

THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE
SUMMER QUARTER 2004
Circle of Life: Salish Stories and Songs

Instructor: Rebecca Chamberlain, 360-866-2141, email chambreb@evergreen.edu,

First Session: 4 or 8 quarter hours; Upper Division Credit

Meeting Times: Tues. & Thurs. 6:00-10:00 p.m., June 22 –July 22

Field Trip: Tuesday, June 29, Meeting with Pauline Hillaire

Primary listing: Native American Studies. Cross listing: Culture, Language, Text,
Environmental Studies

Special expenses: \$50 for guest lectures, tapes, CDs and language materials

Stories are the elders' ways of teaching

Course Description:

- Beginning Lushootseed Language
- Advanced Literature: oral narrative, mythology, folklore, ethno-poetics
- Storytelling, songs, and games
- Northwest history, cultural studies, and environmental education
- Films, lectures, and visits by native speakers

This intensive course in Puget Sound Salish stories and songs, language and literature will introduce traditional indigenous life in the Puget Sound region through a study of native language, stories, songs, and mythology. Language sessions will guide students through introductions to songs, games, and basic conversational phrases in Lushootseed. Participation will encourage speaking, listening, and writing. Students will learn songs and at least one story in the language. They will also read and listen to a variety of stories in both English and Lushootseed, combining storytelling with advanced work in the study of oral narrative and folklore. Our work in literature and oral narrative will focus on pattern, memory, and meaning as we study a variety of narrative styles; legends, myths, oratory, songs, oral history, and biographical accounts. We will learn traditional teachings about native flora and fauna and relationship to community and place. We will develop strategies for conducting oral history interviews and explore collection and transcription methods. Students will have access to films, tapes and transcriptions of traditional storytellers. Language credits will be an introduction toward fulfilling the requirements to obtain an endorsement in Puget Salish, and/or continuing education credits for K-12 instructors. Projects will be adapted for educators and MIT students who wish to explore innovative curricula connecting storytelling to literature, cultural studies, linguistics, language arts, environmental and cultural education, and the Washington State standards in education.

Students may take the class for four or eight credits. Students who take eight credits will complete additional readings and projects.

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

Learning Lushootseed Songs and Stories:

Values are the foundation of the languages,, songs, and storytelling traditions of the world; they help form heritage and culture. People access these values, heritage, and culture through language, songs, and stories. These traditions are still connected intimately with place and share important values and teachings with all people. They remind us that traditional teachings are relevant in the modern world.

Approaching the language: Students will be introduced to the sounds and symbols necessary to speak, read and write Puget Salish Lushootseed. Each meeting will begin with a review of the previous session and move on to new topics. We will explore the natural world by learning to ask questions to learn new information about the world around us. Greetings as well as appropriate responses will be practiced. Repetition will be stressed through interaction, skits, and songs. Words of food and the table will be introduced as world cultures are often preserved through traditions involved in the preparation and sharing of meals. Will will share food with Pauline Hilliare, Lummi Elder, in a fieldtrip to the instructors home.

Written homework will be assigned and students will be expected to initiate practice sessions with colleagues. Personal tape recorders may be a valuable study tool. It is estimated students should dedicate one or two hours of personal review for each hour of class time.

Zalmai (Zeke) Zahir (?esweli?), will join us at the beginning of our first night of class. He has made his language and song tapes available for students. He is the most fluent speaker of the Southern Puget Sound Salish dialect, and one of the key language teachers in the Northwest.

Approaching the literature and oral narratives: It is said that, "Stories are the elders' way of teaching." Elders encourage people to understand and uncover the messages that are contained within stories. Often, the layers of deep, inner-meaning, unfold over a lifetime.

In order to approach the task of understanding and interpretation, we will employ a variety of methods. First, each individual will express the unique psychological and philosphical interpretations they bring to their understanding. Secondly, we will explore mythological themes, symbols, cultural information, and historic context. Third, we will investigate patterns and formulas that are embedded in the language and narrative structure. This will include issues in orality and literacy, ethno-poetics, linguistics, and oral narrative that employ the sophisticated tools and menomic devices used by tradtional storytellers. Finally, we will explore the dynamics of the performance context: how, why, when, and where the stories were, are and will be told.

Each student will develop their understanding of the traditional art of storytelling, both theory and practice. They will write explications and reflective papers, take part in discussions, and participate in a variety of storytelling and performance activities.

Our legends are like gems with many facets. They need to be read, savored, and reread from many angles. My elders never said to me, "This story carries such and such a meaning." I was expected to listen carefully and learn why the story was being told. Though guided, I was allowed the dignity of finding my own interpretation.

Vi Hilbert

Required Texts: (Available in the Bookstore and on reserve in the library.)

Chamberlain, Rebecca, ed. Circle of Life: Class Anthology 2004

Chamberlain, Rebecca and Pauline Hillaire, "Sharing the Circle: Native Music of Washington State,"

Hilbert, Vi. *Haboo: Native American Stories from Puget Sound*. Seattle: University of Washington, 1985.

Kane, Sean, *Wisdom of the Myhtellers*

Zahir, Zalmai (?esweli?). Puget Salish Songs/Tape. Federal Way: Zahir Consulting Services, 1994.

(Zeke will bring these tapes to the first night of class, and after that, they can be purchased in the TESC Bookstore.)

Supplemental Readings:

Ballard, Arthur. *Mythology of Southern Puget Sound*. North Bend: Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum, 1999.

Bates, Dawn, Thom Hess, and Vi Hilbert. *Lushootseed Dictionary*. Seattle: University of Washington, 1994.

Hilbert, Vi, "Susie Sampson Peter.: Lushootseed press, 1991.

Miller, Jay. *Earthmaker and Other Tales of North America*

Zahir, Zalmai (?esweli). *Introduction to Southern Puget Salish*. Federal Way: Zahir Consulting Services, 1999.

Course Equivalencies:

Students can receive a total of four or eight quarter hours credit for college level work in Comparative/American Literature and Language/Linguistics. For those taking the course for eight credits, there is the possibility of designing a special project to earn four credits in Cultural Studies, History, Mythology, Folklore, Cultural Education, or related fields.

Learning Goals:

1. To develop a primary understanding of Puget Salish Lushootseed songs and stories, language and literature.
2. To experience the challenges of reading, understanding, talking, and writing about oral and textual representations of myth, folklore, culture, and history. This includes recognizing symbols, themes, or information that is communicated through the language and literature.

- 3. To survey the literature and oral traditions to develop an appreciation of emerging issues in narrative studies, such as: ethno-poetics, orality and literacy, and the art of storytellers, orators, and cultural historians.
- 4. To increase personal awareness of our connection to the natural world, as well as a deeper understanding of environmental studies, through uncovering information that is embedded in language, songs, and stories.
- 5. To acquire a sense of willingness to support Native People in their continued preservation and recovery of Puget Salish Lushootseed language and stories.

Expectations:

- Faithfully attend and fully participate all meetings, workshops, and seminars.
- Read and respond to the texts faithfully.
- Take notes on class lectures and discussions, and complete all exercises, each week, which connect to language and literature. Place your notes and handouts for these workshops in your portfolio.
- Maintain a portfolio of class handouts, class notes (on lectures, workshops), papers, and cumulative work. These will be reviewed for the final evaluation and conference.
- Successfully complete all individual or group projects, presentations, workshops, writings, or assignments on time. Note: 4 credits in 5 weeks of upper division work should involve 20 hours a week of work (on average), including class time. 8 credits is 40 hours a week of work.
- Because this class is focused on oral tradition, the performance and participation in oral language and storytelling activities is essential.

Class Portfolio:

Each student is required to maintain a class portfolio. This will be turned in at the end of the session to be reviewed at evaluation conferences. Include your name and a table of contents. Record the topic and date of each item in your portfolio. Each section should be arranged chronologically. The portfolio must be kept in a loose leaf three ring binder with dividers and should contain the following:

- 1. Course syllabus and all class handouts
- 2. Class notes: lectures, speakers.
- 3. In-class workshops.
- 4. Seminar notes
- 5. Weekly reading responses to required texts. Follow format on reading response handout. (A section of reading notes is strongly recommended.)
- 6. Planning notes or copies of stories for oral presentations.
- 7. Self and Faculty evaluations (Three signed copies on official forms.)
- 8. For 8 credits: include your research, planning notes, drafts, and your final project.

Assignments: (4 Credits)

- 1. Complete weekly exercises and assignments in Lushootseed.
- 2. Complete weekly reading response papers and explications, (typed). These papers will allow you to:
 - a) comment upon the readings, and b) summarize, reflect upon, and integrate program topics, themes, and issues. (See "Guidelines For Reading Response Papers.")

3. Oral Performances: a) Tell the story of "Lady Louse," or perform a short skit using Lushootseed songs or phrases. b) Tell a traditional or autobiographical story in English. Performances will be given during the last week of class.

Assignments: (8 Credits)

1. Complete all of the assignments (above), PLUS a special project in both the language and literature. Presentations will be due the last day of class.
Language: Develop a short skit, song, or tell a short story using phrases in the language.
Literature: (Complete ONE of the following special projects.)
2. Write a typed, double-spaced, research or reflective paper (5-7 pages). This paper may involve doing research on a particular work, topic, or theme. You might explore some aspect of storytelling, mythology, literature, history, cultural studies, natural history, or other areas of interest. Examples might include: a study of mythological themes; stories about star-lore, ethnobotany, or other subjects; examples of native oratory or speeches; contemporary Native American women writers or poets; or other topics of interest.
3. Curriculum Project: (for teachers) This project should incorporate some aspect of storytelling, literature, northwest history, cultural studies, environmental education, or other topics, that you can incorporate in your school curriculum. Examples might be canoes, Lushootseed math, insects, native foods, basketry, or other topics. See handout for guidelines in structuring your curriculum.
4. A substantial artistic, creative, or performance project. This may involve art work, storytelling, theatre, song writing, poetry readings, or a combination of artistic mediums that integrate your learning from the program.
5. Other options can be developed. If you are unsure if a particular project is acceptable, please discuss your ideas with the instructors.

Assignment Due Dates: See handouts for details.

- Weeks 1-5: Reading responses and assignments are due at the beginning of each class. Assignments will be given each week.
- Week 2: Special project or research topic statement (8 credits only.)
- Week 3: First draft of special project (8 credits only)
- Week 4: Sign-up for evaluation conferences
- Week 5: Final Portfolio due on Tuesday.
Final Presentations
Self and Faculty Evaluations (Three copies, signed.)
Special Project: Final draft and presentation (8 credits only.)

Rebecca Chamberlain, M.A., is a Northwest writer, storyteller, and educator, holds an M.A. in English Literature from the University of Washington with an emphasis in Medieval Literature, oral narrative, and Puget Sound Salish storytelling traditions. She teaches courses in literature, storytelling, poetry & writing, illuminated manuscripts, comparative mythology, and cultural studies. She has studied the Northern Lushootseed Language with Vi Hilbert since 1980, and was adopted by Vi Hilbert and the Upper Skagit Tribe in 1985. She was adopted and given her Indian name (du-yoke-by-yo) by the David Family (Nuchanuth), in a potlatch on Vancouver Island, in 1993. She began studying the Southern Lushootseed dialect with Zeke Zaihir in 2000.