

Language in Society

LING 1305

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office hrs: MWF 2:00 - 5:00 pm
TR 2:00 - 5:00 pm

Description

In this course, we will consider language from a social perspective, one in which language only becomes meaningful when placed in its social context. Some of the topics to be explored touch on dialects, regional variation, slang, minority languages, power and status, language and gender, bilingualism, code-switching, pidgins and creoles, and some applied fields of sociolinguistics (e.g., language and law, language and healthcare, etc.).

Course Goal

To raise awareness of the complex ways language creates and confronts social identity.

Course Objectives

The topics and assignments are designed to reach the *Course Goal* by focusing on the following areas:

- **Citizenship** - When we lack an awareness of the social influences of language, the resulting miscommunication is often attributed to bad intentions. In discussing *gender (ch 7)*, for example, we will consider the role of frames in guiding interpretations and the many possible frames we might bring to the same event.
- **Introduction to Societal Issues** (shared knowledge) - The course is a broad survey of the well-established field of sociolinguistics. The class discussion, textbook, and articles walk through various topics with the goal of enabling more informed and empathetic discussion of moral, religious, political, economic, health, and ethnicity issues.
- **Inter-connectedness** (shared knowledge) - In the assignments on *multilingualism (ch 10)*, for example, we will see the way language interacts with our many social obligations and alignments. Speakers of multiple languages must navigate an array of identity issues in every speech event, from accommodating with their interlocutors to maintaining solidarity with their own heritage.
- **Integration** (shared knowledge) - While exploring *social status (ch 4)*, for example, we will see that our language choices and preferences are not isolated, benign issues, but carry a web of consequences for people both inside and outside our social groups.
- **Understanding and Empathy** (virtues) - By considering *ethnicity (ch 6)*, for example, we will better understand the subtle variations that occur in speech that have profound impact on the lives of ethnic minorities. Whether an insider or outsider, the discussion will enable students to articulate and, hopefully, better practice the virtues of compassion and justice.
- **Social and Economic Processes** (shared knowledge) - The readings and discussion on *attitudes and ideologies (ch 12)*, for example, will allow us to consider our own biases and assumptions, allowing for healthier cross-cultural tolerance and clearer communicative coherence.
- **Critical Opinions** (skills) - The *research project* will give us the opportunity to explore some sociolinguistic topics of personal interest, evaluating and forming our own insights on the issues, and allowing us the opportunity to voice our views in a class presentation.

Texts

- (1) Van Herk, Gerard (2018) *What is Sociolinguistics?* (2nd ed) Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons
- (2) Articles: *These are available for free through < Canvas : Reading List >.*

Grading

- 20% **Textbook Quizzes** - covering topics in the textbook
- 20% **Articles Quizzes** - covering topics in the articles
- 9% **Project** - students will read an article on one of the assigned topics, create a PowerPoint summarizing insights, and give a brief presentation to the class
- 17% **Exam 1** - covering material since the beginning of class
- 17% **Exam 2** - covering material since Exam 1
- 17% **Exam 3** - covering material since Exam 2. Exam 3 is the final exam

** see the later sections of the Syllabus for detailed descriptions of the assignments*

Grading Standards

| | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------|
| | 88-89 B+ | 78-79 C+ | 68-69 D+ | 0-59 F |
| 92-100 A | 82-87 B | 72-77 C | 62-67 D | |
| 90-91 A- | 80-81 B- | 70-71 C- | 60-61 D- | |

Articles

The articles are available for free through the library's online course reserve system:

- in Canvas, click **Reading List** on the left side of the page (under "Home")
- save or print each item ASAP. Do not wait until a quiz to look for an article

The articles are all FREE. If you get a message saying you need to pay for an article, you are not logged in correctly. Contact the library *Help Desk* for assistance < baylor.edu/helpdesk > or 254.710.4357.

Attendance

Absent students are responsible for all material (including handouts) missed and should make independent efforts to collect notes from other students and to finish readings before consulting the instructor.

Contacting Me

There are four easy ways to talk with me:

- **Email** I prefer you email me directly rather than sending a message through Canvas because I may not see a Canvas message for days
- **Zoom** This is a particularly good way to review a quiz or exam
- **Office** You are always welcome to visit my office. My regular hours are posted at the top of this *Syllabus*, but it's a good idea to email me in advance to schedule the time
- **Coffee** I'd be very happy to treat every student to a cup a coffee in the SUB once this semester. We can chat about life, love, linguistics, or whatever is on your mind

Late Policy

Only one late allowance will be considered per semester. Once you have been allowed to turn in an assignment late, any future late assignment will receive a zero. Chapter and article quizzes will never be accepted late.

PowerPoints: Students unable to turn in a project PowerPoint on time may be allowed to turn in the assignment late. This type of completion will be penalized 10 points if completed within **4 days** (due on Monday at 11:59 pm, complete no later than Friday at 11:59 pm) and 20 points if completed within **7 days** (due on Wednesday at 11:59 pm, complete no later than the following Wednesday at 11:59 pm). After 7 days, a zero will be entered for the assignment.

Presentations: Students unable to give a presentation on the assigned day may be allowed to complete the assignment by doing a voice-over recording of their presentation on their PowerPoint file. Immediately contact the instructor to request this option and to receive instructions and requirements. This type of completion will be penalized 10 points and must be uploaded to Canvas within **7 days** of the due date for the PowerPoint upload. For example, if the PowerPoint was due at 11:59 pm on a Monday, then the late assignment will be due the following Monday at 11:59 pm.

Exams: Students unable to take Exams 1 or 2 on the assigned day may be allowed to complete it late in the instructor's office. Immediately contact the instructor to request this option and arrange a time. This type of completion will be penalized 10 points if completed within **7 days** (due on Thursday at 1:45, complete no later than the following Thursday at 1:45 pm) and 20 points if completed within **14 days**. After 14 days, a zero will be entered for that exam. Due to time constraints at the end of the semester, Exam 3 must be taken no later than the specified time.

Computers

If you want to use a computer or other electronic device for taking notes, please move to a seat on the back row to minimize distractions to other students. Please stay off the internet.

Incompletes

An incomplete grade is reserved for students who have attended class regularly and who are missing only the final exam for a sound and documented (usually medical) reason.

Other stuff

Academic Success: Every student who has been admitted to Baylor can be successful in my class. Familiarize yourself with the culture of success we have at Baylor by stopping by the *Paul L. Foster Success Center* in Sid Richardson or by going to: www.baylor.edu/successcenter/.

Academic Integrity: You are not allowed to copy any part of the quizzes or exams for this course in any form or to share information about the contents. All quizzes and exams for this course are subject to the academic policies and procedures of Baylor University and regulated by the *Baylor University Honor Code*.

Plagiarism or any form of cheating involves a breach of student-teacher trust. This means that any work submitted under your name is expected to be your own, neither composed by anyone else as a whole or in part, nor handed over to another person for complete or partial revision. Be sure to document all ideas that are not your own. Instances of plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Honor Council and may result in failure of the course. Not understanding plagiarism is not an excuse. I expect you, as a Baylor student, to be intimately familiar with the Honor Code at: www.baylor.edu/honorcode/.

Students Needing Accommodations: Any student who needs academic accommodations related to a documented disability should inform me immediately at the beginning of the semester. You are required to obtain appropriate documentation and information regarding your accommodations from the Office of Access and Learning Accommodation (OALA). Stop by the first floor of Sid Richardson, East Wing in the Paul L. Foster Success Center or call (254) 710-3605 or email OALA@baylor.edu.

Military Student Advisory: Veterans, active duty military personnel, and dependents are encouraged to connect with the VETS program, a space dedicated to supporting our military-connected students. Please communicate, in advance if possible, any special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations).

Civil Rights Policy and Sexual and Interpersonal Misconduct Policy: Baylor University does not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, race, color, disability, national origin, ancestry, age (over 40), citizenship, genetic information or the refusal to submit to a genetic test, past, current, or prospective service in the uniformed services, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, Texas, or local law (collectively referred to as Protected Characteristics).

If you or someone you know would like help related to an experience involving:

- Sexual or gender-based harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, intimate partner violence, or retaliation for reporting one of these types of prohibited conduct, please visit www.baylor.edu/titleix, or contact us at (254) 710-8454, or TitleIX_Coordinator@baylor.edu.
- Harassment (excluding those issues listed in #1) or adverse action based on Protected Characteristics, please visit www.baylor.edu/civilrights, or contact us at (254) 710-7100 or Civil_Rights@baylor.edu.

Quizzes

There are two sets of reading quizzes on Canvas:

- one covering chapters from the **textbook** (13 total), and
- another covering **articles** (13 total).

They are designed to encourage your careful reading of the chapter or article. The questions are all multiple choice or true/false. There are no essay or short-answer questions. Also, the questions are generally sorted in the same order as the chapter or article.

I recommend reading the material all the way through first, then starting the quiz. You will definitely want the chapter or article in front of you while you are taking the quiz.

The quizzes are NOT timed, but once you start you must work until finished; you cannot start, save your work and restart later. When they are due, they will submit even if you are in the middle of a question.

Due

- **11:59 pm** on the day on the *Schedule*

Dropped Quizzes

I understand that there are exceptional circumstances, such as losing your Wi-Fi connection, that make it hard to complete assignments on time, every time. To accommodate for difficult circumstances, I will drop

- 2 lowest scores for the **textbook** quizzes, and
- 2 lowest scores for the **article** quizzes.

If you cannot complete a quiz within the window, lose your internet connection at the worse moment, become too sick to think straight, or just forget there is a quiz due, count it as one of your dropped scores. It is your responsibility to have a plan for reliable internet and a plan B if your first plan fails.

Please do not ask to retake a quiz or take a quiz after the deadline has passed.

Project

Summary

The purpose of the project is to give you a chance to explore one of the many areas in which sociolinguistic research has produced interesting and useful observations. Briefly, you will select an article, create a PowerPoint summarizing the interesting parts of the article, then present your summary to the class using the PowerPoint.

Project Select

As soon as possible, go into **Canvas > Project > Project Select** and browse the PDFs I have created with articles on various topics. Choose the article that is most interesting to you.

Once you've chosen an article, click on the **Selection Page link** for that topic and reserve your article. If other students have claimed all the available articles for a topic, you must pick a different topic

If you don't successfully choose an article by the *Select* date, I will randomly assign one for you. Selections are first-come, first-serve.

Next, search Baylor's online library until you find the article and either download or print it. Acquire the article right away; do not wait until just before the assignment.

Due

- **11:59 pm** on the *Select* date

Project Upload (60%)

Please use PowerPoint as your presentation software. It is provided free to all Baylor students through ITS. If you haven't installed Office 365, now is a good time to do it. On the Baylor homepage, search "Microsoft 365 Installation".

Length

Your presentation should have **4-5 content slides** (not counting a title page at the beginning). Do not exceed 5 content slides. Remember, you are not trying to describe the whole article; you are summarizing the important points of the article relating to how language and society interact. Focus on the parts that you find interesting because you will not have time to talk about the whole article.

Requirements

- on the **first slide** (your title page), include your name, the project group name (e.g. Slang), and a complete reference for your article
- include **at least one example** that illustrates how language and society interact
- do not type all of your text onto slides and simply read them; use an outline and bullet points
- name the file you upload: **year_topic_StudentName** (e.g., 2022_Slang_BobbyBaylor)
- upload your presentation using the link in **Canvas > Project > Project Upload**
- you must turn this assignment in through Canvas. I will not accept the assignment any other way
- I will download and bring your PowerPoint to class the day of your presentation
- review the *Project Grading Rubric* (on *More...* page in Canvas) for this assignment to be sure you are getting all possible points

Example

I recorded a sample presentation to give you a better idea of what I am looking for. It's available on the *Project Select* page in Canvas. You can watch it by opening the PowerPoint file, clicking on the **Slide Show** tab, and then clicking on **From Beginning**.

Due

- **11:59 pm** on the *day before your presentation*
- for example, if your topic presentation is scheduled for Thursday, then your *Project Upload* is due by 11:59 pm on Wednesday

Presentation (40%)

Your presentation is meant to summarize the important, interesting points in the article. Do not try to explain the whole article. Read it with a critical eye to find the key ideas. Be sure to cover how your article describes the intersection of language and society and give at least one example.

Length

Your presentation should take between **6-8 minutes**. Do not exceed 10 minutes. Practice talking through your slides to be sure you can stay within the time limit. If you notice you are pressed for time, look for content to delete from your presentation. Don't try to speed up your talk to include more content.

Due

- **12:30 pm** on the day on the *Schedule* for your topic

Exams

All exams are taken on **Canvas** using the **LockDown Browser** (but not the webcam).

Due

- during class on the day listed on the *Schedule*
- **40 minutes** - exams will automatically submit 40 minutes after starting
- bring a computer (or tablet) that works with the LockDown Browser and your DUO authentication device

Instructions

- Aim for **4-5 sentences**.
- Do not use information gathered from the internet or another outside source. No credit will be given for an answer that might be technically correct, but is not based on things learned in our class.
- Excellent answers will include key terms, important people, and relevant examples.

Allowances & Expectations

- you may use your notes (including PowerPoints) on the exam
- you may NOT use your textbook or articles
- you may only access printed materials (no digital documents or internet browsing)

The exams only cover material from the **class lectures**. While some of the information is also mentioned in the textbook or in articles, the questions are specifically from the class lectures. They are not comprehensive; they only cover material since the previous exam. Exam 3 counts as the Final Exam but is the same format, length, and weight as the others.

Exams have **3 parts**:

- Matching: match the names of people, theories, key terms, etc. presented in class lectures
- Lecture Questions: answer True/False and Multiple-Choice questions
- Short Answer: answer the following short-answer questions

Exam 0 is a practice exam that allows you to see the format and practice with the technology.

LockDown Browser

This course requires the use of the LockDown Browser for online exams (not for quizzes). Following are some notes to help you prepare.

Preparing for an exam...

- download the LockDown Browser on each device you might use for the exams...
 - <https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=755512061>
- watch this video to learn about the LockDown Browser (NOTE: we are not using the webcam feature)...
 - <https://web.respondus.com/lockdownbrowser-student-video/>
- read through this page from Baylor's HelpDesk to learn best practices for using the LockDown Browser...
 - <https://www.baylor.edu/helpdesk/index.php?id=972776>
- practice by taking Exam 0 to be sure the technology works and you know the procedure
 - *take Exam 0 as many times as needed. It is not graded. For example, if you decide to use a different computer for an exam, you should practice retaking this exam on the new computer before starting the live exam.*

Taking an exam...

- use a device with the LockDown Browser installed
- have your DUO authentication device with you, then put it away as soon as you've approved the logon
- click the LockDown Browser icon, which looks like this...



- login to Canvas. Each time you start Canvas in the LockDown Browser, you will have to re-enter your BearID and accept a DUO authentication
- open the LING 1305 course and navigate to the exam
- click "Take the Quiz"
- keep all of your electronic devices off and out of reach while taking the exam
- remain seated for the duration of the exam
- LockDown Browser will prevent you from accessing other websites or applications during the exam