



The Evergreen State College

Winter Quarter 2009

**Faculty:** Rebecca Chamberlain 360-867-5845 chambreb@evergreen.edu  
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**Meeting Times:** Monday/Wednesday, 6-10 p.m.

**Location:**

**Required Fees:** \$30

Mon. Sem II D 1105

**Credits:** 8

Wed. Sem II E 1107

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*taslaḫdub ʔə kʷi tuyəlyəlab tiʔə? sʔəyəhub tuʔal tudi? tuhaʔkʷ, yəxi liʔal sʔəyəhub tiʔə?  
 gʷədəxʷəshaydubs ʔə kʷi ləʔəḷ ʔaciʔalbixʷ tuʔcad əlgʷə, ʔəscəl kʷi ʔusqʷibil ʔə tiʔə? sgʷaʔs swatixʷtəds,  
 ʔəscəl kʷi gʷəsəshuys ʔal tiʔə? suʔibuš ʔal tiʔə? swatixʷtəd.*

*Our ancestors remembered these old stories from a long time ago, because the legends were what carried the teachings, that coming generations would know where they were from, how their earth was prepared, how they should conduct themselves as they walked on the earth.*

--Vi Hilbert, taqʷsəbluʔ, Puget Sound Salish (Lushootseed)

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**Course Description:**

During this two-quarter program, we will examine how language and place shape our experience of the world. How do traditional languages reflect an evolving relationship to the natural world, and in what ways does technology change the way modern cultures perceive and interact with their environment? From the local to the global, we'll explore how language shapes our awareness, acts as container for carrying and preserving culture, and affects the choices we make about living sustainability. We will look at how traditional cultures and languages are disappearing, along with the complex eco-systems that sustained them. Can we rekindle a relationship to oral cultures that listen to the voices of the land, preserving ancient languages, sacred traditions, and stories, or does the information age push us to rely more heavily on abstraction, leaving behind many of the skills that helped us live in harmony with our environment? Can the tools of the information-age help us recover traditional wisdom? What are the challenges and opportunities that face us as we seek to develop an ecology of language and place for the 21st Century?

This course is for students who want to think deeply and write well. During the winter quarter, students will engage in a rigorous course of reading, writing, performance, creativity, and critical thinking, and will be introduced to Puget Sound Salish (Lushootseed) stories and language, as we look at issues past and present. During the spring quarter, we will continue our work and begin natural history projects, as we explore the challenges that we face locally and globally. As we investigate the role of endangered languages and places, and the economic, educational, and technological factors that pressure them, we will explore culture, history, natural history, linguistics, mythology and storytelling, literature, and communications technology.

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*Translating the literature of one language into another is never easy, especially when the cultures involved are extremely dissimilar. The task is made even more difficult when the translator must also render in writing what has been an oral tradition.*

--Thom Hess, Linguist, Lushootseed

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**Required Texts:** We will read selections from the following texts, along with other articles and readings that you can access on our class site or through electronic reserve in the library. See weekly reading schedule for details. (W/S: We will use the text both Winter and Spring.)

Abraham, David. "Landscape and Language." *The Spell of the Sensuous*. New York: Vintage, 1996. (W/S)

Chamberlain and McKinnon. *Ecology of Language and Place Reader*. On program website or electronic reserve.

Fill, Alwin, and Peter Muehlhaeusler. *The Ecolinguistics Reader: Language, Ecology, and Environment*.

New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001. (W/S)

Guss, David M. *To Weave and Sing*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Kane, Sean. *Wisdom Of the Myhtellers*. Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, 1994.

Strauss, Susan. *The Passionate Fact: Storytelling in Natural History and Cultural Interpretation*.

Golden CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1996.

Nettle, Daniel. *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000.

Treuer, David. *The Translation of Dr Apelles: A Love Story*. New York: Vintage, 2006.

**Supplemental Texts:**

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well*. New York: HarperCollins, 2006. (Useful winter, required spring.)

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*We have stories  
as old as the great seas  
breaking through the chest  
flying out the mouth  
noisy tongues that once were silenced,  
all the oceans we contain  
coming to light.*

--Linda Hogan, "To Light"

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### **Expectations:**

- Faithful attendance and full participation at all meetings, workshops, films, field-trips and seminars.
- Reading, writing, and posting weekly responses to the texts.
- Maintain a portfolio of class handouts, notes, papers, research, assignments from language, storytelling, and linguistics workshops, and cumulative work for the quarter to be reviewed at fifth week and final evaluation conferences.
- Participate in class linguistic, language, storytelling, and writing workshops and practice sessions and present oral and written responses to lessons.
- Successfully complete individual and group projects, presentations, workshops, and other assignments on time.

**Course Equivalencies:** Students can receive upper division credit for a total of eight quarter hours for college level work in the following areas:

- Ecology and Indigenous Languages 4
- Storytelling: Process and Practice 2
- Literature: Ecocriticism and Issues of Sustainability 2

### **Assignments:**

1. **Reading response papers** each week, turned in and/or posted promptly before the beginning of seminar (1-2 pages, typed). These papers will allow you to: 1) comment upon the assigned readings, lectures, workshops, and films, and 2) summarize, reflect upon, and integrate program topics, themes, and issues. There will be a total of 9 responses, over the quarter. You must post your paper each week on our group web-site. (See handout, "Guidelines for Reading Responses," for details.)

2. **Workshops:** Demonstrate knowledge of language, linguistic, and storytelling lessons and workshops.

This includes...

Written Work: Complete all workshops and written assignments from language, linguistic, and storytelling workshops and maintain them in your portfolio.

Oral Work: Demonstration of oral knowledge through class participation and group or individual presentation of songs, invocations, basic conversational phrases, vocabulary and the memorization of a short story, etc.

3. **Storytelling Performance:** Develop and perform family and biographical stories in class, and develop a traditional myth or folktale for a performance and video/podcast. We will schedule various storytelling performances mid-quarter and at the end of the quarter.

4. **A Final (Group) Project** and final performance/presentation (Weeks 9-10): Throughout the quarter, we will be doing a number of linguistic, language, storytelling performance, writing, and computer workshops. You will get experience in each of these areas. However, you should select ONE area to develop with a group into a final project and presentation. (You can choose to develop a theatre project with a group working together on a final production. However, you may also be working individually on something such as a "writing project," Either way, you will meet with a "project" group to develop, edit, and refine your ideas, as well as plan how you will present samples of your work in the allotted time in Weeks 9-10.) Your project should relate to some aspect of Ecology of Language and Place, as well as local and global influences in our contemporary world. Each person will be given ten minutes to present their work, therefore, a group of three people has 30 minutes to make their presentation. Your final project can be . . . (Choose **ONE** of the following.)

- A. **Writing Project: (4-5 pages with revisions) research paper, essay, or creative writing:**
- B. **Theatrical or musical performance, visual, or creative arts project:**
- C. **A Media, Radio, Film, or Computer Project:**
- D. **Community service, sustainability, natural history, indigenous language preservation, or education project.**

### **Guest Artists and Field Trips:**

We are fortunate to have a number of guest artists, field trips, and other opportunities as part of our studies this quarter. These events are required as part of the class. Check the class schedule, syllabus, and handouts for the dates and details of each event. They include:

**Zalmi** (əswəli?) **Zahir**-- Lushootseed Language, Songs, Stories & Teachings.

**Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>**--The Power of Place & Names

**Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>**--Weaving the World in Words

Zalmi əswəli? is one of the fluent teachers and speakers of the Lushootseed language, the native Salish language of Puget Sound. He has worked on preserving the Southern dialect. He has developed a number of activities to teach language through total emersion, on-line programs, and TPR (total physical response) techniques. He has developed and written a number of publications and language texts, including books on place-names, plants, canoes, and other subjects through the language and cultural teachings. He currently teaches classes for individuals, tribal groups, and other organizations.

You can find out more about his work at: <pugetsalish.com>

**Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>** **Joe McHugh** Artist, Archivist, Activist: From family Stories to radio production—how stories transform in different media.

Joe McHugh began telling stories professionally in 1978 when he was hired to organize to a series of ethnic festivals in New York State. He went on to host a weekly segment on Appalachian folkways for West Virginia Public Television. In the year 2000, Mr. McHugh founded the American Family Stories Project and began traveling around the country, recording people telling their family stories. These stories were later featured on a public radio series called "The Telling Takes Us Home" which aired on many public radio stations and on the international English-language service of Voice of America.

Joe McHugh has presented at conferences, colleges, libraries, museums, and festivals throughout the United States, Scotland, Ireland, and England. He has published two collections of folktales and humor and an illustrated children's book about the early days of aviation. His most recent book is a novel entitled Kilowatt about the energy industry, big media, and the nature of time. He lives with his family in Olympia, Washington.

You can find out more about his work at: < [http://www.joemchugh.info/about\\_joe.html](http://www.joemchugh.info/about_joe.html) >

**Thursday, Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>, Peter Donaldson, *Salmonpeople*. Arrival Time: 6:30.**

**TESC Experimental Theatre.**

**Attendance is required. Admission will be free for members of our program. Latecomers will not be seated.** (Please mark your calendars, as this field-trip, as it is not on one of our regularly scheduled evenings. If you are unable to attend, you must complete a make-up assignment.)

**Peter will also be coming into our program to do a series of storytelling workshops with us throughout the quarter—see program schedule for details.** Peter Donaldson is our Evans Chair Scholar for 2008-2009. He is a remarkable performance artist who links storytelling with social activism and Pacific Northwest history and ecology. His spellbinding performances push artistic and philosophical boundaries. *Salmonpeople* is . . .

*a one-man theatrical performance about the interdependence of salmon and people in the Pacific Northwest. The story is told through the eyes of Cyrus Jackson, an everyman character who finds himself employed up at the local dam as a salmon taxi. With inquisitive charm and masterful freehand cartography, Cyrus unfolds a delightfully disturbing history of the Pacific Northwest and a lesson on the ultimate economics of mother nature. Through one man's head-scratching, self-taught theories, we come to know our watershed address in a way we had never before imagined and will never forget.*

For more information, go to:

<http://www.peterdonaldson.net/>

<http://www.peterdonaldson.net/Salmonpeople/Performance/comments.html>  
<http://www.peterdonaldson.net/Salmonpeople/index.html>  
[http://www.salmonnation.com/voices/peter\\_donaldson.html](http://www.salmonnation.com/voices/peter_donaldson.html) -an interview with Salmon Nation.

**February 18<sup>th</sup> Susan Christian** Playback theatre, storytelling improv games.

Susan has been a vital member of Olympia's Playback Theatre since its beginning, and has depth of insight about how the arts transform an individuals life and psyche. She is primarily a visual artist, and occasionally teaches at The Evergreen State College. She says, "I show my work at Childhood's End Gallery and Side Door Gallery in Olympia, Washington; at Union Art Cooperative and retrofit.home in Seattle; in group shows nationally; and in France. I've completed several public-art commissions."

You can find out more about her work at: <<http://www.susanchristian.com/about.html>>

**February 22<sup>nd</sup> Native American Stories of Washington 1:00-5:00** TESC Longhouse

We will attend a major Native American storytelling event that will take place at the Longhouse Education and Cultural Center at Evergreen State College. This is the culminating event for the Northwest Heritage Resources NEA project that features recordings of seven prominent Native artists and storytellers:

Pauline Hillaire  
Curtis DuPuis  
Harvest Moon  
Virginia Beavert

Cecil Cheeka  
Elaine Grinnell  
Delbert Miller

This event is **FREE** and open to the public. Food and beverages will be served and the event will be videotaped by two wonderful young professional Native videographers. Our ELP program will help publicize the event by posting fliers and through word of mouth. This is a remarkable opportunity to explore our program themes and to see other storytellers in action before our "in-class" performances. We strongly recommend that you attend. Consider it a "make-up" for the class time we miss on Presidents Day.

**Class Website:** <http://acdrupal.evergreen.edu/languageandplace>

We intend to use the website as a tool to broaden the circle of our learning community. In addition to being a place to post readings and other course-related documents, the website will be an added channel for communicating with each other, sharing our stories, discussing ideas and experiences, and presenting our work.

Rebecca Chamberlain is a Northwest writer, poet, and storyteller with a background in the arts, humanities, and natural history education. She did her graduate work in Medieval literature and American literature (specializing in Native American language and storytelling traditions). She also works with William Blake, the Transcendentalists, and natural history writing. She teaches a variety of storytelling workshops and writing courses around "place based" themes that include issues of sustainability, eco-criticism, and Northwest history. She has worked for science museums, environmental, arts, and cultural organizations.

Rick McKinnon is a linguist and educator with a wide range of interests including the evolutionary origins of language (and the human species in general), language preservation, animal communication, conflict studies, and educational technologies. Rick has taught at Evergreen since '00, and also works as the Learning Director at South Puget Sound Community College.

# **ECOLOGY OF LANGUAGE & PLACE**