

Linguistics 120: Language and Discrimination

Lawrence University, Winter 2011

MWF 1:50-3:00 pm

005 Main Hall

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Phone:

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Office Hours: Monday 12:30-1:30 pm, Wednesday 3-4 pm, and by appointment

Course Web Site: <http://moodle.lawrence.edu> – you must enroll in the course on Moodle

Course Description:

This course examines the ways language serves as a potential site of social statement and, sometimes, social conflict, particularly with respect to questions of “race” and ethnicity. We will explore issues concerning language-based discrimination in various public and private contexts, multilingualism, regional and ethnically-linked dialects, and ideologies about language and language variation. The class will also examine ways in which language is used to construct and reflect social identities and social group boundaries, and discuss how different aspects of social identity relate to language practice. Although we will discuss concepts specific to the field of linguistics, it will not be assumed that students are already familiar with these concepts.

Objectives:

In this course, you will:

1. Critically analyze your own and others’ beliefs about language.
2. Interpret findings of published research examining the relationship between language and social perception.
3. Conduct original research by applying concepts discussed in the course to the analysis of novel data.
4. Develop the knowledge to make informed contributions to public discourse about language.

Required Readings:

There is no required textbook for this course. Required readings are available electronically and can be accessed through Moodle.

Course requirements:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Reading notes (2) | 10 points |
| Writing assignments (4) | 40 points |
| Quizzes (4) | 20 points |
| Final Exam | 20 points |
| Participation | 10 points |

Assignments:

The assignments for this course are designed to provide you with opportunities to (1) develop your analysis skills by applying concepts and theories discussed in the course and in the readings to novel data, (2) develop and demonstrate your ability to engage with published research, (3) think critically and contribute to productive discussions about the nature of language and its role in public life.

Reading Notes. Twice during the term you will turn in written notes on one of the assigned readings. This is an opportunity to practice a very important academic skill and also an opportunity for you (and me) to ensure that the time you spend with the course readings is as productive as possible. Guidelines for preparing reading notes will be posted on Moodle and I will also provide sample notes that I have prepared. Reading notes will be submitted electronically through Moodle and must be completed by noon on the day they are due.

Short Writing Assignments. Over the course of the term you will complete four short (2-3 pages) written assignments. These will generally involve conducting small bits of research, such as interviewing or surveying friends and acquaintances about a particular issue or documenting the use of a particular linguistic phenomenon, and analyzing your findings. The writing assignments will be made available on Moodle approximately two weeks prior to the due date; they will be submitted electronically through Moodle and must be completed by noon on the day they are due.

Quizzes. The quizzes are an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the assigned readings. Quizzes will be administered online through Moodle. They will be available one week prior to their due date and are to be completed by noon on the day they are due (see schedule). You will have only one opportunity to take each quiz. Quizzes are open book/notes, so you are free to consult any materials you find helpful. You may also work with other people on the quizzes, provided you give the names of the people who worked together and how you each contributed to taking the quiz (there will be a question on the quiz where you can indicate this). However, even if you work together, each of you must complete and submit your own quiz. Each quiz should take approximately 30 minutes to complete if you have done the reading and prepared beforehand.

Final Exam. There will be a final exam held during the scheduled final exam period, Sunday, March 13 6:30-9:00pm. The exam will consist primarily of short answers and essay questions and will be cumulative in the sense that you will have the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to synthesize and evaluate the issues we have discussed throughout the term. I will provide more information about the exam as the term comes to its end.

Participation. Active participation in class is expected and can take many forms, including asking questions and contributing to full-class discussions, being an active participant in small group work in class, contributing to online discussion forums, discussing issues related to the course with me in office hours, identifying relevant news articles or other items from outside the course and sharing them with the class, and by completing and turning in occasional in-class written assignments or surveys. More details on how the participation grades will be determined will be provided at the beginning of the term.

Grading:

Grades for the course will be based on a 100-point scale. Each assignment has an associated point value; final grades will be based on the sum of points earned. At the end of the term, cumulative points totals will translate to letter grades as follows:

| | | | |
|------------|----|-----------|----|
| 98-100 pts | A+ | 74-76 pts | C |
| 94-97 pts | A | 70-73 pts | C- |
| 90-93 pts | A- | 67-69 pts | D+ |
| 87-89 pts | B+ | 64-66 pts | D |
| 84-86 pts | B | 60-63 pts | D- |
| 80-83 pts | B- | < 60 pts | F |
| 77-79 pts | C+ | | |

Course Policies:

Attendance. Regular attendance is expected and required. I recognize that situations sometimes arise that aren't emergencies, but require attention. For this reason, you may miss up to 2 class meetings without penalty. For each additional absence, your final grade will decrease by a third of a letter grade (e.g., A- to B+), unless there is a documented emergency requiring you to miss class.

Late Work. Assignments will be turned in online through Moodle and must be submitted by noon on the day they are due. Late assignments will not be accepted without an outstanding reason unless you have made a prior arrangement with me. If there is a reason that you feel might affect your ability to complete an assignment on time, I am happy to discuss the situation with you ahead of the due date and arrange for an extension if that is appropriate.

Classroom Environment. Some of the topics that we will discuss in this course are challenging and potentially sensitive topics. It is important that we maintain an open and respectful environment during our discussions and that everyone should feel comfortable participating and that they and their opinions are respected, even if others disagree with them. If at any point you feel that this environment is in danger or that the classroom environment is presenting a barrier to your full participation in the course, please come see me as soon as possible so that we can work together to remedy the situation.

Office Hours & Appointments. I am available during my office hours to answer questions or discuss anything about this course, or linguistics in general. Please be aware that office hours may become particularly busy around assignment due dates and exams. If your schedule makes it impossible for you to come to my scheduled office hours, please e-mail me to arrange an appointment at a mutually convenient alternate time. Please include in your e-mail several potential meeting times when you will be available and keep in mind that I cannot guarantee that I will be able to make an appointment with less than 48 hours advance notice.

E-mail. E-mail is the best way to contact me with short questions, comments, or to make appointments. I cannot respond to longer or more complicated questions/issues by e-mail, but I am happy to discuss them with you in office hours or to make a separate appointment if you are unable to come to office hours. I will make an effort to respond to e-mail as soon as possible and during the week you can usually expect a response within 24 hours. Though I may sometimes be able to respond to e-mail received over the weekend, please do not expect to hear from me between Friday afternoon and Monday morning or during vacations. When sending e-mail, please include a descriptive subject (e.g., "Ling 120 Homework").

Accommodations. If you have any specific needs that must be met in order for you to participate fully in the course, including a documented need for accommodations due to physical, learning, or other disabilities, please let me know at the beginning of the term so that we can make arrangements for accommodations.

Honor Code/Academic Integrity. You are all aware of the Lawrence University Honor Code. Scholastic dishonesty documented on any work for this course will be referred to the honor council. If you have any question about what type(s) of collaboration, if any, may be permitted on any assignment for this course, be sure to consult with the instructor. You should be particularly aware of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of cheating in which you use someone else's ideas and/or words (including those of your roommate, classmate, parent, significant other etc.) without proper citation of the source. It is plagiarism regardless of whether the material comes from a printed source, from the Internet or from a lecture or a friend: If you got the idea from someone else, you must cite the source properly, and this is true even if you aren't using the source's exact wording. If you are unsure about proper ways to cite the source(s) of information you are using, be sure to consult me or another resource; the writing tutors at the CTL can also assist you.

Schedule:

This schedule is subject to change as necessary. Students will be made aware of any changes to readings or assignments in advance. All assignments will be made available on Moodle; all readings are available electronically and can be accessed through Moodle (the full list of required readings can be found on the following page).

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Topic</i> | <i>Reading</i> | <i>Assignments Due</i> |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Jan. 3 | Course Introduction | | |
| Jan. 5 | “The Linguistic Facts of Life” | Lippi-Green, 1996 | |
| Jan. 7 | <i>No Class (Linguistic Society of American Annual Meeting)</i> | | |
| Jan. 10 | Prescription & Standardization | Milroy & Milroy | |
| Jan. 12 | Prescription & Standardization | | |
| Jan. 14 | Dialect Variation | Wolfram & Schilling-Estes | Assignment 1 |
| Jan. 17 | <i>No Class – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i> | | |
| Jan. 19 | Language Ideology | Lippi-Green, 2004 | |
| Jan. 21 | Language Ideology | | Quiz 1 |
| Jan. 24 | Ideology: Variation | Remlinger et al. | Reading Notes 1 |
| Jan. 26 | Ideology: Multilingualism | | |
| Jan. 28 | Ideology: Accents | Rubin | Assignment 2 |
| Jan. 31 | Language & Education | Labov | |
| Feb. 2 | Education: Dialects | | |
| Feb. 4 | Education: Multilingualism | Wright & Bougie | Quiz 2 |
| Feb. 7 | Speech Acts | | |
| Feb. 9 | Speech Acts: Appropriation | Bucholtz | Reading Notes 2 |
| Feb. 11 | <i>No Class – Mid-Term Reading Period</i> | | |
| Feb. 14 | Speech Acts: Naming | McConnell-Ginet | Assignment 3 |
| Feb. 16 | Speech Acts | | |
| Feb. 18 | Political Correctness | Cameron | Quiz 3 |
| Feb. 21 | Hate Speech | Parekh | |
| Feb. 23 | Language in Public Life | | |
| Feb. 25 | Language Publics: Courts | Piatt, Chen | Assignment 4 |
| Feb. 28 | Language Publics: Media | Santa Ana | |
| Mar. 2 | Language Publics: School | Alim | |
| Mar. 4 | Language Publics: Work | | Quiz 4 |
| Mar. 7 | Language Publics Housing | Purnell et al. | |
| Mar. 9 | Wrap-up | | |
| Mar. 13 | Final Exam 6:30-9:00pm | | |

Required Readings:

- Alim, H. S. (2005). Hearing what's not said and missing what is: Black language in White public space. In S. F. Kiesling & C. B. Paulston (Eds.), *Intercultural discourse and communication: The essential readings* (pp. 180-197). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Bucholtz, M. (1999). You da man: Narrating the racial other in the production of white masculinity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 3/4, 443-460.
- Cameron, D. (1995). Civility and Its discontents: Language and 'political correctness'. *Verbal Hygiene* (pp. 116-165). London: Routledge.
- Chen, E. (1992). Language rights in the private sector. In J. Crawford (Ed.), *Language loyalties: A source book on the official English controversy* (pp. 269-277). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Labov, W. (2008). Unendangered dialects, endangered people. In K. A. King, N. Schilling-Estes, L. Fogle, J. J. Lou & B. Soukup (Eds.), *Sustaining linguistic diversity* (pp. 219-238). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Lippi-Green, R. (1996). The linguistic facts of life. *English with an accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States* (pp. 244-247). New York: Routledge.
- Lippi-Green, R. (2004). Language ideology and language prejudice. In E. Finegan & J. R. Rickford (Eds.), *Language in the USA: Themes for the twenty-first century* (pp. 289-304). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McConnell-Ginet, S. (2002). Queering semantics: Definitional struggles. In K. Campbell-Kibler, R. J. Podesva, S. J. Roberts & A. Wong (Eds.), *Language and sexuality: contesting meaning in theory and practice* (pp. 137-160). Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.
- Milroy, J., & Milroy, L. (1999). "Prescription and Standardisation" and "The Complaint Tradition". *Authority in Language* (pp. 1-46). London: Routledge.
- Parekh, B. (2006). Hate speech: Is there a case for banning? *Public Policy Research*, 12, 213-223.
- Piatt, B. (1992). The confusing state of minority language rights. In J. Crawford (Ed.), *Language loyalties: A source book on the official English controversy* (pp. 229-234). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Purnell, T., Idsardi, W., & Baugh, J. (1999). Perceptual and phonetic experiments on American English dialect identification. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 18, 10-30. doi: 10.1177/0261927X99018001002
- Remlinger, K., Salmons, J., & Von Schneidemesser, L. (2009). Revised perceptions: Changing dialect perceptions in Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. *American Speech*, 84, 176.
- Rubin, D. L. (1992). Nonlanguage factors affecting undergraduates' judgments of nonnative English-speaking teaching assistants. *Research in Higher Education*, 33, 511-531.
- Santa Ana, O. (2009). Did you call in Mexican? The racial politics of Jay Leno immigrant jokes. *Language in Society*, 38, 23-45.
- Wolfram, W., & Schilling-Estes, N. (1998). Social and ethnic dialects. *American English: Dialects and variation* (pp. 151-184). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Wright, S. C., & Bougie, E. v. (2007). Intergroup contact and minority-language education: Reducing language-based discrimination and its negative impact. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 26, 157.