

Time & Place: MWF 6th period (12:50 – 1:40) Little Hall 0101
Instructor: Prof. Gerald F. Murray
Office hours: (Grinter 331) M-W 10:30 – 12:00
Phone/email 392-3830 X 302 murray@anthro.ufl.edu
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Teaching Assistant Alicia Peon ampa@ufl.edu
Office hours: to be announced

Course content and objectives

This will be an introductory course to anthropological linguistics. Students will learn how to identify the major universal structures of human language, how to evaluate the possible evolutionary origins of language, how to trace the changes that come over languages through time, and how to identify the multiple uses (“functions”) that language serves in human cognitive and social life.

In the first part of the course students will be introduced into standard linguistic techniques for analyzing certain basic universal structures found in every language: phonology (sounds), morphology (words), and syntax (sentences). Students will learn how to analyze phonological and morphological differences among different dialects of American English (e.g. Southern English “y’all”, Bostonian English “pahk the cah”.) They will also learn what produces a “foreign accent” in English or in other languages.

The second section of the course will go back in time and deal with the possible evolutionary origin of languages, the evolution of language families, the birth of new languages and the death of old, the development of language in the individual, and the nature of writing systems. This part of the course will also deal with the emergence of special languages such as the Creole languages of the Caribbean. We will also examine whether “Ebonics” and “Spanglish” are simply dialects of English and Spanish or should be classified rather as different languages.

In the final part of the course students will learn to identify the multiple functions of language in human life: conversational strategies, information transfer, establishing solidarity, insults and other verbal aggressions, commercial advertising and political propaganda. In addition to matters covered in the textbook we will also look at language as it relates to three life-spheres that are of particular interest to anthropologists: kinship, race, and religion.

Textbook: *Language: Its Structure and Use*, Edward Finegan. The book is available for purchase at Orange and Blue Textbooks on 309 N.W. 13th Street. Other readings will be assigned on the web during the course of the semester.

Exams. Because of the large number of students (160+), exams will be objective and computer graded. There will be four in-class exams. The exams will be based on the classroom lectures

and the assigned chapters from that particular section, though an occasional question from a preceding section may be asked. As many as half of the questions on each exam may come from readings, even though the matter may not have been discussed in class. All students must take all four exams.

The textbook readings required for each exam are as follows:

- Exam 1: Jan. 31. Chaps. 1,2,3, 4
- Exam 2: Feb. 28. Chaps. 5,6,7
- Exam 3: March 28. Chaps. 12, 13, 14, 15
- Exam 4: April 25. Chaps. 8,9,10,11

The exam dates may be shifted slightly. If so students will be given a week's notice.

Papers. Students with near perfect attendance may substitute one or two 8-page papers for exam 2 or exam 3. Students interested in this paper option should read the "procedures" on the course webpage. Students with attendance problems will take the exams rather than write papers.

Calculating the Semester average. In calculating the final semester average, students may drop the lowest of their first three grades. **The fourth exam will be counted into the final average.**

If a student skips an exam without prior authorization, the grade for that exam is 0 and it will not be dropped in the final grade calculation. Attendance adjustments for all four quarters will be factored into the final grade – i.e. there is no dropping of a low attendance score for a quarter. The grading scale is:

90+ = A. 86-89 = B+ 80-85 = B 76-79 = C+ 70-75 = C 66-69 = D+ 60-65 = D 0-59 = E

Attendance. Regular attendance is expected and will be monitored with a sign-in system. A bonus points will be added to the final semester average for perfect attendance in any quarter. That permits a maximum of four bonus points. Points will be subtracted from the final semester average for more than one unexcused absence during each quarter. **Students who miss more than three weeks of classes – i.e. are absent 10 or more times during the semester -- will not receive credit for the course, even if one or more of the absences have been excused.** They should either withdraw from the course or be prepared for an automatic E. Students who receive permission to miss class for a religious, athletic, or personal reason will not lose points for those absences. **But they are still bound by the three-week rule.** For more detail see "procedures" on my website. Students unsure of their ability or willingness to meet these attendance requirements should drop this course immediately.

Class procedures. On my website I have posted procedures for:

Sending me emails.

Arranging to visit me during office hours.

Conduct during exams.

Calculating attendance bonuses or deductions.

Students are expected to read and abide by these guidelines.