

Language and Culture
ANTH 254-001
Spring 2012
Mondays and Thursdays, 11:45 am – 1:00 pm
Room: EQB 15

Instructor

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Course Overview (from AU Schedule of Classes)

Examines connections between language, culture and society. Includes grammars as systems of knowledge; language and cognition; structure of everyday discourse; language diversity; speech communities; language change; literacy and language planning. Usually offered every spring.

Course Overview (a more detailed version)

This course is designed to help you develop a critical understanding of issues that surround the intersections of language and culture. We will draw on examples from different cultures and different parts of the world to better understand how languages and discourses impact our perceptions of gender, sexuality, class, race, religion, politics, and other identities. The readings in this class are a mixture of introductory articles, theoretical discussions, discourse analysis strategies, and ethnographic case studies.

This course includes three main goals: first, you will learn about how language and culture interconnect and influence people, cultural development, and identity formation, and how ideological values are connected to language. Next, you will learn selected discourse analysis skills to prepare you to produce your own original research exploring how language and culture interconnect. Finally, you will explore how language has impacted your own life and identity, and you will think about how your own career plans might be influenced by your newly gained knowledge about language, culture, and discourse analysis.

Trigger warning: Please note that during this course, we will discuss potentially triggering topics about sexual violence and domestic violence. Please contact me if you believe that you will have difficulty attending class for these discussions, and I will try to work out alternative arrangements with you.

Grading Scale

93% - 100%	A	73% - 76%	C
90% - 92%	A-	70% - 72%	C-
87% - 89%	B+	67% - 69%	D+
83% - 86%	B	63% - 66%	D
80% - 82%	B-	60% - 62%	D-
77% - 79%	C+	0% - 59%	F

Textbooks and Course Materials

There are no required books for this course. All course readings will be posted to Blackboard.

What you can expect from me

I will strive to:

- create a safe and engaged learning environment
- give you clear guidelines for how to succeed in this class, including grading rubrics for the assignments
- provide you with helpful feedback about your writing and your ideas
- meet with you to discuss your work when you request assistance or guidance
- be available during office hours (or agreed-upon appointment times) to talk with you about the course and your work

What I expect from you

During this course, you should:

- read the syllabus carefully and plan out your schedule to complete your assignments on time
- be fully prepared for class discussions
- refer to the syllabus and assignment sheets if you have questions about due dates or course or assignment requirements
- commit to following the course guidelines and meeting the course objectives
- interact with me and other students in a respectful way
- contact me immediately if you are having difficulties with the material, or other issues in life, which might negatively impact your grades or class participation
- avoid anxiety about your grades; instead, focus on doing the assigned work and actively participate in class

Academic Conduct and Integrity

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. *By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code*, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course.

Please see more information about integrity and plagiarism in the “Expectations for Written Work” section of this syllabus.

Difficulties in the Class

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please do not hesitate to consult with me. In addition to the resources of the department, many services are available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements and get the most out of this class:

Academic Support Center: (x3360, MGC 243) offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, Supplemental Instruction, and services for students with learning disabilities and ADHD. Writing support is available in the ASC Writing Lab or in the Writing Center, Battelle-Tompkins 228.

Counseling Center: (x3500, MGC 214) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.

Disability Support Services: (x3315, MGC 206) offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical, or psychological disabilities.

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me as soon as possible (ideally within the first week of class) with a letter from the Academic Support Center or Disability Support Services so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

Ground Rules

Technology:

Please turn your cell phones to vibrate/silent before class begins. If you need to answer a call during class due to an emergency situation (i.e. sick family members or childcare problems) you must let me know before class begins. *Do not text during class. If you text during class, you will be asked to apologize to the class, and leave. You will receive an unexcused absence for the day.*

If you wish to use a computer (or other technological device) in this class, you must meet with me during office hours (or at another mutually agreed-upon time) to discuss why you want to use your device. You will be asked to sign a contract indicating that you will only use your

device for class-related tasks while in the classroom; if you break the terms of our contract, you will no longer be allowed to use the device during class.

Late Assignment Policy:

All assignments are due on the dates indicated in this syllabus. If you have a legitimate reason (i.e., an emergency appendectomy) to submit a late assignment, you will need to document your excuse (i.e., a doctor's note). Bear in mind that working on projects for other classes, or being distracted by life events, do not count as legitimate excuses for a late assignment. Read through the syllabus carefully and plan your schedule in advance so that you have adequate time to complete your assignments. Late assignments will be deducted one full letter grade for each 24-hour period that they are late.

Expectations of Written Work:

Your work should meet minimum standards of college writing. I will not grade work that has extensive spelling or grammatical errors; I will return poorly written papers to you and you will be expected to revise and resubmit within a timeframe we agree upon. If you have difficulty writing at the college level, please visit the college writing center for assistance.

Your submitted work (written papers and your final class presentation) should also include proper, AAA-style citations for any ideas, writing, or images that are not your own. The AAA style guide will be provided on Blackboard in the "Information" section. A helpful quiz/handout about plagiarism will also be provided on Blackboard in the "Information" section. Please review and follow the guidelines in both of these documents. If you have questions about plagiarism or proper citations, ask me. I am required to report any incidents of plagiarism to the university administration, and I will follow this policy. **Do not plagiarize. When in doubt, cite!**

Course Requirements

I. Participation	
A. Attendance	10%
B. Class Discussion	20%
II. Lavender Languages Essay	10%
III. Personal Reflection Essay	20%
IV. Final Project	
A. Paper	30%
B. Presentation	10%

I. Participation

A. Attendance

You are allowed one unexcused absence (this means you do not need to provide a reason for your absence). However, any work that is due on the day of your unexcused absence is still due, regardless of your absence, and you must submit your work by the deadline to avoid late penalties. Any additional absences will count against your course grade. Note that specific days on the syllabus have mandatory attendance requirements, and any absences on these mandatory days will serve as a detriment to your grade. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class, and if you are late, you run the risk of being marked absent. Please be on time for each class. If I

notice that you have a habit of always being late, your participation grade will be negatively impacted. Being on time shows respect for yourself, your classmates, and me, and ensures that you will not miss important information.

B. Class Discussion

Before each class session, you are expected to read all of the assigned readings prior to the beginning of class, and to think about them critically in preparation for discussion. Participation in class means engaging in discussions without dominating the conversation; pay attention to your level of participation. You are expected to act in a professional manner, meet deadlines, and contribute positively to the class. This includes respecting other people's opinions even if you disagree with them. Please be mindful of these expectations.

If you prefer not to speak in class, I expect you to visit me during office hours (or another mutually agreed-upon time) to discuss the readings.

II. Lavender Languages Essay

You are required to attend at least one session at AU's international Lavender Languages conference (February 10 – 12) and write a 3-page essay about the experience, what you learned, and how the conference session connects to course material. See the assignment sheet for more information.

III. Personal Reflection Paper

You will write a 4-page personal reflection paper about your own personal experiences with language. This paper must include a discussion of how you see language, and/or discourse analysis, connecting to your career goals. Periodically during the semester, we will spend in-class time writing short journal entries about how language has influenced your life, identity, and perceptions. See the assignment sheet for more information.

IV. Final Project

A. Final Paper

Your final end-of-term project will be comprised of your own original research about language, culture, and discourse analysis. Your paper will be a minimum of 10 pages. See the assignment sheet for more information. *You must submit a proposal, an outline, a rough draft, and a final version of the paper by the assigned due dates in order to receive a grade on your paper.*

B. Final Presentation

You will do a brief (5-minute) presentation to the class about your research project findings. If you feel that you are unable to present in front of the class, please contact me immediately and we will discuss possible alternative arrangements for this assignment. *You must attend all three class sessions for the presentations in order to receive a grade on your final presentation.*

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

January 19 (Thursday): Introduction to the Course

No assigned readings

I. Language and Culture

January 23 (Monday): Introductory Readings

Ottenheimer, Harriet Joseph

2006 Linguistic Anthropology. *In* The Anthropology of Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology. Pp. 1-13. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Wareing, Shân

2005 What is Language and What does it Do? *In* Language, Society and Power, 2nd ed. Linda Thomas et al., eds. Pp. 1-16. London: Routledge.

January 26 (Thursday): Elements of Language

Paradise, Ruth

1994 Interactional Style and Nonverbal Meaning: Mazahua Children Learning How to be Separate-but-Together. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 25(2):156-172.

Taylor, John

2002 Cognitive Grammar and Cognitive Linguistics. *In* Cognitive Grammar. Pp. 3-19. New York City: Oxford University Press.

January 30 (Monday): Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

Goldfrank, Esther

1946 Linguistic note to Zuni ethnography. *Word* 2:191-196

Whorf, Benjamin Lee

1953 Linguistic factors in the terminology of Hopi architecture. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 19(2):141-145.

February 2 (Thursday): Ideology and Hegemony

Althusser, Louis

1971 Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus (Notes Toward an Investigation). *In* Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays. Pp. 142-146; pp. 162-166; pp. 172-176. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Cohn, Carol

1990 "Clean Bombs" and Clean Language. *In* Women, Militarism, and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory. Jean Bethke Elshtain and Sheila Tobias, eds. Pp. 33-55. Savage, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Williams, Raymond

1977 Hegemony. *In* Marxism and Literature. Pp. 108-114. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, Raymond

1977 Traditions, Institutions, and Formations. *In* Marxism and Literature. Pp. 115-120. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

February 6 (Monday): Language... and Politics

Submit a proposal for your final project via email by 11:30 am. See assignment sheet for more information.

Jones, Jason and Shân Wareing

2005 Language and Politics. *In* Language, Society and Power, 2nd ed. Linda Thomas et al., eds. Pp. 32-47. London: Routledge.

February 9 (Thursday): Language, Sexuality, and Culture

Decena, Carlos Ulises

2008 Tacit Subjects. GLQ 14(2-3):339-359.

Leap, William

2008 "True Things that Bind Us": Globalization, U.S. Language Pluralism, and Gay Men's English. *In* The Impact of Globalization on the United States. M. Bertho, ed. Pp. 183-209. Westport, CT: Praeger. Decena

February 10 – 12 (Friday – Sunday): Lavender Languages Conference at American University

Mandatory attendance at this conference; see the assignment sheet for more information. See the online schedule at <http://www.american.edu/cas/anthropology/lavender-languages/pdf/upload/Program2012.pdf>

February 13 (Monday)

No class meeting today; this day off compensates for the time you spent at Lavender Languages.

February 16 (Thursday): What is Discourse Analysis?

Foley, William A.

1997 Social Markers: Code-Switching. *In Anthropological Linguistics: An Introduction*. Pp. 333-344. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Johnstone, Barbara

2008 Introduction. *In Discourse Analysis*, 2nd ed. Pp. 1-5. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

February 20 (Monday): Participants in Discourse

Johnstone, Barbara

2008 Participants in Discourse. *In Discourse Analysis*, 2nd ed. Pp. 128-161. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Bucholtz, Mary

2007 Shop Talk: Branding, Consumption and Gender in American Middle-Class Youth Interaction. *In Words, Worlds and Material Girls: Language, Gender, Globalization*. Bonnie S. McElhinney, ed. Pp. 371-402. Berlin: Mouton-de Gruyter.

February 23 (Thursday): Feminism and Sexism

Echeverria, Begona

2002 Gendered Pedagogies: "Authentic Basqueness" as Male Domain. *In Gendered Practices in Language*. S. Benor, M. Rose, D. Sharma, J. Sweetland, and Q. Zhang, eds. Pp. 23-44. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.

Martin, Emily

1991 The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles. *Signs* 16(3):485-501.

February 27 (Monday): Agency and Passive Voice

Lavender Languages essays due via email by 11:30 am

Penelope, Julia

1990 "That's How *It* Is." *In Speaking Freely: Undoing the Lies of the Fathers' Tongue*. Pp. 126-143. New York: Pergamon Press.

Penelope, Julia

1990 "The Agents Within." *In Speaking Freely: Undoing the Lies of the Fathers' Tongue*. Pp. 144-179. New York: Pergamon Press.

March 1 (Thursday): Career Connections

Attendance on this day is mandatory!

Guest speaker: Dr. Michelle Carnes

March 5 (Monday): Finding Cultural Values in Discourse

Strauss, Claudia

2005 Analyzing Discourse for Cultural Complexity. *In Finding Culture in Talk: A Collection of Methods*. Naomi Quinn, ed. Pp. 203-241. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

March 8 (Thursday): Evaluation

Thompson, Geoff and Susan Hunston

2000 Evaluation: An Introduction. *In Evaluation in Text: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse*. Susan Hunston and Geoff Thompson, eds. Pp. 1-27.

March 12 and 15: SPRING BREAK

Enjoy spring break! Relax! Have fun! Spend time with family and friends!

March 19 (Monday): Language, Culture, and Religion

Harding, Susan

1987 Convicted by the Holy Spirit: The Rhetoric of Fundamental Baptist Conversion. *American Ethnologist* 14(1):167-181.

Excerpts from:

Ratliff, George, dir.

2003 Hell house. 86 min. Mixed Greens/Cantina Pictures. Brooklyn, NY.

March 22 (Thursday): Language, Culture, and National Identities

Hirsch, Susan F.

1994 Interpreting Media Representations of a 'Night of Madness': Law and Culture in the Construction of Rape Identities. *Law and Social Inquiry* 19(4):1023-1056.

March 26 (Monday): Language, Advertising, and Gender

Submit a detailed outline of your final paper via email by 11:30 am.

Excerpts from:

Jhally, Sut, dir.

2010 *Killing Us Softly 4*. 45 min. Media Education Foundation. Northampton, MA.

Excerpts from:

Sun, Chyng Feng and Miguel Picker, dirs.

2001 *Mickey Mouse Monopoly: Disney, Childhood, and Corporate Power*. 52 min. Media Education Foundation. Northampton, MA.

March 29 (Thursday): Group Project Day

In your assigned groups, visit a store or shopping center of your choice. Take notes and make observations about how language connects with representations and perceptions of gender, class, and race. See the assignment sheet for more details.

April 2 (Monday): Group Research Presentations

With your small groups, present your March 29th research findings to the class.

April 5 (Thursday): Language and Globalization

Bhatia, Tej K. and William C. Ritchie

2003 Bilingualism in the Global Media and Advertising. *In The Handbook of Bilingualism*. Tej K. Bhatia and William C. Ritchie, eds. Pp. 513-546. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Foster, Robert J.

2002 The Commercial Construction of New Nations. *In Materializing the Nation: Commodities, Consumption and Media in Papua New Guinea*. Pp. 109-127. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

April 9 (Monday): Language, Race, and Racism

Bucholtz, Mary

2011 'It's Different for Guys': Gendered Narratives of Racial Conflict among White California Youth. *Discourse and Society* 22(4):385-402.

Josey, Christopher S.

2010 Hate Speech and Identity: An Analysis of Neo Racism and the Indexing of Identity. *Discourse and Society* 21(1):27-39.

April 12 (Thursday): Language, Culture, and Authenticity

Submit a draft of your final paper via email by 5:00 pm.

Chun, Elaine W.

2009 Ideologies of Legitimate Mockery: Margaret Cho's Revoicings of Mock Asian. *In Beyond Yellow English: Toward a Linguistic Anthropology of Asian Pacific America.* Angela Reyes and Adrienne Lo, eds. Pp. 261-287. New York City: Oxford University Press.

Cutler, Cecilia

2003 "Keepin' it Real": White Hip-Hoppers' Discourses of Language, Race and Authenticity. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 13(2):211-233.

April 16 (Monday): Language and Technology

Baron, Naomi S.

2005 Instant Messaging and the Language of the Future. *Communications of the ACM* 48(7):29-31.

Persson, Anders

2001 Intimacy Among Strangers: On Mobile Telephone Calls in Public Places. *Journal of Mundane Behavior.*

Excerpts from:

Dretzin, Rachel, dir.

2010 *Digital Nation: Life on the Virtual Frontier.* 90 min. Frontline with Ark Media. Boston.

April 19 (Thursday): TBD

TBD (possible guest speaker)

April 23 (Monday)

In-class work day.

April 26 (Thursday)

Independent work day: no class meeting. Professor Irvine is available in EQB 15 during class time.

April 30 (Monday)

Final Presentations: 11 students

Attendance is mandatory on this day!

Personal Reflection Essays are due via Blackboard by 5 pm.

May 3 (Thursday)

Final Presentations: 11 students

Attendance is mandatory on this day!

May 7 (Monday) 11:45 am – 2:15 pm

Final Presentations: 18 students

Attendance is mandatory on this day!

Final papers are due via Blackboard by 11:30 am.

A NOTE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, AU is committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/ college-specific information.