

**DOUGLAS COLLEGE**  
**Anthropology 2240**  
**Anthropology of Human Sexuality**

**Fall 2010, Mondays and Wednesdays 12:00-1:50p (NW 1750)**

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Wednesdays 11a-12p (NW); Thursdays 11:30a-12:30p (DL)

*I am available at other times by appointment. You may also contact me at any time at the email address listed above.*

**Skype:** tmcilwraith (Call or IM)  
**Chat:** Widget on [www.tadmclwraith.com](http://www.tadmclwraith.com) (no software required)  
**Twitter:** Follow @douglasanth (anthropology news, department updates)  
Watch <http://twitter.com/douglasanth>

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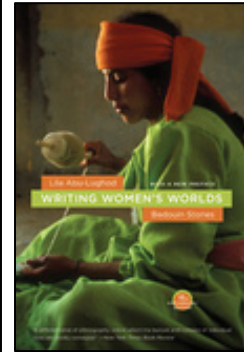
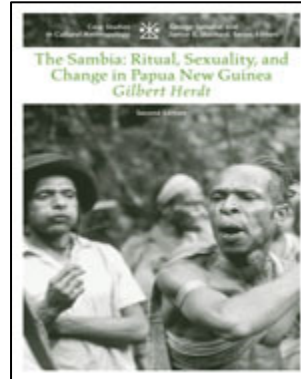
## Aims and Objectives

This course will introduce students to the anthropological study of human sexuality and gender. Topics covered include the biological basis for differences between men and women, how gender and sexuality appear differently in different cultures around the world, and topics like gender and language, politics, and religion. Examples of cultural practices will be drawn from around the world and presented using lectures, films, and slide presentations.

## Textbooks

Herdt, Gilbert. 2006. *The Sambia: Ritual, Sexuality, and Change in Papua New Guinea*. Toronto: Thomson/Wadsworth.

Abu-Lughod, Lila 1993 *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*. Berkeley: University of California Press.



## Other Course Resources

[www.tadmCILwraith.com](http://www.tadmCILwraith.com) – This is my website. A page on the website is devoted to this class. You can keep up with the lecture schedule there, find additional copies of handouts, and review slides presented in class. You can also see my **availability for chat** on the front page of the website.

[www.anthroblog.tadmCILwraith.com](http://www.anthroblog.tadmCILwraith.com) – This is my blog. I discuss issues related to anthropology, studying anthropology, and my other interests here. Much of the blog deals with aboriginal rights in British Columbia and, more generally, Canada. Feel free to browse at your leisure and, should you feel inclined, you are able to comment on what I write about on the blog.

## Course Requirements

- i) Readings: Students are expected to complete required readings before class.
- ii) Tests and Exams: There are two midterms and a final quiz in this course. Students are responsible for all materials discussed in class. The tests will cover material from a limited number of lectures and the final exam will include materials from the entire course.
- iii) Written Assignments: There are three written assignments for this course. They are all related to a single, final essay. The first is a prospectus outlining your intentions for an essay

project. The second assignment is a submission of the first paragraph of your essay. The final assignment is an essay of 2000-2500 words. It is based on your prospectus and uses the introductory paragraph you have already drafted. All assignments will be discussed in class and handouts will be provided.

Note: I am open to proposals for different paper projects. Please speak to me about what you might put in your prospectus.

iv) Participation is also graded in this class. Participation will be graded based on your involvement in the classroom and during discussion groups. Some of this mark will be based on the completion of answers to questions distributed in advance of discussion groups and participation in the discussion groups themselves. (See below.)

## Evaluation

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Prospectus	October 4	10%
Midterm I	October 13	20%
Introductory Paragraph	October 27	5%
Midterm II	November 10	20%
Essay	November 29	25%
Final Quiz	December 7	10%
Participation	Ongoing	10%

*Respectful Learning Environment:* Students are expected to adhere to all College policies regarding respectful conduct in all aspects of this course. This includes classroom conduct and online conduct through message boards, etc. A respectful learning environment also includes the appropriate use of laptops and other kinds of electronics in class. Be aware that anyone sitting behind you can see what you are doing on your laptop – and it can be VERY distracting. If you feel you must watch movies, do email, text, etc. during class, then please get yourself a privacy screen for your laptop's monitor. Better yet: save those activities for another time.

*Attendance:* As material discussed in class will differ from the text material, attending class is important. If you miss a class, it is strongly recommended that you obtain the notes from another student.

*Missed Tests:* You must contact the instructor before an examination if an emergency prevents you from attending. Make up tests will only be administered if the student provides a legitimate and pressing reason for missing the test. Otherwise a grade of 0 will be assigned for the test.

Let me put it this way: it is always in your best interest to talk with me if you have an issue before an assignment is due or a test is scheduled. I am in a much better position to help you before the due dates than I am after them.

*Late Assignments:* Penalties for late assignments will be discussed in class. No assignments will be accepted after the last day of our class (December 7, 2010).

*Plagiarism (Academic Dishonesty) Policy:* Plagiarism is defined as a student “submitting the words, ideas, images or data of another person as his or her own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, research project or assignment in a course or program of study”. Plagiarism amounts to cheating: it is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with as such in this course. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive a grade of 0 for the assignment and you will be subject to College disciplinary measures.

*Language Competency Policy:* Students are advised that this is a language intensive course. Much of the material covered relies upon students possessing a good grasp of English grammar and syntax. It is strongly recommended that students have completed English 124 (Writing Skills) or possess its equivalent level for reading and writing English prior to taking this course. Students who do not possess a “post-secondary” level of reading and writing competence in English will not be able to complete this course successfully. Students for whom English is a second language are strongly advised to ensure that their level of English proficiency is adequate before taking this course.

## Lecture Outline and Reading Assignments

**Note:** Herdt refers to chapters in *The Sambia*  
AL refers to chapters in *Writing Women’s Worlds*

**Note:** Classes are cancelled on Monday October 11 for Thanksgiving and Monday November 8.

### *I. The Anthropological Perspective and Theoretical Orientation*

Week 1: Class Introduction (September 8)

Week 2: Theories of Gender and Sexuality in the Social Sciences (September 13, 15)

- Herdt Chp 1

### *II. Biology Versus Culture*

Week 3: Biological Orientations (September 20, 22)

- Herdt Chp 2
- Film: Among the Wild Chimpanzees

Week 4: Cultural Orientations (27, 29)

- Herdt Chp 3
- Discussion Group #1 (Sept 29)

Week 5-6: Marriage, Family, Love, and Incest (October 4, 6)

- Herdt Chp 4 (pp.55-89)
- Discussion Group #2 (October 6)
- Prospectus Due on October 4

**No Class on October 11 for Thanksgiving  
Midterm I is on October 13**

*III. The Impact of Material Conditions on the Expression of Sexuality and Gender*

Week 7-8: Foragers (October 18, 20, 25)

- Herdt Chp 4 (pp.89-122), October 18
- Herdt Chp 5, October 25

Week 8-9: Horticulturalists and Pastoralists / Herdt/Sambia Discussion (October 27, November 1, 3)

- Herdt Chp 6 & 7
- Discussion Groups #3 (November 3)
- Essay Introduction is Due on October 27

**No Class on November 8: Read AL Chp 1 & 2 (Leave the Prefaces and Introduction alone for now)**

**Midterm II is on November 10**

*IV. Ideological Constraints on the Expression of Gender and Sexuality: Ambiguities and Issues*

Week 11: Birth and Social Difference (November 15)

- AL Chp 3

Week 11-12: Religion (November 17, 22)

- AL Chp 4 & 5
- Discussion Groups #4 (November 22)

Week 12-13: Abu-Lughod Discussion (November 24, 29)

- AL Preface, Introduction and New Preface (in that order)
- Discussion Groups #5 (December 1)
- Essay is Due on November 29

Week 13: Language and Its Influence (December 1); if time permits

Week 14: Final Quiz (December 7)

# Questions for *The Sambia*

## Introduction

1. What does Herdt mean by marriage? Is Herdt really talking about marriage?
2. Why did Herdt reverse his opinion that the sexual activities he witnessed were homosexual acts?
3. What is the relationship between violence and male initiation rites among the Sambia?
4. How did Herdt end up studying the Sambia?
5. Pay attention to Herdt's definitions on page xxiii. How are the concepts of sexual culture, sexual identity, sexual orientation, and sexual attraction related?

## Chapter 1: The Mountain Setting

1. Where do the Sambia live? How are their physical and village environments organized? What kind of economic system do they employ?
2. What are the gender roles associated with horticulture? How does Herdt explain these differences?
3. How is Sambia religion gendered?

## Chapter 2: Warfare and Cultural Life

1. Evaluate this sentence in Herdt's opening paragraph: "Their cultural creation was an exceptional sexual culture adapted to a world of constant war." Is Herdt right to equate sexual activity and warfare for the Sambia?
2. What is masculine prestige?
3. What biases does Herdt, a male anthropologist, bring to his assessment of Sambia sexual culture?
4. What is jerungdu and how does it work?
5. What kinds of marriage are recognized by the Sambia? How are they related?
6. What types of men Sambia are characterized by Herdt?

## Chapter 3: Sambia Social Individuals

1. What does Herdt mean by 'social individual'?
2. Is the presentation of Sambia people as 'cameo portraits' effective? Why and why not?
3. What types of people does Herdt present to you? Are they exceptional in some way, or, can you consider them portraits of general members of Sambia society?

#### Chapter 4: The Men's Secret Society

1. Does this chapter support or invalidate the article on male initiation and masculinity by Gilmore?
2. What is semen to the Sambia?
3. What is Moondi's decision? Why is it difficult for him?
4. The description of the initiation is long and detailed. Pay attention to the goals of the initiation. How does it reinforce Sambia notions of masculinity?
5. How do the Sambia explain the violence of the initiation?
6. What is Herdt's position in the initiation? What do you make of that? Does his work raise ethical issues for you?
7. What happens to the boys in the liminal stage of the initiations?

#### Chapter 5: The Magical Age of 10

1. Why do the initiations occur by age 10?
2. How does Herdt's explanation balance nature and nurture?
3. What is the distinction between 'sexual lifeways' and 'sexual orientation'? Why does Herdt make the distinction?

#### Chapter 6: Sex/Gender, Power and Social Inequality

1. What lessons do the Sambia provide us in North America?
2. What is the sexual paradox in Sambia society?
3. How is social inequality created through contractual marriage?
4. How do the Sambia conceptualize sexual intercourse?
5. What sexual agency do women have?

#### Chapter 7: Sexuality and Revolutionary Change

1. What changes have come to Sambia culture since Herdt's initial work? What has been the effect on Sambia sexual culture?
2. What is the new masculinity?
3. What is meant by 'luv marriage'? What would Jankowiak or Burbank have to say?

# Questions for Writing Women's Worlds

Note: I suggest that you read the chapters of this book in this order.

## Chapter 1: Patrilineality

1. What is the role of older women like Migdim in this community?
2. How does Abu-Lughod put herself into the book? Do you like that?
3. Summarize the role of men and the role of women among the Awlad 'Ali.
4. How does patrilineality impact the lives of men and women?
5. How does Migdim define kinship?
6. What is the place of land in the lives of the Awlad 'Ali? How does that impact women?
7. What's with the title of this chapter (and, indeed, the other chapters)?

## Chapter 2: Polygyny

1. How do men and women view polygyny differently?
2. What are the benefits of marrying relatives (cousins)?
3. What is the basis of the fight between Azza and Gateefa?
4. How is Migdim a matriarch? Does she actually have power? In what arenas of life?
5. How does Abu-Lughod's constant presence in the book affect the tone and presentation?

## Chapter 3: Reproduction

1. Are the births of boys or girls preferred in this community?
2. What is the place (role) of children in the lives of women?
3. Which women play roles in childbirth?
4. What is 'shock'?
5. What kinds of stories are recounted in this book? Are they effective parts of Abu-Lughod's ethnography?

## Chapter 4: Patrilateral Parallel Cousin Marriage

1. Why is marriage so important to Sabra?
2. What kinds of questions do anthropologists ask about marriage? How do the Awlad 'Ali girls talk about marriage?
3. Why patrilateral parallel cousin marriage? Where do love marriages fit in to the story?
4. Pay attention to the discussion about virginity between Abu-Lughod and the women of the camp. What are the women getting at? Are they trying to change Abu-Lughod's mind about her culture? Is Abu-Lughod effective in conveying the oddity of 'western' behaviors on the wedding night?

## Chapter 5: Honor and Shame

1. This chapter is built around an essay by Kamla. What are the themes of the essay? What does she say about change?
2. Do women have power among the Awlad 'Ali?

## Preface

1. How does Abu-Lughod set you up for her position in the Awlad 'Ali Bedouin? (What is her position?)
2. What themes in the lives of the Awlad 'Ali does she imply she will discuss in the book?
3. How is the book set up?

## Introduction

Note: This is the 'heaviest' or most academic chapter in the entire book.

1. What is feminism for Abu-Lughod?
2. What is *culture* for Abu-Lughod?
3. How does she intend to 'write against culture'?
4. What are the problems with ethnography in anthropology, according to Abu-Lughod?
5. What stylistic choices does Abu-Lughod make? (ie what conventions does she use to put the book together?)
6. Who is Abu-Lughod writing the book for?
7. Having now read the book, is the book successful? Has Abu-Lughod met her stated goals? In other words, does Abu-Lughod succeed at writing against culture?

## A New Preface for the 21st Century

1. Who does Abu-Lughod see as her audience for this book? Has it changed in the past 15 or more years?
2. Note the updates of the lives of the people in the book on page xxiii.

# Discussion Group Procedures and Meeting Dates

## Introduction

The class will meet in discussion groups five times throughout the semester. During that time, you will discuss 3-4 questions provided on a handout. The purpose of these groups is to allow open discussion of the course readings, films, and lecture materials. Participation in these sessions is graded and forms part of your class participation mark.

These meetings take place during regular class time on:

- Week 4/September 29
- Week 5/October 6
- Week 9/November 3
- Week 12/November 22
- Week 13/December 1

## Procedures

1. Personal worksheets will be distributed in class one week in advance of each discussion group meeting. These sheets will have one or two questions related to the discussion for the following week. Your worksheet will be collected during the discussion group meeting along with the group worksheet. The personal worksheet is your 'ticket' to the discussion group and the basis for your participation grade in the group.
2. Select a leader and a scribe for your group.
3. The leader will:
  - a. Collect the personal worksheets and turn them in to me at the end of the discussion;
  - b. Start the discussion;
  - c. Monitor the time and ensure that there is enough time for each question;
  - d. Hand in the discussion group question sheet to me ensuring that everyone in attendance has signed the sheet.
4. The scribe will:
  - a. Note the responses of the group on the group discussion page;
  - b. Turn in the group discussion page to me or the group leader at the end of the class.
5. At the end of the class, be sure you have signed the group discussion sheet and that your group leader or I have collected your personal worksheet.

## Grades

You will receive 1 point for turning in your personal worksheet at the beginning of the session. You receive an additional point for attending the discussion group and participating in the conversation. There are 5 meetings during the semester. 5 meetings x 1 worksheet and 1 discussion = 10 possible points on your grade.