

Department of Anthropology

Anthropology 2252B-001 - Languages in Canada

BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE

Winter 2023

Version date: June 29, 2022

Instructor:

Federica Guccini (she/her)

Office: SSC-3328

Office hours: Will be posted on OWL (remote and in-person options available).

Email: fguccini@uwo.ca

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Classes: Thursdays 1:30-4:30 pm, Classroom: SSC-3102

Requisites:

Prerequisite(s): None.

Antirequisite(s): 2152A/B.

Course Description:

The Official Languages Act in 1969 and the subsequent adoption of a multiculturalism policy in 1971 marked the beginning of Canada's official self-promotion as a multicultural country, although diversity has been a social reality in Canada for much longer. Language is thought to be one of the defining issues of multicultural Canada. This course examines language use in Canada from an anthropological point of view, addressing two central questions: What can we learn about Canada by studying language? And what can we learn about language by studying Canada? Among others, we will cover Indigenous languages, the official languages French and English, and heritage languages. You will gain a deeper understanding of how language has always played a central role in constructing and reinforcing national, group and individual identities in Canada, especially through legislation and education. We will explore linguistic variation in Canada and social constructions of language as a resource, a right, a problem, a commodified skill, and an art form.

The course will be taught in person and includes lectures, interactive class and group discussions, and multimedia content. Course topics will include: linguistic landscapes of Canada; the role of language in Canadian nation-building; language policies and official language(s) in Canada; linguistic heritage; colonial linguistic genocide and Indigenous language revitalization; linguistic discrimination and language activism; language varieties and accents across Canada; language ideologies and language commodification; multi- and translingual practices; and other to-be-announced topics chosen by students of the course. You are encouraged to identify research areas and materials that are of specific interest to you and address those interests in class discussions or assignments.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- discuss a range of language issues in Canada, taking into account political, historical and cultural contexts;
- identify language ideologies influencing policies and public discourses about language;
- summarize and evaluate academic literature about language issues;
- assess the role of language in Canadian nation-building and community formation processes;
- apply key concepts of linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics to Canadian current events;
- critically reflect on their own language use and linguistic identities; and
- present results of research and reflection on language to various audiences.

Course Materials:

Registered students will be able to access course readings through the course's on-line OWL site before the first day of class.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course's OWL site before the first day of class.

Evaluation:

25% Linguistic Landscape Report

25% Current Events Analysis

30% Essay

20% Language Biography

Evaluation Details:

Linguistic Landscape Report – 25% total

This assignment will involve collecting photographs of language in the physical landscape and public places around you (e.g. on campus, in the city, in your neighbourhood). You will complete a data description sheet and add the data you collect to a class map. You will analyze data in the class map and write a report of 700-800 words. This assignment will help you build awareness of the language ecology where you live, build skills in representing data and findings in novel ways, and develop skills in collaborative research design and data collection.

Current Events Analysis – 25% total

For this assignment, you will review a current issue or debate about language in Canada with reference to what you have learned in the course. You will present your critical analysis in the form of a 5-minute recorded podcast or video essay that you will upload to OWL for the class to listen and/or watch. You may do the podcast/video essay with a partner, in which case it will be 8 minutes. Further instructions and examples will be provided on OWL. Learning outcomes for this assignment include developing skills in applying theories and concepts (e.g. language ideologies, language ecology) to real world examples and developing oral and/or visual presentation skills.

Essay – 30% total

You will write an essay of 2000-2500 words that demonstrates evidence of independent research on a topic related to the course. You may begin with some of the readings from the course and you should consult Writing Resources posted on OWL for more suggested readings. You may also wish to consult a librarian at Weldon library for help in researching specific topics. Your essay should not be merely descriptive; it must present a critical engagement with the issue and/or scholarly materials. The learning outcomes for this assignment are to enhance your skills in academic reading and writing (summarizing and evaluating literature, making an argument), critical thinking about language issues in Canada, and library research (defining a topic, finding relevant sources).

Language Biography – 20% total

You will write a reflection of 1200-1500 words in which you think critically about either your own (autobiographical) or someone else's (biographical) experiences with language(s) in Canada and demonstrate your understanding of specific concepts from the course. This is an opportunity to be creative and experiment with new ways to present your ideas to different audiences. Acceptable formats include a reflection paper, a language portrait with explanation, a photo essay, a blog post, a social media post series, a fictional narrative based on true experiences, a poem (or set of poems), or a short play or film/video. Other formats may be approved upon consultation with the professor. Suggestions and guidelines as well as resources for writing can be found on OWL > Instructions.

Late submissions: Please note that 2% of your grade will be deducted for each day you are late in submitting the assignment. **No late assignments are accepted more than five days (including weekends) after the deadline.** However, this does not apply if you have permission for special accommodation from Academic Counseling, in which case the needed accommodation will be provided.

Where to submit: Submit your written assignments electronically through OWL's Assignments feature.

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 (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Course Specific Conditions Required to Pass this Course

In order to pass an essay course, students must exhibit some minimal level of competence in essay writing and the appropriate level of knowledge of the content of the course. The four assignments above are designed to meet this requirement and will require you to demonstrate your understanding of course material in different ways. **You must receive passing grades on both the essay and the language biography assignments to successfully complete the course.**

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 or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

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.

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined, with links to the full policies, at:

http://anthropology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/academic_policies.html

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