

ANTHROPOLOGY 2245F-001
Anthropological Approaches to Language

Department of Anthropology

COURSE OUTLINE

Fall 2021

Version date: 6 October 2021

Class day/time: Monday 1:30-4:30 pm

Classroom: SSC-3028

Instructor: Dr. K. Pennesi

Office: SSC3404

Office hours: Wednesdays 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. via Zoom

Email: pennesi@uwo.ca

Course Teaching Assistant: Javier Alvarez

Credit Value: 0.5

Requisites:

Antirequisites: none.

Prerequisites: Anthropology 1020 (formerly Anthropology 1020E), or Anthropology 1021A/B, or Anthropology 1025F/G, or Anthropology 1027A/B, or Linguistics 2288A/B.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description:

This is an introduction to the general field of linguistic anthropology. The foundation of an anthropological approach to language is the idea that language use and linguistic variation are central to understanding the social lives of individuals and communities. Language and culture are bound together because it is through language that our values and our ways of behaving and thinking are passed on, negotiated and changed. Linguistic anthropology is concerned with the ways language shapes our understanding of the world and how people use languages in different ways to create multiple meanings and identities.

In order to achieve the learning outcomes, students will do weekly readings and participate in discussions, complete quizzes on the readings, listen to lectures, watch films and write reflection papers, complete homework assignments, and write a final exam. The assignments are designed to give students opportunities to think about what they are learning and apply new concepts and approaches to their analyses of language and culture. Learning will be evaluated through quizzes, written assignments, and an exam.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- describe linguistic structures, patterns and practices using appropriate scholarly terminology
- define language and articulate its relationship to thought
- critically examine sociocultural contexts in which particular varieties of language are used in social action
- demonstrate how linguistic practices are linked to social meaning and categories such as race, gender, ethnicity and class
- identify language ideologies at work in examples of discourse
- apply course concepts to real world observations of language in action
- critically reflect on their own linguistic practices.

Course Materials:

Blum, Susan (2017) *Making Sense of Language*. Third Edition. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Be sure to get the third edition as most of the chapters are different from the first two editions!

Other required readings for this course are available in digital format through the "Course Readings" feature in the course OWL site.

Evaluation:

Timeline and Summary of Assignments:

Weekly – Quizzes (10%)

25 Oct. – Identifying Concepts Paper (15%)

19 Nov. – Critical Reflection Paper (15%)

6 Dec. – Analytical Essay (30%)

15 Dec. – Take-Home Exam (30%)

Quizzes – 10%

There will be an open-book, quiz to complete on OWL each week starting in Week 3. The purpose of the quizzes is to encourage you to do the readings so that you will be prepared for class discussions and to assess whether you have understood the main points of the readings. Quizzes will be open from Wednesday to Monday at 1 p.m. prior to the class. No make-up quizzes will be offered but the lowest quiz grade will be dropped, for a total of 10 quizzes counting toward your final mark. Each quiz will be worth about 1% of your final mark.

Identifying Concepts Paper – 15%

The purpose of this assignment is to introduce you to the process of linguistic anthropological analysis by developing your awareness of theoretical concepts in use. There will be several videos shown in class to complement the readings. You will choose

one video shown in Weeks 3 to 7 and write answers to questions about the video, which will be posted on OWL before the video is shown in class. The questions will ask you to identify or explain concepts, or evaluate theories from the readings and lectures, using material from the video. Copy the questions from OWL and write your answers in complete sentences directly below each of the questions. The recommended length for each answer will be indicated in the question, for a total of 500 words in the assignment.

You are strongly encouraged to submit your paper as soon as possible after the week in which the video is shown, while the course material is still fresh in your mind. The deadline for all papers is 1:00 p.m. on 25 October. No late papers will be accepted after the 48 hour grace period.

Critical Reflection Paper – 15%

In this assignment, you are looking at language from “inside” and critically discussing your thoughts, feelings and reactions from your own perspective in relation to the class material. You will choose one set of course materials (readings, video, in-class examples) from week 8-10 and write a critical reflection paper of 700-800 words on that topic. The paper must not summarize the readings or videos; you can assume we are familiar with them. Use the course materials from your chosen weekly topic (as a whole set or a specific part) as a starting point to think about your own language ideologies and socialization processes. You will make connections to the week’s course materials but the focus of this short paper should be on your own insights and critiques. Use these questions to guide your reflection and writing:

- Examine your assumptions about language and different kinds of speakers. How are your assumptions challenged or reinforced in this week’s readings or video?
- Determine the contexts that influence your assumptions. How did you come to think the way you do? If you were in one of the contexts depicted in the readings or video this week, how might your understanding be different?
- Consider other ways of thinking as you question your assumptions. Whose ways of thinking are privileged in specific contexts in this week’s course materials and in your experience?
- Question universal claims or “normal” interactions by temporarily rejecting your assumptions. Think about this week’s materials and reflect on how linguistic practices that you think of in terms of “normal/good”, “OK for others but not me” and “never/bad” are socially constructed.

The paper will be due on OWL by 1:00 p.m. on 19 November. No late papers will be accepted after the 48 hour grace period.

Analytical Essay – 30%

The purpose of this assignment is to assess how well you can apply what you are learning to the language you hear and use every day. Instructions for the analytical essay will be posted on the OWL website. Briefly, you will first write a detailed description of an interaction you experienced or witnessed that illustrates how language use is shaped by the sociocultural context. You will then write an analysis of the interaction using concepts and theories from the course. In this assignment, you are looking at language from “above” or “outside” and explaining what is going on from different perspectives.

The essay should be submitted on OWL by 1:00 p.m. on **6 December**. The essay must be 1,000 words (+/- 50 words) and must include a word count at the end. Your writing style will influence your grade.

Note: you will not have to do any additional research beyond the course readings in order to write the essay. The time you would otherwise spend exploring paper topics, looking for sources, etc., should be spent doing a careful review of the assigned readings to pull out the concepts and theories related to the essay topic and to polish your written analysis.

Final Take-Home Exam – 30%

The final exam will be due on 15 December by 11:00 pm (ten days after the last class). Submit the electronic copy through OWL > Assignments. The exam will be based on assigned readings, material presented in class, and videos. The exam will be composed of two essay questions that will require you to make connections across the readings to reflect on the broader issues explored in the course. The final exam questions will be made available in the last class on 6 December. There is no grace period for the exam and no late exams will be accepted – unless special accommodations have been granted due to exceptional circumstances – as we will have only a few days to get the exams marked and the final grades submitted.

Course Specific Statements and Policies

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds. A range of [support services](#) is available.

Statement on Essay Course Designation:

As an essay-designated course, all three writing assignments and the final take-home exam must be submitted and three of the four must receive passing grades in order to pass this course.

Grading Philosophy:

Your best chance to do well in this course is to

- attend regularly
- participate fully
- do all the readings
- think hard about the material, even if you find it confusing or difficult
- do the work, regardless of how bored or frustrated you are with it.

If you are doing all these things and you are still concerned about your grade, then please come to office hours for suggestions and assistance. If you are not doing all these things, you should expect a lower grade.

Communication Best Practices:

E-mail should not be seen as an alternative to meeting with me during office hours; it should be used primarily for administrative purposes, e.g. informing me of prolonged illness, or making an appointment. Please take advantage of office hours. It is the best way for me to attend to your queries. All e-mail messages to me must be sent with ANTH 2245 in the subject line. Your full name should also be included in the body of the

text. I will not respond to anonymous messages or those missing a salutation (Dear/ Hello/ Good afternoon + Dr. Pennesi).

Sometimes you may be confused about an idea or an assignment. No problem! Here is what to do:

- Start by asking a classmate. You should have the e-mail addresses for at least two of them.
- If your two classmates don't have the answer, e-mail your TA.
- If the TA does not know, they will pass along the message to me.
- If there is an urgent matter, I will do my best to respond to messages within 48 hours. I do not answer e-mail on weekends or holidays. If your question is such that I can more efficiently answer it in person, I will ask you to make an appointment to see me.

Guidelines for Written Assignments:

All written assignments should follow the guidelines below.

- Formatting: double-spaced, 12 point font, 2.5 cm margins, separate title page, number all pages except the title page
- The title page must include your first and last name, the course number, the date of submission, the professor's name and a relevant title (e.g. not "Homework 1"). Writing a descriptive title actually helps you clarify what your essay is about!
- Number all pages starting with 1 after the title page. The title page does not have a number.
- Use the "Headings" function in "Styles" (in Word) for section subheadings in your document. This makes it easier for you and for the marker to navigate your document (use the "Find" function and choose "Headings" instead of "Results" to see the paper outlined by headings). Having subheadings also helps you see how your paper is organized.
- Include the word count in brackets at the end of your document.
- Cite references according to the Author-Date version of the Chicago Manual of Style. There is a Style Guide with examples of how to do this posted on OWL in Course Materials under Assignments.
- **GRACE PERIOD:** If you are unable to submit a written assignment by the due date for any reason, you may take up to 48 hours past the deadline to submit your assignment without penalty. You do not need to notify the professor or provide an explanation. *You do not need to use a self-reported absence.* This grace period eliminates the need to ask for extensions and ensures that we have enough time to mark the assignments and return them to you within one week. Assignments submitted after the 48 hour grace period will not be accepted without recommendations for accommodation from Academic Counselling or a formal Self-Reported Absence). If you need longer than 48 hours, you should seek accommodations from Academic Counselling and/or use a self-reported absence. Note: there is no grace period for quizzes or the final exam.
- Electronic copies of assignments will be checked by Turnitin.com for plagiarism.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that your document has been uploaded correctly. Assignments sent by e-mail will not be opened.
- Evaluation criteria will be provided by the professor for each assignment; be sure to consult these when completing your work

Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation

marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major [scholastic offence](#). All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](#).

Statement on Backing up Your Work:

Make sure to regularly back up all your work on an external site (such as the Western One Drive, an external hard drive, send it to yourself in e-mail, cloud, etc.) in case your computer crashes or is stolen. This should be standard practice for anything you do on your computer. No extensions for any assignments will be granted because of computer malfunctions or lost files.

Statement on Problems with Using OWL:

If you encounter any problems using OWL, such as downloading and uploading documents or taking a quiz, try solving it by reading the [OWL Help](#) pages. If that doesn't work, contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#) by phone, in person or online. The professor cannot offer any computer-related assistance. Efforts to seek help from WTS must be documented if you are planning to request accommodations due to problems with OWL.

Policy on Laptops and Cellphones in Class:

Laptops and other electronic devices are permitted for note-taking in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites, or using their devices for anything other than course activities, they will be asked to turn off the device and will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. If you are causing distractions, you may be asked to leave. Be sure that all cellphones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Institutional Statements and Policies

Masking Guidelines:

Students will be expected to wear triple layer, non-medical, paper masks at all times in the classroom as per University policy and public health directives. Students who are unable to wear a mask must seek formal accommodation through Western Accessible Education, and present medical documentation.

Students are not permitted to eat or drink while in class to ensure masks stay in place. Students will be able to eat and drink outside of the classroom during scheduled breaks.

Students unwilling to wear a mask as stipulated by Western policy and public health directives will be referred to the Dean, and such actions will be considered a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Missed Deadlines and Accessibility:

Occasionally illness or other personal issues make it impossible to meet deadlines, even with the grace period. All students should familiarize themselves with [Western's academic policies](#) regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation.

Some assignments have flexible due dates (i.e. identifying concepts and critical reflection papers). It is advisable to organize your workload so that you do not leave everything to the end. It is recommended not to use the grace period unless absolutely necessary so that you do not get behind.

Course Absences due to Daily COVID Screening Questionnaire:

Missed assessments (e.g., presentations, essays, quizzes, tests, midterms, etc.) require formal [academic considerations](#) (typically self-reported absences and/or academic counselling). Assignments are submitted online so even if you cannot come to campus due to a failed COVID screening, you should still submit your assignments on time. If symptoms are such that you need a medical accommodation, then follow the normal procedures for that situation.

Students who demonstrate a pattern of routinely missing coursework due to self-reported COVID symptoms, and therefore do not demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes of the course, will not receive credit for the course.

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor. In the event that online learning is required, a stable internet connection with working microphone and webcam will be required. As has been the case in the past, the decision to pivot to online learning will be made by Western, and not individual instructors or departments (excepting temporary online instruction in the event of instructor illness).

Weekly Schedule of Topics, Readings and Assignments:

Most readings are pages and chapters from the textbook (Blum 2017), unless otherwise specified as material on OWL.

Wk	Date	Topic	Readings	Videos	Assignment Due
1	8-12 Sept.	Preparation	On OWL: Syllabus; COVID-19 tab		
2	13 Sept.	Introduction; Language-Culture Connections	On OWL: Course Materials tab> Guidelines & Tips		

3	20 Sept.	Language Ideologies	Pg. 252; Ch. 13; Ch. 22; Ch. 24	The Amendment; Slang Debate; Names Comedy	Quiz 1
4	27 Sept.	Language Socialization	Pg. 81; Ch. 8; Ch. 9; Ch. 25	Call Waiting; New Boy	Quiz 2
5	4 Oct.	Multilingualism	Pg. 480; Ch. 40; Ch. 46; Young 2010 (on OWL)	Speaking in Tongues	Quiz 3
6	11 Oct.	THANKSGIVING	NONE		
7	18 Oct.	Linguistic Performativity & Naming	Pg. 213; Ch. 19; Ch. 20 <i>Performatives</i> videos (on OWL)	Meet the Hitlers	Quiz 4
8	25 Oct.	Language and Identity: Class, Region	Ch. 28; Ch.29 <i>Talking Canadian</i> video (on OWL)	American Tongues	Quiz 5 25 Oct. Identifying Concepts Paper
	1 Nov.	READING WEEK	NONE		
9	8 Nov.	Language and Identity: Gender, Sexuality, Age	Ch. 33; Ch. 35; Ch. 38; Ch. 39 (links on OWL)	Do I Sound Gay?	Quiz 6
10	15 Nov.	Language and Identity: Race, Ethnicity	Pg. 335-337; Ch. 30 (videos on OWL); Ch. 31; Ch.32	Short clips in class	Quiz 7 19 Nov. Critical Reflection
11	22 Nov.	Language and Culture Online	Pg. 154-155; Ch. 14; McCulloch 2019 (on OWL)	Are there Internet Dialects?	Quiz 8
12	29 Nov.	Language Endangerment & Revitalization	Ch. 45; Patrick 2007 (on OWL)	First Language: The Race to Save Cherokee	Quiz 9

13	6 Dec.	Language and Thought	Pg. 43; Ch. 5; Ch. 7	How the Languages We Speak Shape the Ways We Think	Quiz 10 Last day for Analytical Essay
	15 Dec.				Take-Home Exam due

List of Films

Week 4

Call Waiting: The Blossoming of the Indian Call Centre. 2001. Producer: Ian Altschwager. Australia: ABC. YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qI79QssjxB4>

New Boy. 2007. Director: Steph Green. Zanzibar Films. YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdeioVndUhs>

Week 5

Speaking in Tongues. 2010. Producers and directors: Marcia Jarmel & Ken Schneider. San Francisco, CA: PatchWorks Production.

Week 7

Meet the Hitlers. 2016. Director: Matthew Ogens. Virgil Films and Entertainment.

Week 8

American Tongues. 1987. Directors: Andrew Kolker and Louis Alvarez. NY: Center for New American Media.

Week 9

Do I Sound Gay? 2014. Director: David Thorpe. Impact Partners and Little Punk think Thorpe.

Week 11

Are There Internet Dialects? 2014. Idea Channel. PBS Digital Studios. Available on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDPasRas5u0>

Week 12

First Language: The Race to Save Cherokee. 2014. The North Carolina Language & Life Project. Available on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9y8fDOLsO4>

Week 13

How the Languages We Speak Shape the Ways We Think. 2017. Lera Boroditsky. Lecture for the School for Advanced Research. Available on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGuuHwbuQQg>