LIN 4784 Writing Systems

Spring 2014

MWF 7th period (1:55-2:45) Anderson 19
Section 098H
http://lss.at.ufl.edu/

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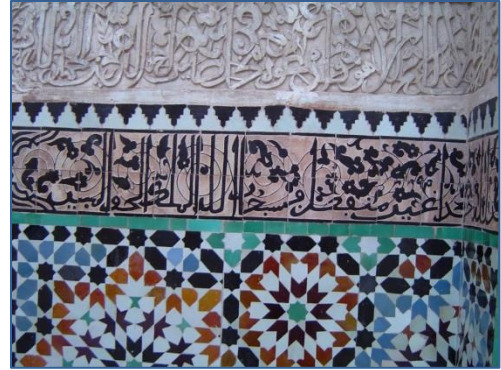
Course overview

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
    - Diacritics and other means of indicating prosody
- Script evolution
    - Invention, borrowing, adaptation
    - Changes over time
- 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. **Houston,** Stephen D., ed. 2012. *The Shape of Script: How and Why Writing Systems Change*. Santa Fe, New Mexico: School for Advanced Research Press.
3. **Sebba**, Mark. 2007. *Spelling and Society: The Culture and Politics of Orthography around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0521-300759.
4. **Articles and Book Chapters on online Course Reserves**, through Sakai course website, or 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** (05%): These are five 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** (20%): 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 at least one hour prior to your presentation.
   a. **Topics**
      i. 01/24/14 Friday, Cuneiform
      ii. 01/29/14 Wednesday, Egyptian hieroglyphs
      iii. 02/03/14 Monday, Hebrew
      iv. 02/05/14 Wednesday, Arabic
      v. 02/26/14 Wednesday, Indian devanagari script (Hindi, Sanskrit)
      vi. 03/14/14 Friday, Other script of your choice
      vii. 03/24/14 Monday, Case of orthography as social practice, your choice
      viii. 03/31/14 Monday, Digraphia in South Asia and elsewhere
      ix. 04/02/14 Wednesday, Russian script and orthography; Russian writing in immigrant contexts
   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) optimal fonts for maximum ease of readability, (c) graffiti in bilingual contexts (e.g., Catalan/Spanish), (d) scripts and dyslexia, (e) history of orthography of a given language (e.g., Xhosa), (f) magical properties of scripts, (g) script reforms (e.g., China), (g) creole scripts and debates (e.g., Haitian Creole).
   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, January 31, 2014**. 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.
        1. 02% of grade
    ii. Submit **First draft** to instructor on or before **Monday, March 17, 2014**. This draft must contain a list of References.
        1. 03% of grade
    iii. Submit **Final version** to Assignments in Sakai by **Friday, April 18, 2014**.
        1. 20% of grade
    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:** 02/17/14 (Monday)
    b. **Exam 2:** 04/14/14 (Monday)
    c. Make-up Exams: Prior notification to awehmeye@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   05%
    b. Group presentation   20%
    c. Research paper   25%
        i. Topic 02%
        ii. Draft 03%
        iii. Final version 20%
    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
Week 1 *Key terms and Script types*			
M 01/06/14	Introduction	Course overview and course requirements	
W 01/08/14	Writing and technical terms	Rogers, Chapters 1 and 2: Introduction, Theoretical Preliminaries, p. 1-19.	
F 01/10/14	Morphographic writing, Chinese	Rogers, Chapter 3: Chinese, p. 20-49	Exercises 1, 2, 3, p. 48-49 in Rogers.
Week 2 *Script types*			
M 01/13/14	Early script change in China	Steinke, "Script Change in Bronze Age China," Chapter 6 (135-158) in Houston.	
W 01/15/14	Morphographic and phonographic writing, Japanese	Rogers, Chapter 4: Japanese, p. 50-68.	
F 01/11/14	Variation in a dual system, Japanese	Lurie, "The Development of Writing in Japan," Chapter 7 (159-185) in Houston.	
Week 3 *Script types*			
M 01/20/14		Martin Luther King Jr. Day Classes suspended	
W 01/22/14	Languages that changed their writing systems: Hankul, an invented alphabet written in syllable glyphs;	Rogers, Chapter 4: Korean and Vietnamese, p. 68-77.	Exercise 4, p. 78 in Rogers.

	Vietnamese adaptation of Chinese characters and roman alphabet		
F 01/24/14	The earliest writing system	Rogers, Chapter 5: Cuneiform, p. 79-96. • Rogers, Exercise 3, p. 96, for in-class discussion.	**Group Presentation 1: Cuneiform**
Week 4 *Script types*			
M 01/27/14	Concepts and tools of early writing; Rosetta Stone and decipherment	Veldhuis, "Cuneiform: Changes and Developments," Chapter 1 (3-23) in Houston. • Film: "Before the Alphabet" (26 min.)	Exercise: Cuneiform Assignment in Sakai.
W 01/29/14	Hieroglyphs	Rogers, Chapter 6: Egyptian, p. 97-114. • Rogers, Exercise 6.12, p. 114, for in-class discussion.	**Group Presentation 2: Egyptian hieroglyphs**
F 01/31/14	Media and text types	Baines, "Scripts, High Culture, and Administration in Middle Kingdom Egypt," Chapter 2 (25-63) in Houston.	**Research Paper Topic due, submit to Sakai**
Week 5 *Script types*			
M 02/03/14	Development of abjad systems	Rogers, Chapter 7: Semitic, p. 114-131 (through Hebrew).	Exercise 1, p. 142-143 in Rogers. **Group Presentation 3: Hebrew**
W 02/05/14	Arabic abjad, variant letter forms	Rogers, Chapter 7: Semitic (Arabic and others), p. 132-144.	Exercise 2, p. 143-144 in Rogers. **Group Presentation 4: Arabic**
F 02/07/14	Variations in writing	Greundler, "Stability and Change in Arabic Script," Chapter 4 (93-118) in Houston.	
Week 6 *Script types*			
M 02/10/14	Development of alphabetic systems; Linear B script	Rogers, Chapter 8: The Greek Alphabet, p. 145-152. • Rogers, Exercise 2, p. 168, for in-class discussion.	
W 02/12/14	Orthographic depth	• Rogers, Chapter 9: The Roman Alphabet, p. 170-184. • Bodel, "Paragrams, Punctuation and System in Ancient Roman Script," Chapter 3 (65-92) in Houston.	
F 02/14/14	Exam 1, Review	Review of key concepts, discussion of question types	
Week 7 *Script types*			

M 02/17/14	Exam 1	Exam 1, in class, on all materials through 12/12/14	
W 02/19/14	History of English orthography	Rogers, Chapter 10: English, p. 185-198. Exercises 2, 3, 4 p. 198 for in-class discussion.	
F 02/21/14	History of writing in Africa	Pasch, Helma (2008). Competing Scripts: The Introduction of the Roman Alphabet in Africa. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 191:65-109. **CR**	
Week 8 *Script types*			
M 02/24/14	Representing tone	Roberts, David (2011). A Tone Orthography Typology. *Written Language & Literacy* 14:1, 82-108. **CR**	
W 02/26/14	Abugida systems	Rogers, Chapter 11: The Indian Abugida and Other Asian Phonographic Writing (through Indian writing), p. 199-220.	**Group presentation 5: Devanagari script (Sanskrit, Hindi)**
F 02/28/14	Derivative abugida systems	• Rogers, Chapter 11: The Indian Abugida and Other Asia Phonographic Writing (Southeast Asian writing), p. 221-232. • Salomon, "Some Principles and Patterns of Script Change," Chapter 5 (119-133) in Houston.	
Week 9	March 3 – 7 Spring Break		
Week 10 *Script types*			
M 03/10/14	Glyphs	Rogers, Chapter 12: Maya, p. 233-246. • Exercise 1, p. 246 for in-class discussion.	
W 03/12/14	Variation in glyphs	Houston, "Maya Writing: Modified, Transformed," Chapter 8 (187-208) in Houston.	
F 03/14/14	Invented scripts	Rogers, Chapter 13: Other Writing Systems, p. 247-268. • Exercises 2, 3, 4, 5 for in-class discussion.	**Group Presentation 6: Other script of your choice**
Week 11 *Orthographic variation and identity display*			
M 03/17/14	Methods of classifying writing systems	• Rogers, Chapter 14: Classification of Writing Systems, p. 269-279. • Sebba, Chapter 1: Approaching Orthography, p. 10-25.	**First draft of Research paper due, submit to Sakai**
W 03/19/14	Deviation for social purposes	Sebba, Chapter 2: Orthography as Social Practice, Sections 1 and 2, p. 26-41.	
F 03/21/14	Deviation in product naming	Wong, Andrew W. (2013). Brand Names and Unconventional Spelling: A two-pronged analysis of the	

		orthographic construction of brand identity. *Written Language & Literacy* 16:2, 115-145. **CR**	
Week 12 *Script and orthography: Questions of nationhood and culture*			
M 03/24/14	Identity display	Sebba, Chapter 3: Orthography as Social Practice, Sections 3, 4 and 5, p. 41-57.	**Group Presentation 7:** Case of orthography as social practice.
W 03/26/14	Language contact and creation of orthographies	Sebba, Chapter 3: Language contact, linguists and the emergence of orthographies, p. 58-80.	
F 03/28/14	Language preservation	Crowley, "The Consequences of Vernacular Illiteracy in the Pacific." In *Language Planning and Policy: Issues in Language Planning and Literacy*, edited by Anthony J. Liddicoat, p. 164-184. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters. **CR**	
Week 13 *Script and orthography: Questions of nationhood and culture*			
M 03/31/14	Digraphia	King, "The Poisonous Potency of Script: Hindi and Urdu." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 150 (2001), 43-59. **CR**	**Group Presentation 8: Digraphia in South Asia and elsewhere.**
W 04/02/14	Digraphia in immigrant contexts	Angermeyer, "Bilingualism Meets Digraphia: Script alternation and script hybridity in Russian-American Writing and Beyond." In *Language mixing and code-switching in writing: Approaches to mixed-language written discourse*, edited by Mark Sebba et al., p. 255-272. New York: Routledge, 2012. **CR**	**Group Presentation 9: Russian script and orthography, and Russian in immigrant contexts**
F 04/04/14	Orthography and identity	Sebba, Chapter 4: 'Postcolonial' Orthographies, p. 81-101.	
Week 14 *Script in the context of language preservation*			
M 04/07/14	Writing and language preservation	Bradley, "Resilience Linguistics, Orthography, and the Gong." In *Applied Linguists Needed: Cross-disciplinary Teamwork in Endangered Language Contexts*, edited by Linda Cope, p. 83-94. London: Routledge, 2012. **CR**	
W 04/09/14	Orthography in postcolonial contexts	• Suslak, "The Story of ö: Orthography and Cultural Politics in the Mixe Highlands." *Pragmatics* 13:4 (2003), 551-563. **CR** • Monaghan, "The Shape of Script in a Colonial Context: Alphabetic and Pictorial Registers in Mixtec	

		Texts," Chapter 9 (209-227) in Houston.	
F 04/11/14	Exam 2 Review	Review of key concepts and discussion of question types	
Week 15 *Standardization*			
M 04/14/14	**Exam 2**	Materials from 02/18/13 through 04/08/13	
W 04/16/14	Script and Orthography selection in contested contexts	Sebba, Chapter 5: Between Language and Dialect: Orthography in unstandardized and standardizing vernaculars, p. 102-131.	
F 04/18/14	Orthography in contexts with no established spelling conventions	Oenbring, Raymond (2013). Bey or Bouy: Orthographic patterns in Bahamanian Creole English on the web. *English World-Wide* 34:3, 341-364.	**Final version of Research Paper due, submit to Sakai**
Week 16 *Script reform*			
M 04/21/14	Issues in orthographic reform	Sebba, Chapter 6: Reform or Revolution: Where angels fear to tread, p. 132-156.	
W 04/22/14		Discussion of research papers	

Basic References on Writing Systems in UF Libraries

Baurmann, Jurgen, Hartmut Gunther, and Otto Ludwig, eds. *Schrift und Schriftlichkeit: ein interdisziplinares 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

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Gelb, I. J. 1963. *A Study of Writing*. Revised Edition. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.

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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.*

Woodard, Roger D., ed. 2994. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.