

Project #1: Charting Kinship; DUE: _____ at the beginning of
class
Cultural Anthropology; ANTH 201 Dr. Brad R. Huber; Revised Thursday, January
17, 2013

Goals: The primary goal of this project is to have you become familiar with basic kinship symbols and terms, and their use. Other goals include giving you an opportunity to develop as a writer and an interviewer.

Instructions: This project requires that you interview someone and make a kinship chart/diagram for him or her that includes at least 4 generations (don't include more than 5). In addition to exploring generational depth, explore width by including cousins, aunts, uncles, and these relatives' children.

The kinship chart will use the symbols found in Linda Stone's text, pp. 7-9. You must work with an informant who is:

- 1) **Not** a student, unless you are doing the extra-credit option.
- 2) **Not** a Professor or College Staff or Administrator
- 3) **Not** a friend, acquaintance, or someone to whom you have been introduced in the past.

Your informant, of course, will be "Ego" on your chart. In the chart, include the following:

- a) a **pseudonym (false or fictitious name)** for Ego's first and last names. For the other people on the chart you can use their real first name, but don't include their last names.
- b) the person's relationship to Ego using the symbols or combinations of the symbols found in Linda Stone's text, p. 9; e.g. Ego's MMZ.
- c) the terms of reference that Ego uses for his or her relatives, such as "my cousin".
- d) the terms he or she uses for address such as "Mom", "Come over her please". "Uncle Joe", "Nanna" etc. (Terms of address are the terms one uses when speaking to the person in question.) For the sake of clarity, place the terms of address in quotation marks. If the informant did not know the person and therefore had no term of address for him or her, you may simply draw a line to indicate the lack of a term.
- e) Just to double-check, ask your informant whether the chart includes kin that are deceased, divorced, remarried, adopted, etc. Include this information in the chart using the appropriate symbols or notation. (Refer back to Linda Stone's text, p. 9).
- f) The information requested in "a" through "d" must be included on the chart in the following manner:



Fred
FB
My Uncle
"Uncle Fred"

Then ask your informant to talk about kin with whom he or she has the "very strongest" ties and "weakest" ties. Strongest and weakest can be defined any way that the informant understands these terms. Ask for explanations about strongest and weakest ties, e.g., "How did they become strong or weak?", "What sorts of emotional and financial aid did the "strong" kin provide?", "Why do you say you have weak ties with kin person 'X'?", etc.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Make it clear that the interviewee's participation is voluntary as are the kinds of information divulged during the interview. It is also important that you preserve the confidentiality of your informant's name by referring to your informant with a **pseudonym (fictitious name)** in both the written account of the strongest and weakest ties, and on the kinship chart. And tell the informant that you are taking this safeguard.

Hand in:

- 1) a kinship chart with the information requested in "a" through "e" above. This need not be typed. (The chart should be a sized so that I can **easily carry it away**. You can use 2 or more pages if the informant has a large kin network.)
- 2) a **well-written**, short (2-3 page), typed, and double-spaced discussion of the informant's weakest and strongest ties.
- 3) notes you took during your interview with your informant, any rough drafts of the kinship chart, and
- 4) the real name and telephone number of the person you spoke to about kinship. **It is very important that you put this information on a separate piece of paper. Sign your name to the bottom of this page.**

Grading: (20% each)

- 1) Kinship Code (see p.7)
- 2) Kinship Notation (see p.9)
- 3) Terms of Reference (my cousin)
- 4) Terms of Address (Uncle Joe)
- 5) **Grammar, Spelling, and Content** of Essay on Strongest/Weakest Ties

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-100 points: You didn't interview a stranger, or you interviewed a student, professor, College Staff, or Administrator
-20 points: You didn't use a **pseudonym** for Ego on the kinship chart or in the typed discussion of weakest and strongest ties.
-20 points: The information requested in "a" through "d" above was not included on the chart in the manner requested in "f".
-10 points; Name/Telephone Number of Informant are **not** on a Separate Page with your Signature
-10 Points; You didn't hand the notes in taken during the interview(s)
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X-Credit: up to 10 points added to your score.

If your native language is English, Extra-credit will be given to those students who interview someone whose native language is NOT English, and who elicit a genealogical chart in a non-English language. If you are fluent in a language other than English and you elicit a genealogical chart in that language, that will not count as extra-credit. Select a language you are not fluent in for extra-credit. For the extra-credit, you may interview a student as long as the student is not an anthropology major.