

ANT 3620: Language and Culture

Spring 2016

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 12:50pm – 1:40pm
Turlington L011

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Hours: Mondays and Thursdays, 2:00 – 3:30pm

Introduction, Course Objectives, and Outcomes

The main goal of this course is to provide you with a basic understanding of various anthropological approaches to the study of language and how to properly analyze and deconstruct instances of language. You will learn about how language both replicates and shapes thought, culture, power and society. This course is not designed as a course in linguistics – the formal systematic study of language and its structures – but as a means of contextualizing how anthropology as a discipline approaches the issue of language and thought and their roles in social settings.

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Understand and apply the basic terms and concepts of language and anthropological thought concerning.
- Evaluate the relationship between the biological phenomenon of language and the cultural phenomenon of speech.
- Analyze the ways in which language not acts as a passive conveyer of information but also as a vehicle for constructing social relationships.
- Create relations between speech, media and discourse to express how the concept of language is continuing to evolve.

Course Materials and Required Readings

There is one textbook for this course:

Ahearn, Laura. 2012. *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell Publications.

There will be additional readings from the primary literature. These readings are listed at the end of this document. They will be distributed as .pdf files on Canvas.

Assignments and Grading

The grades and assignments for this course break down as follows:

Class participation: 100 points total

Exams: 100 points each: 300 points total

Gordon Rule Essays: 100 points each: 200 points total

Non-Gordon Rule Project: 100 points total

Weekly Quizzes: 150 points total

In either case, the total amount of points a student can receive will be 750 or 650, depending on section type. This number is used to calculate your grade, with the total number of points one received divided by 750/650. The assigned letter grades are as follows:

A+ = 100 - 97

A = 96 - 94

A- = 93 - 90

B+ = 89 - 87

B = 86 - 84

B- = 83 - 80

C+ = 79 - 77

C = 76 - 74

C- = 73 - 70

D+ = 69 - 67

D = 66 - 64

D- = 63 - 61

F = 60 and below

Class participation: It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ARRIVE ON TIME. Class participation is measured through group activities conducted in class that are given at random times and on random days. The required weekly readings MUST be read before the week to ensure proper and lively discussions. Some group activities may be small quizzes with questions drawn from the readings; it is advisable you do not skip any readings as they will also be on the exams. Coming late to class, or any other non-emergency absence, will result in no points for that activity. If you have three unexcused absences, you will automatically drop to a 50% for your attendance grade. I have a zero tolerance policy towards students who attempt to sneak around the system. Therefore, I reserve the right to change attendance policy on an as-needed basis.

Exams: These are a combination of multiple choice, true/false and short-answer essays to evaluate students' knowledge of the material assigned thus far. Each exam's total points are 100. The third exam is NOT a final exam, it is NOT cumulative and will be held on the last day of class.

Gordon Rule Essays: Those students who are signed up for the Gordon rule section of this course must write 4,000 words to fulfill the requirement. There will be two essays assigned during the semester whose topics will be larger debates within linguistic anthropology, culled from large topics covered in the lectures.

Essay 1: Language and Thought: Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

Essay 2: Language and Power: Social Hierarchies through Language

For each essay, students will be given a prompt and relevant articles/readings to properly engage in the debates, and give their own viewpoints. These relevant readings will be found on Canvas. All essays **MUST** be grammatically correct with few to no spelling errors. Students' writing capabilities **ARE A PART OF THE TOTAL GRADE** for your essays; poorly written essays with many grammatical and spelling errors will accordingly lose points. Each essay must be between 1,800 – 2,000 words. Both essays will be constructed throughout the semester as: an initial draft that is then peer-reviewed by fellow students before final submissions.

Non-Gordon Rule Visual Discourse Project: Those students who are not signed up for the Gordon Rule requirement must complete a small visual project that will analyze media images and their related language to investigate how societal norms and perpetuated/subverted through popular culture. Readings from the class must be incorporated into the essay, as well as the relevant images. Further instruction will be discussed in class and posted to Canvas later in the semester. The project will consist of a small essay (1,000 – 1,200 words) analyzing a set of images that students will choose themselves to explore ideas presented in lectures of the last third of the semester.

Course Policies, Procedures, and Useful Links

Class Attendance and Make-up Policies

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policy, which can be found [here](#).

Academic Honesty

Both I and the University of Florida will give no leeway when it comes to cheating and plagiarism. If I catch a student cheating on an exam, the exam will be taken away and you will receive a zero and be asked to leave the exam space. The same policy applies to plagiarism on your essays and visual projects. All students are expected to honor their commitment to the [University's Honor Code](#).

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#). The DRC will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. **Please make any requests by September 3.**

UF Counseling Services.

Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals that interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

1. [University Counseling and Wellness Center](#), 3190 Radio Road, 392-1575. Personal, career, and emergency counseling
2. [Career Resource Center](#), Reitz Union, 392-1601, Career development assistance and counseling
3. [Writing Studio](#), 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Writing assistance, study skills, test preparation

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing [online evaluations](#). Evaluations are typically open during the last 2-3 weeks of the semester, but students will be notified of specific times when they are open. [Summary results](#) of these assessments are also available to students.

Course Schedule: Dates, Topics, and Required Readings

Week 1: January 5th – January 10th: Introduction to Language

- Ch. 1 of Ahearn
- Kroskrity 2004
- Winawer et al. 2007

Week 2: January 11th – January 17th: Language and Thought

- Ch. 4 Ahearn
- Lakoff and Johnson 1980
- Whorf 1942

Week 3: January 18th – January 24th: Culture

- **NO CLASS MONDAY:** M.L.K. Jr. Day
- Duranti 2004, Ch. 2
- Geertz 1973
- Levi-Strauss 1963, selected readings

Week 4: January 24th – January 31st: Biology of Language

- **Exam 1** on January 29th (Friday)
- **Extra Credit #1** due on January 29th (Friday)
- Corballis 2011 – Chapters 1 – 4

Week 5: February 1st – February 7th: Meaning in Linguistic Forms

- **Rough Draft of Essay 1** due on February 1st (Monday)
- **Peer Review of Essay 1** due on February 5th (Friday)
- Ch. 7 of Ahearn
- Duranti 1994, selected readings

Week 6: February 8th – February 14th: Ethnography/Communication

- **Final Draft of Essay 1** due on February 8th (Monday)
- Ch. 2 of Ahearn
- Duranti 2004, Ch. 4

Week 7: February 15th – February 21st: Speech Communities

- Ch. 5 of Ahearn
- Duranti 2004, Ch. 3, pp. 72 – 83; Ch. 7, pp. 214 – 229
- Schilbrack 2005

- Meyerhoff 1999

Week 8: February 22nd – February 28th: Individual/Societal Multilingualism

- Ch. 3 and 6 of Ahearn
- Agha 2004

Week 9: February 29th – March 6th: **SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES**

Week 10: March 7th – March 13th: Nonverbal Communication

- **EXAM 2** on March 11th (Friday)
- **Extra Credit #2** due on March 11th (Friday)
- Ch. 8 of Ahearn
- LeMaster, Barbara and Leila Monaghan 2004
- Alibali & Goldin-Meadow 2013

Week 11: March 14th – March 20th: 21st Century Technology

- Poe 2010
- Case Study #1
- Case Study/Other Reading #2

Week 12: March 21st – March 27th: Gender, Sex, Language

- Ch. 9 of Ahearn
- Leap 2008
- Kulick 1998

Week 13: March 28th – April 3rd: Class, Dialect, Ethnicity, Race

- Ch. 10 of Ahearn
- Long 2003
- Pulis 2003

Week 14: April 4th – April 10th: Philosophies of Language and Power

- Ch. 12 of Ahearn
- Derrida 1988, "Signature, Event, Context"
- Foucault 1977, "Discipline & Punish"
- Bourdieu 1991, "Language and Symbolic Power"

Week 15: April 11th – April 17th: Language Death

- **Rough draft of Essay 2 (Gordon-Rule) AND Visual Discourse Paper (non-Gordon Rule):** due April 11th (Monday)
- **Peer Reviews of BOTH:** due April 15th (Friday)
- Ch. 11 of Ahearn
- Evans 2007

Week 16: April 18th – April 20th: Final Week

- **Final Draft of Essay 2 AND Visual Discourse Paper:** due April 18th (Monday)
- Review Session: final papers and last exam questions (Monday)
- **Exam 3:** April 20th (Wednesday)
- **Extra Credit #3** due on April 25th (MONDAY after classes end!!!)