This course examines the rapport among writing practices, hierarchies of knowledge, collective memory genres, and sociopolitical authority. We begin with a reassessment of the epistemic assumptions that underlie the canonical distinctions between writing and orality, ideographic and alphabetic writing, and collective memory and reconstruction. We then trace the production, circulation and reception of various media that record rhetorical acts, narratives, and collectively authored statements. The case studies range from public and private ideographic/alphabetic texts, sacred texts, and clandestine writings to monuments, rhetorical performances, and globally exchanged texts and images. The course concludes with an assessment of writing and remembrance as practices that reinforce social circuits and perennially reconstitute their own spaces and modes of interaction. In 2003, the case studies include the gendered production of Classic Maya and Postclassic Mixtec writing, the European “art of memory” and its failed introduction into 16th-century China, the circulation of clandestine texts in the 17th and 18th centuries, Classical Arabic rhetoric and state bureaucracies, and the rhetoric of public monuments.

### Required books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spence, Jonathan</td>
<td>Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci</td>
<td>Penguin</td>
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<td>Messick, Brinkley</td>
<td>The Calligraphic State</td>
<td>Berkeley</td>
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<td>Rappaport, Joanne</td>
<td>The Politics of Memory</td>
<td>Duke</td>
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<td>Besnier, Niko</td>
<td>Literacy, Emotion &amp; Authority</td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lambek, Michael</td>
<td>The Weight of the Past</td>
<td>Palgrave</td>
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<td>Sturken, Marita</td>
<td>Tangled Memories</td>
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### Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and discussant role</td>
<td>35 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outline and first two drafts of research paper</td>
<td>25 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final draft of research paper</td>
<td>30 %</td>
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**General participation (25 %) and intervention as a discussant (10 %)**
You will prepare for class by taking notes on the readings, and coming to class prepared to discuss the main points they raise. **This is a seminar, not a lecture course.** This means that you are responsible for introducing questions, discussing the readings, and responding to my input and that of your fellow students. Your grade will reflect quality, relevance, and willingness to learn rather than frequency.

After you indicate to me your main theoretical/topical interests in the first week of classes, I will assign you two sessions in which you will serve as a co-discussant, along with one of your fellow students. You will summarize the major argument(s) in the day’s reading, and present your critical reaction to them—which should include a well-thought reaction to the author’s approach or conclusions. You should feel free to prepare materials you want to share with the class during your turn as discussant.

**Research project**
This course requires the completion of a major research paper (18 – 22 pp., excluding notes and bibliography). Your topic should address the intersection of writing practices and authority, or collective memory work and sociopolitical power. I will give you suggestions for topics, and we will decide on a topic after discussing your interests in class and/or during office hours.

**Outline and bibliography (10 %) and first two drafts of research paper (15 %)**
You will hand in a detailed outline and annotated bibliography for your paper on **Oct. 6**, and I will respond with some suggestions that will allow you to complete a first draft (10-12 pp.) before or during Fall Break, which you will turn in on **Oct 27**. These two assignments will determine your midterm grade. You will receive feedback from me, and complete a second draft (14 – 18 pp), which you will turn in on **Nov 24**. Copies of this second draft will be distributed to other class members before your presentation so they may prepare questions and comments in advance. Any delays in turning in your outline or drafts will be reflected in this part of your grade.

**Final draft of research paper (30 %)**
You will turn in a complete draft of your research paper, along with a bibliography and standardized source citation on or before **Dec. 15**.

**Presentation (10 %)**
Not only do you get to develop a project of your choice; you will also have the opportunity to dazzle us with your knowledge of the topic in a short (15 min.) presentation at an end-of-semester social hour + roundtable.

**Attendance and extension policies**
Attendance and lateness will be noted at each session. You should aim to have, at most, **one** unaccounted absence. More than one unaccounted absence will result in a downward adjustment of your final grade at the instructor’s discretion. Contact the Dean of Students if you have any personal or health emergency; they will notify all of your professors, and your grade will not suffer as a result. If you have a disability, you are encouraged to discuss your needs with me so we can make any special arrangements ahead of time.

Please note that extensions for turning in your work will be given only under **exceptional** circumstances (i.e., family emergencies or illnesses corroborated by the Dean of Students) and on a case-by-case basis. This means that most extensions and all requests for an incomplete grade are, in practice, granted at the discretion of the Dean of Students.
Course schedule

Readings marked with (★) are available at the ANTH 240 Blackboard site, or as photocopies

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WEEK 1

W Sept 1

Introduction: Reframing the study of writing practices and memory
Discussion of course requirements, readings, and class presentations

WEEK 2

W Sept 8

Writing and memory: Some theoretical frameworks and assumptions

WEEK 3

I. Writing practices and power

W Sept 15

Central Mexican writing systems before the Spanish conquest
Boone, Elizabeth, "Aztec Pictorial Histories: Records Without Words" (pp. 50 – 74); Monaghan, John, “The Text in the Body, the Body in the Text: The Embodied Sign in Mixtec Writing” (87 – 96); Pohl, John, “Mexican Codices, Maps, & Lienzos as Social Contracts” (137 – 156). In Boone, Elizabeth & Mignolo, Walter, eds., Writing Without Words.

WEEK 4

W Sept 22

Traditional oral genres and colonial textual genres: the Nahua case
 Lockhart, James, The Nahuas After the Conquest, Stanford University Press. Chapter 8, "Ways of Writing" (pp. 326 – 373).
 León-Portilla, Miguel, "Nahuatl Literature." In Edmonson, Munro, ed., Literatures. Handbook of Middle American Indians, Supplement 3, pp. 7 – 43.

WEEK 5

W Sept 29

Writing, resistance, and native responses to colonial rule in New Spain

WEEK 6

W Oct 6

INTRODUCTION, OUTLINE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
The weight of the quill: Writing, legal authority and the social order