LIN 6932 Writing Systems
Spring 2016

MWF 7th period (1:55-2:45) MAT 105
Section 0024
Canvas, http://elearning.ufl.edu

Instructor: Ann Wehmeyer
Office: 320 Pugh
Office hours: M 8th period; T 5-6th period, and by appointment
Contact: awehmeye@ufl.edu
Office phone: 352-273-2961

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

4. Articles and Book Chapters on online Course Reserves, through UF Library, http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/ or via Canvas. 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. If you don’t access via the VPN Client, course reserves link will try to charge you money to use each article.

**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 by going to “People” and then selecting “Presentation Groups” on Canvas. Each group should have 3-4 members. Submit one copy per group of the slides or other visual support to Assignments in Canvas at least one hour prior to your presentation.

   a. **Topics**
      i. 01/25/16 Monday, Cuneiform
      ii. 01/29/16 Friday, Egyptian hieroglyphs
      iii. 02/03/16 Wednesday, Hebrew
      iv. 02/05/16 Friday, Arabic
      v. 03/09/16 Wednesday, Indian devanagari script (Hindi, Sanskrit)
      vi. 03/28/16 Monday, Case of orthography as social practice, your choice
      vii. 04/04/16 Monday, 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 Files in Canvas).

e. Deadlines
   i. Submit topic to Assignments by Monday, February 1, 2016. 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 topics with me at any time.
      1. This should be one paragraph in length.
      2. 02% of grade
   ii. Submit First draft to Assignments on or before Monday, March 21, 2016. This draft must contain a list of References, at least three pages of writing, and an outline of plans for the completion of any unfinished portions.
      1. 08% of grade
   iii. Submit Final version to Assignments by Friday, April 15, 2016.
      1. 30% of grade
      2. LIN 4784 will take an exam on this date and you need not attend class on this day. Wednesday, April 13, will be devoted to review for the exam and you are not required to attend on this day, either.
      iv. Late submissions will be downgraded by 5 percentage points per day.

4. Exams (25%): There will be one exam and it 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: 02/19/16 (Friday)
   b. 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.

6. Grades
a. Exercises 10%

b. Group presentation 20%

c. Research paper 40%
   i. Topic 02%
   ii. Draft 08%
   iii. Final version 30%

d. Exam 1 20%

e. Attendance and participation 10%


**Policies and Expectations**

a. You are expected to abide by the **Student Conduct and 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. This includes your own work, which should not be duplicated to serve dual purposes. See [https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/) for elaboration of this code and an explanation of what counts as a violation.

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. See [https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/students](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/students) for an outline of how to start this process.

**Daily Schedule**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
<th>Exercises/Presentations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1 Key terms and Script types</strong></td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Course overview and course requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 01/06/16</td>
<td><strong>Writing and technical terms</strong></td>
<td>Rogers, Chapters 1 and 2: Introduction, Theoretical Preliminaries, p. 1-19.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 01/08/16</td>
<td><strong>Morphographic writing, Chinese</strong></td>
<td>Rogers, Chapter 3: Chinese, p. 20-49</td>
<td>Exercises 1, 2, 3, p. 48-49 in Rogers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 01/11/16</td>
<td><strong>Early script change in China</strong></td>
<td>Steinke, “Script Change in Bronze Age China,” Chapter 6 (135-158) in Houston.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 01/13/16</td>
<td><strong>Script types</strong></td>
<td>Rogers, Chapter 3: Chinese, p. 20-49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Key References</td>
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| F 01/15/16 | Morphographic and phonographic writing, Japanese                  | - Rogers, Chapter 4: Japanese, p. 50-68.  

**Week 3 Script types**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 01/18/16</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Day</td>
<td>Classes suspended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 01/20/16</td>
<td>Variation in a dual system, Japanese</td>
<td>Lurie, “The Development of Writing in Japan,” Chapter 7 (159-185) in Houston.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| F 01/22/16 | 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.**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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</table>
| F 01/22/16 | Hieroglyphs                                                                 | Rogers, Chapter 6: Egyptian, p. 97-114.  
- Rogers, Exercise 6.12, p. 114, for in-class discussion.  

**Group Presentation 2: Egyptian hieroglyphs**

**Week 4 Script types**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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</table>
| M 01/25/16 | The earliest writing system                                     | Rogers, Chapter 5: Cuneiform, p. 79-96.  
- Rogers, Exercise 3, p. 96, for in-class discussion.  

**Group Presentation 1: Cuneiform**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Key References</th>
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</table>
| W 01/27/16 | 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.), in class.  

**Exercise: Cuneiform Assignment in Canvas.**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<th>Key References</th>
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</table>
| F 01/29/16 | Hieroglyphs                                                                 | Rogers, Chapter 6: Egyptian, p. 97-114.  
- Rogers, Exercise 6.12, p. 114, for in-class discussion.  

**Group Presentation 2: Egyptian hieroglyphs**

**Week 5 Script Types**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Key References</th>
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</table>
| M 02/01/16 | 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 Canvas**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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</table>
| W 02/03/16 | Development of abjad systems                                       | Rogers, Chapter 7: Semitic, p. 114-131 (through Hebrew).  

**Exercise 1, p. 142-143 in Rogers.  
Group Presentation 3: Hebrew**

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<th>Day</th>
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</table>
| F 02/05/16 | Arabic abjad, variant letter forms                                | Rogers, Chapter 7: Semitic (Arabic and others), p. 132-144.  

**Exercise 2, p. 143-144 in Rogers.**
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/08/16</td>
<td><strong>Variations in writing</strong></td>
<td>Greundler, “Stability and Change in Arabic Script,” Chapter 4 (93-118) in Houston.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 02/12/16   | **Development of alphabetic systems; Linear B script** | Rogers, Chapter 8: The Greek Alphabet, p. 145-169.  
• Rogers, Exercise 2, p. 168, for in-class discussion. |
| 02/15/16   | **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. |
| 02/17/16   | **Exam 1, Review**                            | Review of key concepts, discussion of question types                  |
| 02/19/16   | **Exam 1**                                    | Exam 1, in class, on all materials through 12/15/16                  |
| 02/22/16   | **History of English orthography**            | Rogers, Chapter 10: English, p. 185-198.  
Exercises 2, 3, 4 p. 198 for in-class discussion. |
• Recommended:  
  o Pasch, Helma. 2008. Competing Scripts: The Introduction of the We will have a guest lecture by Dr. Essegbey, and be joined by his class on Methods in Language Documentation. |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>W 03/09/16</td>
<td>Abugida systems</td>
<td>Rogers, Chapter 11: The Indian Abugida and Other Asian Phonographic Writing (through Indian writing), p. 199-220.</td>
<td>Group presentation 5: Devanagari script (Sanskrit, Hindi)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| F 03/11/16 | Derivative abugida systems                 | • Rogers, Chapter 11: The Indian Abugida and Other Asia Phonographic Writing (Southeast Asian writing), p. 221-232.  
| M 03/14/16 | Glyphs                                     | Rogers, Chapter 12: Maya, p. 233-246.  
• Exercise 1, p. 246 for in-class discussion. |
| W 03/16/16 | Variation in glyphs                        | Houston, “Maya Writing: Modified, Transformed,” Chapter 8 (187-208) in Houston. |
| F 03/18/16 | Invented scripts                           | Rogers, Chapter 13: Other Writing Systems, p. 247-268.  
• Exercises 2, 3, 4, 5 for in-class discussion. |
| M 03/21/16 | 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 Canvas |
| W 03/23/16 | Deviation for social purposes              | Sebba, Chapter 2: Orthography as Social Practice, Sections 1 and 2, p. 26-41. |
| F 03/25/16 | 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 13 Script and orthography: Questions of nationhood and culture**

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<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>M 03/28/16</td>
<td>Identity display</td>
<td>Sebba, Chapter 2: Orthography as Social Practice, Sections 3, 4 and 5, p. 41-57.</td>
<td>Group Presentation 6: Case of orthography as social practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 03/30/16</td>
<td>Language contact and creation of orthographies</td>
<td>Sebba, Chapter 3: Language contact, linguists and the emergence of orthographies, p. 58-80.</td>
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**Week 14 Script and orthography: Questions of nationhood and culture**

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<tr>
<td>W 04/06/16</td>
<td>Orthography and identity</td>
<td>Sebba, Chapter 4: ‘Postcolonial’ Orthographies, p. 81-101.</td>
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**Week 15 Orthography in postcolonial contexts**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04/13/16</td>
<td>Exam 2 Review</td>
<td>Review of key concepts and discussion of question types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/15/16</td>
<td>Exam 2 for LIN 4784 only</td>
<td>Materials from 02/22/16 through 04/11/16</td>
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<td>Do not attend class</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/18/16</td>
<td>Script and Orthography selection in contested contexts</td>
<td>Sebba, Chapter 5: Between Language and Dialect: Orthography in unstandardized and standardizing vernaculars, p. 102-131.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 04/20/16 | Issues in orthographic reform | • Sebba, Chapter 6: Reform or Revolution: Where angels fear to tread, p. 132-156.  
• Tiny talk of 1-2 minutes on highlights of your research paper. |

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

- Daniels, Peter T. and William Bright, eds. The World’s Writing Systems. P211 .W714 1996
- Taylor, Insup and David R. Olson, eds. Scripts and Literacy: Reading and Learning to Read Alphabets, Syllabaries, and Characters. P211.4 .S42 1995