ANTHROPOLOGY 2245F-650

Anthropological Approaches to Language

COURSE OUTLINE

Fall 2020

Instructor: Lindsay Bell (she/her)

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Credit value: 0.5 credit

Mode of delivery: For 2020/2021 this course will be conducted online. It is *asynchronous*, meaning that students will be provided with a variety of lesson materials and activities that can be done throughout the week, although there are weekly tasks that must be completed by specific times.

Calendar Course Description: Introduces theories and methods of linguistic anthropology. Topics include: the relationship between language and thought, connections between linguistic practices and social categories, the role of language in cultural practices.

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisites: Anthropology 1020 (or the former 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 Syllabus

Most people accept the proposition that language and culture are connected. Yet, how this connection forged is far more complicated. This course is an introduction to linguistic anthropology. Our purpose is to think about the nature of the connection between language and culture. This includes an investigation of how meanings are made, how language is learned, and how language shapes social identities and communities. We will be looking at language 'up close' (meaning understanding linguistic structure and sequencing in interaction) and 'from above' (changing ideas about language and its uses). We begin with a close study of some core concepts in linguistic anthropology. The remainder of the course is arranged thematically. Each week, we examine a major topic of linguistic anthropological concern, including language socialization, gender, race, media and globalization.

This is a "hands-on" research course, meaning each student will develop a small semester long project. Linguistic anthropology is concerned with the 'work' language does in the world. We study language as a social practice and action. This course is designed for you to experience linguistic anthropological research rather than just learning about it. The course builds towards a single paper based on original research that you will do over the course of the term. We will collect and

analyze data together through a series of workshops. The research has been modified to be able for you to collect data from the safety of your home. In short, you will be studying reality television! While it is easy to dismiss reality TV as "fluff", it does provide us with ample interaction to observe and analyze. Have an allergy to reality TV? No problem. There are options to select from a list of documentaries that would work equally well. Don't be fooled. While it is easy to zone out and watch these programs, thinking anthropologically about them will require a great deal of skill!

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.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Describe linguistic structures, patterns and practices using appropriate scholarly terminology
- 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.
- Critically reflect on their own linguistic practices.
- Apply course concepts to real world observations of language in action.

Course Materials

Required Textbook: *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology,* 2nd Edition by Laura Ahearn, 2016. It will be available at the Western Bookstore and can be ordered online.

Registered students will be able to access additional course readings through the course site in OWL before the first day of class.

Evaluation

Assignments are meant to keep you engaged throughout the course and keep you on track so that you are not left scrambling at the end of term. A good portion of your grades comes from weekly assessments. To allow for scheduling flexibility, you will be able to miss one of each weekly assessment without penalty. If you complete all eleven weeks worth of assessments, your lowest grades will be dropped.

The following is a breakdown for the grading and a brief explanation of each assessment is below.

Introduction & Essay Topic Selection 3%

Practice Pod Participation 10%

Unit Tests (4x10%) 40%

Lesson Comprehension Questions 12% (4 each week)

Paying Attention To Talk: Methods in Linguistic Anthropology Assignment 10%

Language as Social Action: Analytical Paper 25%

Introduction and Essay Topic Selection

In week 1, you will be asked to introduce yourself and answer three questions in Voice Thread. You will then need to respond to two others, one person who you already know, and another you do not but think you may have something in common with. If you don't know anyone, just choose two

new people. In Week 2, once you have a sense of the research paper, you will fill out a short survey about your preferred topic, meeting style and availability. I will use the survey and the introductions to create "practice pods".

Practice Pod Participation

There will be seven opportunities for you to apply course concepts and work through your research projects in groups facilitated by the teaching assistants or the professor. There will be both synchronous and asynchronous options for maximum flexibility and to address different learning styles. You need to attend and participate in at least five of these sessions for full points.

Unit Tests

The materials are divided into four, three-week units. At the end of each unit an online, generously timed test will be administered. It needs to be completed by the week's end (Friday midnight). It will be a mix of true or false, multiple choice and short answer. They will each take roughly 45 minutes. Once you begin the test, you need to complete it in a single sitting. The final test will be delivered in the exam period.

Paying Attention To Talk: Methods in Linguistic Anthropology Assignment

You will be responsible for turning in two sets of field notes and a 500-word reflection on your research of your selected "community of practice". A full description for the assignment and instructions are available on OWL.

Language as Social Action: Analytical Paper

A 2000-word essay detailing the findings of your research in conversation with course materials. More information on the assignment will be made available to students on the course OWL site. This project will be scaffolded through the practice pods so that you have ample opportunities to gain the requisite skills to be successful.

Academic Integrity - 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.

Please be aware that 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.

Course Specific Conditions Required to Pass this Course

In order to pass this essay course, students must submit and receive a passing grade (average score) on the final paper.

Course Specific Statements and Policies

Communication Best Practices:

Basic Questions: There will be a logistics thread in forum where you can post questions about due dates, course technologies or other matters that may interest the rest of the class. Chances are, if you are confused, so is someone else. Posting in the thread will get you an answer faster and help out your peers.

Weekly Content Related Questions: I will host a weekly live Question and Answer session on Zoom. The session will be recorded and posted to OWL. You can post your questions ahead of time in the Forums and I will be sure to answer it.

Weekly Student Hours: I will be available on Zoom twice weekly for you 'drop in' and ask questions about the course. I will see one student at a time, so you can ask questions that are unique to your situation.

Email: should not be seen as an alternative to meeting with me during virtual student hours; it should be used primarily for administrative purposes, e.g. informing me of prolonged illness, etc. Please take advantage of student hours. It is the best way for me to attend to your queries.

All e-mail correspondence with me must be sent with the course number mentioned 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. Bell). If there is an urgent matter, I will do my best to respond to e-mails within 72 hours. If your query is such that I can more efficiently answer it in person, I will ask you to make an appointment to see me.

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.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see: [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

[Student Medical Certificate (SMC)](#)

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Use of Recordings

All of the remote question and answer sessions for this course will be recorded. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals under special circumstances. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings.
Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.

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 in Western's academic policies by clicking on this link: [Western's academic policies](#).

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