



EXPLORE

MIT ANTHROPOLOGY FACULTY

Graham M. JONES*Lister Brothers Career Development Professor**Associate Professor, Anthropology*

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gmj@mit.edu**Biography**

Graham Jones is a cultural and linguistic anthropologist, whose research focuses on knowledge and rationality in practice, performance, and interaction generally. After studying literature at Reed College (BA, 1998) and anthropology at New York University (PhD, 2007), he was a postdoctoral member of the Princeton Society of Fellows (2007-2010). Drawing on nearly two years of ethnographic fieldwork in France, his book *Trade of the Tricks: Inside the Magician's Craft* (California, 2011) explores the production, circulation, and display of secrets within the subculture of entertainment magic. Focusing on forms of performance that blur boundaries between enchantment and disenchantment, he has also written about intercultural magic performances in colonial contact zones, and the resignification of magical practices by evangelical Christian conjurers. Collaborating with Bambi B. Schieffelin, he has written extensively about the linguistic dimensions of Computer-Mediated Communication, with a particular focus on reflexive language. At MIT, he teaches classes on a range of subjects, including: the anthropology of play; the language of mediated communication; and ethnographic research methods.

Research

I am a cultural and linguistic anthropologist whose work addresses the production and circulation of knowledge. As an ethnographer, I examine the ways people use language and technology to control flows of knowledge in contexts that are little known or easily misunderstood by outsiders. My research reveals how a delicate skein of personal relationships and unspoken expectations governs the circulation of secrets as intellectual property in the insular subculture of entertainment magic. I also show how new ways of encoding knowledge and producing evidence emerge in the oft-maligned verbal behavior of American teenagers, particularly in their gossip. In secrecy as in gossip, knowledge confers power: acts of revelation or concealment entail including or excluding other people. My research demonstrates how these processes unfold in the micro-level of talk and interaction, producing complex social dynamics of identity and difference.

Selected Publications

- 2012 [Magic with a Message: The Poetics of Christian Conjuring](#). *Cultural Anthropology* 27(2): 193-214.
- 2011 [Trade of the Tricks: Inside the Magician's Craft](#). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 2011 When Friends Who Talk Together Stalk Together: Online Gossip as Metacommunication. With Bambi B. Schieffelin and Rachel E. Smith. [Digital Discourse: Language in the New Media](#). Crispin Thurlow and Kristine Mrozeck, eds. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 26-47.
- 2010 [Modern Magic and the War on Miracles in French Colonial Culture](#). *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52(1): 66-99.
- 2009 [Enquoting Voices, Accomplishing Talk: Uses of Be + Like in Instant Messaging](#). With Bambi B. Schieffelin. *Language & Communication* 29(1): 77-113.
- 2009 [Talking Text and Talking Back: "My BFF Jill" from Boob Tube to YouTube](#). With Bambi B. Schieffelin. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication* 14(4): 1050-1079.

To see a full publication list with links to downloadable PDFs, please [click here](#).

Teaching**21A.00****Introduction to Anthropology: Comparing Human Cultures**

Through the comparative study of different cultures, anthropology explores fundamental questions about what it means to be human. Seeks to understand how culture shapes societies, from the smallest island in the South Pacific to the largest Asian metropolis, and affects the way institutions work, from scientific laboratories to Christian mega-churches. Provides a framework for analyzing diverse facets of human experience, such as gender, ethnicity, language, politics, economics, and art.

21A.502**Fun and Games: Cross-Cultural Perspectives**

Considers the cultural organization of play in different communities and societies. Explores why all people play, how different

cultures experience fun, and what particular games mean, if anything. Surveys major theories of play in relation to a variety of play phenomena, such as jokes, video games, children's fantasies, sports, and entertainment spectacles. As a final project, students develop their own case study.

21A.503J / 24.913J / STS.070J

Language and Technology

Examines cultural impact of communication technologies, from basic literacy to cell phones, and computer-based social networks on patterns of verbal interaction. Introduces theories and methods of linguistic anthropology pertinent to technologies that make it possible for people to communicate across distances in space and time. Students develop their own research projects exploring the cultural dimensions of technologically enhanced communication. Enrollment limited.

21A.819J / 15.349J

Qualitative Research Methods

Training in the design and practice of qualitative research. Organized around illustrative texts, class exercises, and student projects. Topics include the process of gaining access to and participating in the social worlds of others; techniques of observation, fieldnote-taking, researcher self-monitoring and reflection; methods of inductive analysis of qualitative data including conceptual coding, grounded theory, and narrative analysis. Discussion of research ethics, the politics of fieldwork, modes of validating researcher accounts, and styles of writing up qualitative field research.

Awards

2013	Edgerton Award for Exceptional Distinction in Teaching and Research
2012	Levitan Award for Excellence in Teaching, MIT School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences
2007-2010	Haarlow-Cotsen Fellowship, Princeton University Society of Fellows
2006-2007	Ford Foundation Dissertation Diversity Fellowship
2004-2005	International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Social Science Research Council
2004-2005	Fulbright Graduate Student Research Fellowship

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- CV (pdf)
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