

SILENCE AND SECRECY

Reading and Composition (R5B) Course in Anthropology
Fall 2019



~Poster by Keith Herring for ACT UP movement, 1989

It is not the case that a man who is silent says nothing
~Anonymous

Thank you EVERYONE!! Especially all of you who rang the alarm when you thought I wasn't being acknowledged. I couldn't say anything!! I'm sorry. But I felt every bit of the love. Now the work REALLY begins. #metoo

~tweet on December 6, 2017 by Tarana Burke, Founder of the #MeToo movement

Silence can be voluntary and self-imposed, or it can be the result of external pressures and constraints; silence can be expressive, or it can be empty, unreadable; silence can be temporary, situational, or it can represent a consistent, even pathological pattern; silence can signify withdrawal from a conversation, or it can be an indicator of attentive, thoughtful listening.

~Nicholas Burbules 2004:xxiv

It is a quite different process to be silent than it is to be unheard. One may speak and simply not be listened to, understood, or taken seriously. Thus, even speech is structured by always already existent relations of power.

—Patti Duncan, *Tell This Silence*, 2004

Instructor: Juliana Friend
jgfriend@berkeley.edu

Course time and location:
MWF 1-2 pm
Wheeler Hall 122

Office Hours time and location:
Tues 12:30-2
Weds 2-3:30
Barrows 158

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This Reading and Composition course explores the intersection of language and power through two interrelated concepts: silence and secrecy. We will approach silence not just as the absence of speech, but as a form of meaningful action in and of itself.

This approach brings several questions to the foreground. While silencing someone often entails violence, erasure, and oppression, can silence also be a source of resistance? How might the body speak when words fail? How can secrets – often maintained by keeping silent – both build and break social ties? Why, in diverse social contexts, do people publicly announce that they possess secret knowledge, or conversely, remain silent about something most people already know?

This course will unsettle monolithic definitions of both “silence” and “secrecy.” To do so, we will explore anthropological texts spanning multiple world regions and historical moments: from Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning, secrecy and violence in Sierra Leone, to (re)definitions of silence and sound in deaf communities. Theoretical concepts of discourse, speech act, and public secrecy will help us draw analytical connections across diverse sociopolitical contexts.

Our objective is to challenge assumptions about the power of communication: where this power comes from, who wields it, and how it affects social and political life.

READING AND WRITING GOALS:

Reading, writing, and thinking critically are interconnected. Learning to read critically will help us write effectively. Practicing writing skills will make us more savvy readers. Thus, we will read course texts not only for their content, but also for their strategies of argumentation. We will attend to how anthropologists use specific, often multi-sensory details to support analytical claims. The course will emphasize writing, editing, and revising multiple drafts of each essay. Both process and product are important.

The goal is to build a repertoire of skills that will serve you throughout your coursework at Berkeley and beyond. By the end of the course, you will have improved your ability to persuade, move, and challenge your readers. I hope that by mastering foundational skills in reading and composition, you will find more joy in academic inquiry, and more satisfaction in confronting its inevitable challenges.

BASIS OF EVALUATION

Consistent attendance and preparation: 10%

Attend all class meetings and bring printed copies of all readings. Let instructor know about anticipated obligatory absences in advance. In the case of a sporting event, I may require documentation from your coach. In the case of medical emergency, I may require documentation from your provider

Active Course participation: 15%

“Active course participation” includes both speaking and listening. It includes both participating in all-group discussions and small groups or pairs. By the end of the course, my hope is that everyone feels comfortable venturing comments, interpretations, and questions to the full class. However, this comes more easily to some than others. In the meantime, students can also participate in written form on BCourses, in the form of comments and questions. I will gather these comments and questions and bring them to the next class. I will also encourage those who speak often to leave room for others to speak. Please remember that asking questions is often just as important as offering a response. This course is an opportunity to take risks and experiment to find how *you* contribute best to group discussions.

Printing out readings is part of your participation grade.

Reading Journal: 15%

Several times during the semester you will be asked to write in a “reading journal” about the day’s readings. Sometimes I will offer particular questions to guide these reflections. Prompts can be found in **bCourses in the same folder as the corresponding course reading**. I will regularly collect these journals for review. These journals provide both a space for reflection, and a low-stress opportunity to practice key skills from Friday workshops.

Short essay (2-3 pages): 5%

Paper 1: (5-7 pages) 15%

Paper 2: (5 pages) 15%

1 research paper (8-12 pages): 25%

Use course concepts and texts to explore a research topic of your own design, discussed in advance with instructor. This paper can draw upon and rework Paper 2. While this assignment does not involve conducting your own ethnography, you *can* and should analyze particular texts and media *ethnographically*.

Rough drafts and reading journals will be graded on a pass/no pass basis.

Late assignments will be accepted but down-graded a half grade per day late. If you anticipate difficulties meeting deadlines, please discuss with instructor well in advance.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Notes:

- All assignments are due the following class unless otherwise noted
- All readings are posted to bCourses under “Files -> required readings” unless otherwise noted

Topic 1: Introduction: Silence in Social Contexts

Start getting a sense of the vast diversity of forms silence can take in different social contexts. When is silence expected or even required? When is it unexpected? How can silence affect us? Can silence make people listen in new ways?

Date	In Class	Reading assignments	Writing assignments
Weds 8/28	Introduction to Course and to each other -First watch: Emma Gonzalez@ March for our Lives	1) Watch Gonzalez’ speech a second time AND read a selection of the comments on YouTube (Due 8/30) 2) Richard Irvine, pp. 230-233 from “Eating in Silence in an English Benedictine Monastery”	Reading journal response on Gonzalez’ speech (Due 8/30) Fill out questionnaire (handout from class)
Fri 8/30	-silence in context: Gonzalez and Irvine	Basso 1970, “To Give up on Words”	Fieldnotes Exercise: Part 1 (Due 9/4)
Mon 9/2 (No class)	-----	-----	Fieldnotes Exercise Part 2 (Due 9/4)
Weds 9/4	Workshop: Arguments and evidence (w/ Basso) -Debrief Fieldnotes exercise	Rhine, The Unseen Things, Introduction	Reading Journal (See bCourses for prompt)

Topic 2: Silence as Action

We often equate speech with power and silence with submission. Is it always so simple? Is secrecy merely the withholding of information? How can silence and secrecy CREATE or transform social relationships? Understand the concept of the “speech act” How can silence and secrets provide modes of empowerment, survival, and future-making? At the same time, how can they reinforce structural inequality? (How) does bodily adornment function as a “medium” of secrecy?

Fri 9/6	Flipped classroom:	Rhine ch. 1 “First	Reading Journal (See
---------	--------------------	--------------------	----------------------

	Mini-Lecture – Silence as Speech Act	Loves”	bCourses for prompt)
Mon 9/9	Rhine	Rhine ch. 3 “Dilemmas of Disclosure”	Begin short essay (Due Mon 9/16)
Weds 9/11	Rhine 3 Workshop: Close Reading		Reading Journal (See bCourses for prompt)

Topic 3: Silence, Discourse, Power part 1

How does Foucault use the concept ‘discourse’?

How has this concept been used by anthropologists?

How does Foucault help us understand the relationship between language and power?

Fri 9/13	Reflect on Rhine Rhine ch. 4	Foucault, “Incitement to Discourse”	Finish short essay (due Mon 9/16)
Mon 9/16	Foucault 1	Re-read Foucault	Reading Journal (See bCourses for prompt)
Weds 9/18	Foucault 2 (feat. Wendy Brown) Short essay due in class	Beth Packer, “Queering ‘the Greater Jihad:’ Sufi Resistance and Disruptive Morality in Senegalese Women’s Soccer	
Fri 9/20	Discuss Packer		Brainstorm 2 questions for Dr. Packer and a passage for close reading

Topic 4: Silence, Discourse and Power part 2

What do we think “resistance” looks like? How might Foucault and Packer help us think about resistance differently?

Mon 9/23	Guest speaker: Dr. Beth Packer! -handout essay 1 prompt	1) read paper prompt 2) Gusterson 2013, “Not all Secrets are Alike” 3) Snowden OR Chelsea Manning	See Reading Journal in bCourses
----------	--	--	------------------------------------

Topic 5: Public Secrecy, or, “Knowing what not to know”

What is a public secret?

How can public secrets support the status quo?

*How have activists and scholars (including anthropologists) confronted public secrets?
How might we place whistleblowers in dialogue with the interlocutors in Rhine, Packer's and Woolley's ethnographies?*

			Reading Journal on bCourses
Weds 9/25	Public Secrecy 1: Whistleblowers	<i>Land of Open Graves</i> , De Leon, Chapter 3	Reading Journal on bCourses
Fri 9/27	Public Secrecy 2: Forensic Anthropology	De Leon, Chapter 7	Reading Journal: no prompt
Mon 9/30	Public Secrecy 3: Memory, Erasure, Material Culture Introduce paper 2/final paper	Woolley, "The Silence Itself Is Enough of a Statement": The Day of Silence and LGBTQ Awareness Raising	Reading journal: see bCourses

Writing Skills Workshops: Peer editing and Forming Research Paper Topics

Topic 6: Paradoxes of "Awareness Raising"

How can silence be both a strategy of resistance and oppression?

What is an "institutional silence" and how does it interplay with everyday acts or moments of silence?

Revisit Foucault.

Weds 10/2	Guest Speaker, Celia Emmelhainz MLIS: How to identify and shape a research question Woolley 1	Read handout on peer-editing guidelines	Finish rough draft
-----------	---	---	--------------------

Topic 7: Digital Media and Revelatory Regimes

-How can particular technologies be leveraged to reinforce or challenge claims to control secret knowledge?

-How do digital technologies enhance, interact, or conflict with other technologies of concealment and revelation, such as silence and the body?

Fri 10/4	Rough Draft Paper 1 due in class Peer editing	Re-read Woolley as necessary	Brainstorm 2-3 topics of interest and/or media objects of interest for paper
----------	---	------------------------------	--

			2/final paper
--	--	--	---------------

Mon 10/7	Workshop: Interpreting media objects: Polari, Act Up, and GLSEN Day of Silence	Van der Port, “Revealing the Sacred: Video Technology, “Televisual” Style, and the Religious Imagination in Bahian Candomblé.”	Continue gathering and interpreting primary sources and/or writing personal narrative
Weds 10/9	Discuss Van der Port	Mary Gray, Negotiating Identities/Queering Desires: Coming Out Online and the Remediation of the Coming-Out Story YouTube search: “coming out”	Reading journal: see bCourses
Fri 10/11	Mary Gray: Remediating “coming out”		Finish final draft paper 1 Continue gathering, interpreting, producing primary sources. Draft personal narrative, if using.

Topic 8: Silence and the senses

Are sound and silence opposites?

How do deaf experiences challenge assumptions about sound and noise, silence and absence?

Mon 10/14	Final draft paper 1 due in class Gray cont’d Workshop final paper ideas	Grushkin, “What do deaf people think about silence?” Explore Rikki Poynter’s YouTube Channel	Continue gathering, interpreting, producing primary sources. Draft personal narrative, if using.
-----------	---	---	--

Weds 10/16	Grushkin and Poynter	Amanda Cachia, “Loud Silence”	Reading journal: see bCourses
Fri 10/18	Cachia		Paper proposal due 10/21

Topic 9: Secrecy, History, Materiality

Why might ambiguity be valued over transparency?

In The Underneath of Things, what is the relationship between secrecy, history, and material culture?

What are the possibilities and limitations of concealed practices as modes of creativity and resistance?

Mon 10/21	Paper 2 proposal due -Introduce <i>The Underneath of Things</i> , Mariane Ferme	tUoT, Introduction	Reading journal: see bCourses
Weds 10/23	tUoT	tUoT	
Fri 10/25	tUoT	tUoT	

Mon 10/28	tUoT	tUoT	
Weds 10/30	tUoT	tUoT	
Fri 11/1	Fieldtrip to Anthropology Library with Celia Emmelhainz!	tUoT	Finish paper 2
Mon 11/4	Paper 2 due -tUoT -Vote on final “silence breakers” topic	Make a list of potential external academic sources using Celia’s tips	Brainstorm three questions for Mariane Ferme -Cite two passages for close reading
Weds 11/6	Guest speaker: Mariane Ferme!		Read/skim potential external academic sources

Schedule meetings with Juliana to discuss final paper ideas

Topic 10: “Silence-breakers:” Class Selected Topic

Fri 11/8	Introduce class chosen topic		create final list of sources you will use for your final paper
----------	---------------------------------	--	--

Mon 11/11	NO CLASS	Class chosen topic cont'd	Read external sources more closely
Weds 11/13	Class chosen topic	Class chosen topic	Final paper proposal
Fri 11/15	Class chosen topic Final paper proposals due	Class chosen topic	

Date	In Class	Reading Assignment	Writing Assignment
Mon 11/18	Class chosen topic	Handout on informal presentations	Intro+outline of final paper (due 11/22)
Weds 11/20	Student Presentations		Finish intro paragraph + outline
Fri 11/22	Intro paragraph and Outline of final paper due in class AND by EMAIL to Juliana Peer-edit final paper introductions (Juliana at AAA conference)		

Student Presentations + Workshopping 1

Date	In Class	Reading Assignment	Writing Assignment
Mon 11/25	Student Presentations		
Weds 11/27	NO CLASS		
Fri 11/29	NO CLASS		

Student Presentations + Workshopping 2

Date	In Class	Reading Assignment	Writing Assignment
Mon 12/2	Student Presentations cont'd		
Weds 12/4	Student Presentations cont'd		

Fri 12/6	1st draft of final paper due IN CLASS Final reflections		
----------	--	--	--

R&R week: December 9th – 13th:

Schedule individual meetings with Juliana to discuss revisions of your papers.

****Final draft of final paper due: Monday, December 16th****

COURSE TEXTS

- All texts can be found on bCourses in the folder “required readings” unless otherwise noted. Reading journal prompts can be found in the same folder.
- *The Unseen Things* can be found as a free ebook on Oskicat or in hard copy at the bookstore
- *The Underneath of Things* can be purchased at the bookstore
- Other multimedia sources we analyze will be posted as links on the reading journal handouts

Basso, Keith 1970. "To Give up on Words": Silence in Western Apache Culture. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 26(3): 213-230.

Brown, Wendy 2009. “Freedom’s Silences” in *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cachia, Amanda 2015. *LOUD silence: Turning Up the Volume on Deaf Voice, The Senses and Society*10(3): 321-340.

De Leon, Jason 2015. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ferme, Mariane. 2001. *The Underneath of Things: Violence, History, and the Everyday in Sierra Leone*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Foucault, Michel 1976. “The Repressive Hypothesis - I: The Incitement to Discourse” in *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1, an Introduction*. Robert Hurley trans. New York: Pantheon Books

Gray, M. L. (2009), *Negotiating Identities/Queering Desires: Coming Out Online and the Remediation of the Coming Out Story*. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 14: 1162-1189.

Grushkin, Don 2016. "What do Deaf people think about silence?" Quora.com.
<https://www.quora.com/What-do-deaf-people-think-about-silence> (accessed August 15th, 2019).

Guardian News. (2018, March 24). *Emma Gonzalez's powerful March for Our Lives speech in full* [Video File]. Retrieved August 20th, 2019 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u46HzTGVQhg>

Gusterson H. 2013. Not all secrets are alike. *Bull. Atom. Sci.* July 23: <http://www.thebulletin.org/not-all-secrets-are-alike>

MSNBC. (2019, September 17). *Full Interview: Edward Snowden On Trump, Privacy, And Threats To Democracy*. [Video File]/ Retrieved September 23, 2019 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9yK1QndJSM>

Richard Irvine. 2011. Eating in Silence in a Benedictine Monastery in *Food and Faith in Cristian Culture*. Ken Albala and Trudy Eden eds.

Poynter, Rikki.
YouTube channel
<https://www.youtube.com/user/rikkipoynter>

Rhine, Kathryn 2016, *The Unseen Things: Women, Secrecy, and HIV in Northern Nigeria*.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Van de Port, Mattijs 2006. Visualizing the Sacred: Video Technology, "Televisual" Style, and the Religious Imagination in Bahian Candomblé. *American Ethnologist* 33: 444 - 461.

Woolley, S. W. (2012), The Silence Itself Is Enough of a Statement: The Day of Silence and LGBTQ Awareness Raising. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 43: 271-288.

Starecheski, L. (Producer). (2007, September 10). *Goat on a cow* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <http://www.radiolab.org/story/91518-goat-on-a-cow/>.

Yoshizumi, Mark (Producer). (2018, April 26). *Chelsea Manning with Nadya Tolokonnikova. Talkhouse* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved September 23, 2019 from <https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/the-talkhouse-music-podcast/e/54251498?autoplay=true>

