be recorded at each class meeting, and participation in class discussion is expected.
  - a. Read the assigned texts carefully ahead of time, and be prepared to discuss them on the date that they appear in the Daily Schedule.
  - b.
- 6. **Grades**

a. Exercises	10%
b. Group presentation	15%
c. Research paper	25%
d. Exam 1	20%
e. Exam 2	20%
f. Attendance and participation	10%
g. 93-100 A, 90-92 A-, 87-89 B+, 83-86 B, 80-82 B-, 77-80 C+, 73-76 C, 70-72 C-, 67-69 D+, 63-66 D, 60-62 D-, 59 and below E	

### Policies and Expectations

- a. You are expected to abide by the **Honor Code**: *We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.* On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: *"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."* All sources of information, including print, digital, and verbal, must be acknowledged. Verbatim materials must be indicated as such with quotations marks, and cited.

- b. **Special Accommodations:** Please let me know about any concerns regarding submission of assignments, testing, or other class requirements. You are welcome to visit during office hours, catch me after class, phone, or email. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Daily Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment	Exercises/Presentations
<i>Unit 1 Script types</i>			
Week 1			
M 01/07/13	Introduction	Course overview and course requirements	
W 01/09/13	Writing and technical terms	Rogers, Chapters 1 and 2: Introduction, Theoretical Preliminaries, p. 1-19.	
F 01/11/13	Morphographic writing, Chinese	Rogers, Chapter 3: Chinese, p. 20-49	Exercises 1, 2, 3, p. 48-49 in Rogers.
Week 2			
M 01/14/13	Learning a morphographic script	Taylor and Taylor, "Spoken Chinese," and "Learning Hanzi, Pinyin, and Putonghua," <b>CR.</b> Chapters 2 (p. 28-42) and 9 (p. 131-143) in <i>Writing and Literacy in Chinese, Korean and Japanese</i> . Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995.	
W 01/16/13	Morphographic and phonographic writing, Japanese	Rogers, Chapter 4: Japanese, p. 50-68.	
F 01/18/13	Variation in a dual system, Japanese	Joyce, Hodošček, & Nishina, "Orthographic representation and variation within the Japanese writing system," <b>CR.</b> <i>Written Language and Literacy</i> 15:2 (2012), 254-278.	<b>Group Presentation 1:</b> Orthographic variation in Japanese.
Week 3			
M 01/21/13		Martin Luther King Jr. Day Classes suspended	
W 01/23/13	Languages that changed their writing systems: Hankul, an invented alphabet written in syllable glyphs; Vietnamese adaptation of Chinese characters and roman alphabet	Rogers, Chapter 4: Korean and Vietnamese, p. 68-77.	Exercise 4, p. 78 in Rogers.
F 01/25/13	The earliest writing system	Rogers, Chapter 5: Cuneiform, p. 79-96. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rogers, Exercise 3, p. 96, for in-class discussion.</li> </ul>	<b>Group Presentation 2:</b> Cuneiform

<b>Week 4</b>			
M 01/28/13	Concepts and tools of early writing; Rosetta Stone and decipherment	Film: "Before the Alphabet" (26 min.)	Cuneiform Assignment in Sakai.
W 01/30/13	Hieroglyphs	Rogers, Chapter 6: Egyptian, p. 97-114. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rogers, Exercise 6.12, p. 114, for in-class discussion.</li> </ul>	
F 02/01/13	Development of abjad systems	Rogers, Chapter 7: Semitic, p. 114-131 (through Hebrew).	Exercise 1, p. 142-143 in Rogers. <b>Group Presentation 3: Hebrew</b>
<b>Week 5</b>			
M 02/04/13	Arabic abjad, variant letter forms	Rogers, Chapter 7: Semitic (Arabic and others), p. 132-144.	Exercise 2, p. 143-144 in Rogers. <b>Group Presentation 4: Arabic</b>
W 02/06/13	Development of alphabetic systems; Linear B script	Rogers, Chapter 8: The Greek Alphabet, p. 145-152. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rogers, Exercise 2, p. 168, for in-class discussion.</li> </ul>	
F 02/08/13	Orthographic depth	Rogers, Chapter 9: The Roman Alphabet, p. 170-184	Exercises 4, 5, p. 182-184 in Rogers.
<b>Week 6</b>			
M 02/11/13	Establishing a standard orthography	Nordland, "Finnish, Standardization of Finnish orthography: From reformists to national awakens," <b>CR</b> . In <i>Orthographies in Early Modern Europe</i> , edited by Susan Baddeley and Anja Voeste, p. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2012.	
W 02/13/13	Exam No. 1 Review	Review of key concepts and discussion of question types	
F 02/15/13	<b>Exam No. 1</b> on all materials through 02/11/12	In class	
<b>Week 7</b>			
M 02/18/13	History of English orthography	Rogers, Chapter 10: English, p. 185-198. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercises 2, 3, 4 p. 198 for in-class discussion.</li> </ul>	
W 02/20/13	Ideology and spelling variants	Heffernan, et al., "Preserving Canada's 'honour': Ideology and diachronic change in Canadian spelling variants." <i>Written Language &amp; Literacy</i> 13:1 (2010), 1-23. <b>CR</b>	
F	Abugida systems	Rogers, Chapter 11: The Indian	<b>Group presentation 5:</b>

02/22/13		Abugida and Other Asian Phonographic Writing (through Indian writing), p. 199-220.	Devanagari script (Sanskrit, Hindi)
Week 8			
M 02/25/13	Derivative abugida systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rogers, Chapter 11: The Indian Abugida and Other Asian Phonographic Writing (Southeast Asian writing), p. 221-232.</li> <li>Fedorova, "The development of structural characteristics of the Brahmi script in derivative writing systems." <i>Written Language &amp; Literacy</i> 15:1 (2012), 1-25. <b>CR</b></li> </ul>	
W 02/27/13	Glyphs	Rogers, Chapter 12: Maya, p. 233-246. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercise 1, p. 246 for in-class discussion.</li> </ul>	
F 03/01/13	Invented scripts	Rogers, Chapter 13: Other Writing Systems, p. 247-268. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercises 2, 3, 4, 5 for in-class discussion.</li> </ul>	<b>Group Presentation 6:</b> Other script of your choice
Week 9	March 2 – 9 Spring Break		
<i>Unit 2 Orthographic variation and identity display</i>			
Week 10			
M 03/11/13	Methods of classifying writing systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rogers, Chapter 14: Classification of Writing Systems, p. 269-279.</li> <li>Sebba, Chapter 1: Approaching Orthography, p. 10-25.</li> </ul>	
W 03/13/13	Deviation for social purposes	Sebba, Chapter 2: Orthography as Social Practice, Sections 1 and 2, p. 26-41.	
F 03/15/13	Variation in CMC	Ifukor, "Spelling and Simulated Shibboleths in Nigerian Computer-mediated Communication." <i>English Today</i> 107, Vol 27:3, 35-42. <b>CR</b>	
Week 11			
M 03/18/13	Identity display	Sebba, Chapter 3: Orthography as Social Practice, Sections 3, 4 and 5, p. 41-57.	<b>Group Presentation 7:</b> Case of orthography as social practice.
W 03/20/13	Identity display	Vaisman, "Performing Girlhood through Typographic Play in Hebrew Blogs," <b>CR</b> . In <i>Digital Discourse: Language in the new media</i> , edited by Crispin Thurlow and Kristine Mroczek, p. 177-196. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.	
F	Language contact and	Sebba, Chapter 3: Language contact,	

03/22/13	creation of orthographies	linguists and the emergence of orthographies, p. 58-80.	
<i>Unit 3 Script and orthography: Questions of nationhood and culture</i>			
Week 12			
M 03/25/13	Language preservation	Crowley, "The Consequences of Vernacular Illiteracy in the Pacific," <b>CR</b> . In <i>Language Planning and Policy: Issues in Language Planning and Literacy</i> , edited by Anthony J. Liddicoat, p. 164-184. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters	
W 03/27/13	Concepts of word and implication for orthographies	Peterson, "Words in Kharia: Phonological, Morphosyntactic and "Orthographical" Aspects," <b>CR</b> . In <i>Documenting Endangered Languages: Achievements and Perspectives</i> , edited by Geoffrey Haig et al., p. 89-119. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011.	
F 03/29/13	What to include in scripts	Roberts and Walter, "Writing Grammar Rather than Tone," <b>CR</b> . <i>Written Language and Literacy</i> 15:2 (2012), 226-253.	
Week 13			
M 04/01/13	Digraphia	King, "The Poisonous Potency of Script: Hindi and Urdu," <b>CR</b> . <i>International Journal of the Sociology of Language</i> 150 (2001), 43-59.	<b>Group Presentation 8:</b> Digraphia in South Asia and elsewhere.
W 04/03/13	Digraphia in immigrant contexts	Angermeyer, "Bilingualism Meets Digraphia: Script alternation and script hybridity in Russian-American Writing and Beyond," <b>CR</b> . In <i>Language mixing and code-switching in writing: Approaches to mixed-language written discourse</i> , edited by Mark Sebba et al., p. 255-272. New York: Routledge, 2012.	<b>Group Presentation 9:</b> Russian script and orthography, and Russian in immigrant contexts
F 04/05/13	Orthography and identity	Sebba, Chapter 4: 'Postcolonial' Orthographies, p. 81-101.	
Week 14			
M 04/08/13	Writing and language preservation	Bradley, "Resilience Linguistics, Orthography, and the Gong," <b>CR</b> . In <i>Applied Linguists Needed: Cross-disciplinary Teamwork in Endangered Language Contexts</i> , edited by Linda Cope, p. 83-94. London: Routledge, 2012.	
W 04/10/13	Exam 2 Review	Review of key concepts and discussion of question types	
F 04/12/13	<b>Exam 2:</b> Materials from 02/18/13 through	In-class	

	04/08/13		
Week 15			
M 04/15/13	Script and Orthography selection in contested contexts	Sebba, Chapter 5: Between Language and Dialect: Orthography in unstandardized and standardizing vernaculars, p. 102-131.	
W 04/17/13	Orthography in postcolonial contexts	Suslak, "The Story of ö: Orthography and Cultural Politics in the Mixe Highlands." <i>Pragmatics</i> 13:4 (2003), 551-563. <b>CR</b>	
F 04/19/13	Script selection in diaspora contexts	Eira, "Authority and Discourse: Towards a Model for Orthography Selection." <i>Written Language and Literacy</i> 1:2 (1998), 171-224. <b>CR</b>	
Week 16			
M 04/22/13	Issues in orthographic reform	Sebba, Chapter 6: Reform or Revolution: Where angels fear to tread, p. 132-156.	<b>Group Presentation 10:</b> Issues in orthographic reform
W 04/24/13		Discussion of research papers	

#### **Basic References on Writing Systems in UF Libraries**

- Baurmann, Jurgen, Hartmut Gunther, and Otto Ludwig, eds. *Schrift und Schriftlichkeit: ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch internationaler Forschung = Writing and Its Use: an interdisciplinary handbook of international research*. Z40 .S27 1994, v. 1-2
- Brown, Michelle P. *The British Library Guide to Writing and Scripts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1998
- Cook, Vivian and Benedetta Bassetti, eds. 2005. *Second Language Writing Systems*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. P 118.2 .S438 2005
- Coulmas, Florian. *Writing Systems: An Introduction to their Linguistic Analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2003
- Coulmas, Florian. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Writing Systems*.Z40 .C67 1996 Reference section
- Coulmas, Florian. *The Writing Systems of the World*. P211 .C67 1989
- Daniels, Peter T. and William Bright, eds. *The World's Writing Systems*. P211 .W714 1996**
- Downing, Pamela, Susan D. Lima, and Michael Noonan. *The Linguistics of Literacy*. P211 .L69 1992
- Gelb, I. J. 1963. *A Study of Writing*. Revised Edition. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.
- Nakanishi, Akira. 1982. *Writing Systems of the World: Alphabets, syllabaries, pictograms*. Rutland, VT: Tuttle. Z40 .N2613
- Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. P35 .05 1982 c. 2
- Pontecorvo, Clotilde, ed. *Writing and Development: An Interdisciplinary View*. P118 .W75 1997
- Sampson, Geoffrey. *Writing Systems, An Introduction*. P211 .S341 1985b
- Senner, Wayne M., ed. *The Origins of Writing*. P211 .075 1989
- Sproat, Richard. *A Computational Theory of Writing Systems*. P211.4 .S67 2000
- Taylor, Insup and David R. Olson, eds. *Scripts and Literacy: Reading and Learning to Read Alphabets, Syllabaries, and Characters*. P211 .S42 1995
- Watt, W.C., ed. *Writing Systems and Cognition: Perspectives from Psychology, Physiology, Linguistics, and Semiotics*. P211 .W719 1994