

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Department of Anthropology

Anthropology 105

**Language, Communication, and Culture:
An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology**

Fall 2014

Instructor: Dr. Jonathan Rosa

Office: Herter 101

Office Hours: Mondays, 10:00am-12:00pm; speak with me before or after lecture if you would like to request a meeting on an alternative day and/or at an alternative time.

Teaching Assistants:

Castriela Hernandez (chernandez@anthro.umass.edu)

Vanessa Miranda Juarez (vmirandajuar@umass.edu)

Lectures

Mondays/Wednesdays, 9:05am-9:55am, Herter Hall 231

Discussion Sections

01AA: Thursday, 8:30am-9:20am, School of Management 120 (TA: Castriela Hernandez)

01AB: Thursday, 10:00am-10:50am, School of Management G31 (TA: Castriela Hernandez)

01AC: Thursday, 11:30am-12:20pm, School of Management 120 (TA: Castriela Hernandez)

01AD: Friday, 9:05am-9:55am, School of Management G35 (TA: Vanessa Miranda Juarez)

01AE: Friday, 10:10am-11:00am, School of Management G35 (TA: Vanessa Miranda Juarez)

01AF: Friday, 11:15am-12:05pm, School of Management G35 (TA: Vanessa Miranda Juarez)

Course Description

What is an accent? Should each nation have an official language? Should bilingual education be outlawed? Is text messaging ruining the English language LOL? This General Education course takes up such questions by introducing students to key concepts in Linguistic Anthropology, one of Anthropology's four primary subfields. We explore insights from language-focused disciplinary orientations, such as Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and Applied Linguistics, as well as a range of methodological approaches, such as Conversation Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Ethnography of Communication, and Semiotics. The broader goal is to develop a distinctly anthropological view of what has been called the total linguistic fact: structure, ideology, context, and domain. The interplay among these realms will come to be seen as the very process through which communicative practices become central sites of social action that simultaneously (re)produce and (trans)form language in/culture.

Course Texts

The following books are required. Both books are available for purchase at the textbook annex. I have also placed copies of each book on reserve at W.E.B. Du Bois Library.

Ahearn, Laura. 2011. *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. The full price paperback version sells for \$42.95; the used version sells for \$32.25. In the course schedule, the readings from this text are abbreviated as LL.

Bucholtz, Mary. 2011. *White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Youth Identity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. The full price paperback version sells for \$37.99; the used version sells for \$28.50. In the course schedule, the readings from this text are abbreviated as WK.

This additional book is optional. Several readings from it have been scanned and placed on the Moodle site for this course. I have also placed copies of it on reserve at W.E.B. Du Bois Library.

Blum, Susan D. 2013. *Making Sense of Language: Readings in Culture and Communication, Second Edition*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. The full paperback version sells for \$49.95. In the course schedule the readings from this text are abbreviated as MSoL.

Guidelines and Requirements

This course meets three times weekly, with lecture on Monday/Wednesday and discussion section on Thursday/Friday. You must show up on time prepared for class meetings (i.e., with writing utensil and paper in hand, having completed the assigned readings), pay attention (i.e., no eating, sleeping, or electronic devices are allowed, unless otherwise agreed upon or approved by the instructor), and participate when asked. During Thursday/Friday discussion sections, you will interact closely with your TA and with your fellow students. Due to the interactive nature of the discussion sections and the sensitive topics that will be covered, a high degree of mutual respect and maturity is imperative. Give one another the benefit of the doubt in discussions, and analyze one another's ideas without waging personal attacks. If there are particular learning issues that might exempt you from any of these regulations, please inform me at the beginning of the academic term. All assignments that you submit for this course must be your original work. Consult with the University's official policy on academic dishonesty if you have any questions about what constitutes "original work":

http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/. Deadlines for assignments are non-negotiable and make-up exams will not be permitted.

Communication Policy

If students need to speak directly with the instructor, they should do so after class or during scheduled office hours. The instructor is happy to speak with students, but not via email. Before emailing your designated teaching assistant, be sure to review the syllabus to ensure that your question is not answered therein.

Learning Outcomes

- *Read and write at a college level.
- *Demonstrate critical, conceptual thinking.
- *Discern and identify distinct concepts and theoretical perspectives in Linguistic Anthropology.
- *Assess the strength of different analytical approaches in Linguistic Anthropology and apply them to diverse sociolinguistic realities.
- *Develop your personal beliefs and critical understandings about the nature of language and social life.
- *Develop and exercise your personal voice through an enriched understanding of the politics of language.
- *Develop an understanding of the linguistic dimensions of inequality and begin to imagine yourself as an agent of social change!

Grading and Assignments

Percentage of Overall Grade	
* Attendance and Engagement	10%
* Critical Reflection Pieces	20%
* Discussion Facilitations	20%
* Midterm Exam	25%
* Final Exam	25%
	100%

1. Attendance and Engagement (10%)

Ten percent of your grade will reflect overall class attendance and engagement. These points will be based on attendance, involvement in discussion sections by raising questions and issues, listening and responding respectfully to others, and participation in group work. Excellent class attendance and engagement means not missing class, being on time and staying for the full time, and actively participating in the class.

One of the best ways to learn something is to hang out with people who already know how to do what you need or want to learn. They can be role models and give you feedback. You can benefit from observing and working with others who are also learning. To be prepared for lectures and discussion sections you should do the assigned reading and assignments prior to each class meeting, understand the major themes in the reading and/or ask questions related to your lack of understanding, raise questions and issues for discussion, and share notes with others in the class.

2. Critical Reflection Pieces (20%)

Throughout the semester you will write two critical reflection pieces. During your first discussion section meeting, you will choose the weeks for which you will write these pieces; you must choose weeks other than those during which you sign up to facilitate discussion (see below). For each of these reflection pieces, you will draw on the readings for the assigned week in order to analyze an example of communication of your choosing. Each reflection piece will be 4-5 double-spaced pages, with 12pt. Times New Roman font and 1" margins on all sides. The reflection pieces are due by 5pm on Friday of the week that you have selected. You will submit them via Moodle. Your reflection pieces should identify authors' key arguments in the readings for your designated weeks, and bring these arguments to bear on an analysis of a specific example of communication (e.g., a song, picture, YouTube video, conversation, symbol, book excerpt, etc.). Please submit some artifact of this communication along with your analysis (e.g., a web link to a video, a scanned picture, a transcript, etc.). What are some key elements of the communication you are analyzing? How do the authors from your assigned week help to analyze this communication? What cultural concepts and norms are invoked, reproduced, and/or transformed by this communication? Each critical reflection piece will be graded on a 10-point scale, with 2.5 points for each of the following categories: (1) Identifies a relevant example of communication; (2) References readings and course content; (3) Critical thinking; and (4) Paper mechanics.

3. Discussion Facilitations (20%)

You are each required to facilitate discussions of the readings during two different discussion section meetings; the weeks during which you facilitate discussion must be weeks other than those during which you sign up to submit a critical reflection piece. This will involve your collaboration with your classmates; make sure to get the contact information for your classmates who sign up to facilitate discussion during your designated weeks. You will work with your fellow classmates who sign up for a given week to present key ideas in the reading, lead a discussion based on the text, and offer examples to illustrate key concepts. Making the discussion successful requires careful preparation; therefore, to be fair to the rest of the class and to your TAs, you may not change your designated week or reschedule if you miss class or are unprepared.

For the weeks that you sign up to facilitate discussion, you are expected to develop a set of discussion questions and a creative way in which to guide the discussion. You will prepare a handout with your reflections on the reading and your discussion questions. This handout should include a brief (i.e. one paragraph) summary of the key ideas in the readings and several (i.e. at least three) discussion questions. You must present at least one form of audiovisual media to supplement your handout (e.g., a YouTube video, song, newspaper story, etc.). The handout should be two single-spaced pages (or the front and back of one page), and each student should focus on a different aspect of the reading. Please bring enough copies of your handout for everyone in your discussion section.

Each discussion facilitation assignment will be worth 10% of your final grade. Points will be based on the number of key points and discussion questions on the handout, the incorporation of

a relevant example of audiovisual media, and the overall level of engagement in your facilitation. To be clear, your facilitation should NOT consist of you standing in front of the class reciting a summary of the reading(s). Instead, develop a creative way in which to engage with and frame a discussion of the reading. Focus on issues and themes that are of interest to you!

4. Midterm Exam – October 20 (25%)

The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions geared toward your understanding of the concepts covered in the readings, lectures, and discussion sections during Weeks 1-7.

5. Final Exam – Date/Time/Location TBA (25%)

The final exam will consist of short answer and essay questions that cover *all* course readings, discussions, and lectures.

Course Schedule

*Note on readings:

In the schedule below, Ahearn's *Living Language*, Bucholtz's *White Kids*, and Blum's *Making Sense of Language* are abbreviated LL, WK, and MSoL, respectively. Students are expected to complete ALL readings for this course.

Week 1: Introductions*

*No discussion sections during Week 1

Wednesday, September 3

Week 2: How do linguistic anthropologists analyze language and culture?

Monday, September 8

LL, Preface (Pp. xi-xv) and Chapter 1: The Socially Charged Life of Language (Pp. 3-30)

Wednesday, September 10

LL, Chapter 2: The Research Process in Linguistic Anthropology (Pp. 31-49)

Discussion sections: Thursday, September 11/Friday September 12*

*Be sure to attend the first meeting of your discussion section to sign up for the weeks during which you will facilitate discussion and submit critical reflection pieces

Week 3: What does it mean to be socialized *to* and *through* language?

Monday, September 15

LL, Chapter 3: Language Acquisition and Socialization (Pp. 50-64)

Wednesday, September 17

MSoL, Chapter 9: Ochs and Schieffelin, "Language Acquisition and Socialization: Three Developmental Stories and Their Implications" (Pp. 71-95)

Discussion Sections: Thursday, September 18/Friday, September 19

Week 4: How do language, thought, and culture constitute one another?

Monday, September 22

LL, Chapter 4: Language, Thought, and Culture (Pp. 65-98)

Wednesday, September 24

MSoL, Chapter 8: Levinson, "Language and Mind: Let's Get the Issues Straight!" (Pp. 58-68)

Discussion Sections: Thursday, September 25/Friday, September 26

Week 5: How do domains of language use(rs) emerge?

Monday, September 29

LL, Chapter 5, Pp. 101-118: Communities of Language Users

Wednesday, October 1

LL, Chapter 8, Pp. 160-184: Performativity, and the Constitution of Communities

Discussion Sections: Thursday, October 2/Friday, October 3

Week 6: How do different languages – and varieties thereof - interact within linguistic repertoires?

Monday, October 6

LL, Chapter 6, Pp. 119-140: Multilingualism and Globalization

Wednesday, October 8

MSoL, Chapter 23: Zentella, "Bilingualism en Casa" (Pp. 247-259)

Discussion Sections: Thursday, October 9/Friday, October 10

Week 7: How do linguistic anthropologists analyze language use in modalities other than spoken language, such as literacy?

Monday, October 13, No Class, Columbus Day

Tuesday, October 14 (Monday class schedule)
LL, Chapter 7: Literacy Practices (Pp. 140-159)

Wednesday, October 15
MSoL, Chapter 10: Heath, "What No Bedtime Story Means: Narrative Skills at Home and at School" (Pp. 96-114)
MSoL, Chapter 17: Mahiri, "Literacies in the Lives of Urban Youth" (Pp. 179-185)

Discussion Sections: Thursday, October 16/Friday, October 17

Week 8: What is the relationship between language and categories of gender and sexuality?

Monday, October 20 – Midterm Exam

Wednesday, October 22
LL, Chapter 9: Language and Gender (Pp. 187-213)
MSOL, Chapter 36: Kiesling, "Power and the Language of Men" (Pp. 408-417)

Discussion Sections: Thursday, October 23/Friday, October 24

Week 9: How do linguistic and ethnoracial identities become linked?

Monday, October 27
LL, Chapter 10: Language, Race, and Ethnicity (Pp. 213-239)

Wednesday, October 29
MSoL, Chapter 33: Alim, "Hip Hop Nation Language" (Pp. 378-390)
MSoL, Chapter 34: Rodriguez, "Aria" (Pp. 391-400)

Discussion Sections: Thursday, October 30/Friday, October 31

Week 10: How does language participate in and reflect cultural transformations?

Monday, November 3
LL, Chapter 11: Language Death and Revitalization (Pp. 240-258)

Wednesday, November 5
LL, Chapter 12: Language, Power, and Agency (Pp. 259-291)

Discussion Sections: Thursday, November 6/Friday, November 7

Week 11: Linguistic Anthropology in Action

Monday, November 10

WK, Chapters 1-3: “White Styles,” “Listening to Whiteness,” and “Cliques, Crowds, and Crews” (Pp. 1-66)

Wednesday, November 12, No Class, Tuesday Class Schedule for Veterans’ Day

Discussion Sections: Thursday, November 13/Friday, November 14

Week 12: Linguistic Anthropology in Action

Monday, November 17

WK, Chapters 4-5: “Say Word?” and “I’m like yeah but she’s all no” (Pp. 67-115)

Wednesday, November 19

WK, Chapters 6-7: “Pretty Fly for a White Guy” and “We’re Through Being Cool” (Pp. 116-163)

Discussion Sections: Thursday, November 20/Friday, November 21

Week 13: Linguistic Anthropology in Action

Monday, November 24

WK, Chapters 8-9: “Not that I’m Racist” and “White on Black” (Pp. 164-209)

Wednesday, November 26

WK, Chapters 10-11: “I Guess I’m White” and “Audible Whiteness” (Pp. 210-249)

Thursday, November 27/Friday November 28, No Discussion Sections, Thanksgiving

Week 14: Linguistic Anthropology in Action

Monday, December 1

FINAL EXAM REVIEW SESSION

Wednesday, December 3, No Class, American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting

Discussion Sections: Thursday, December 4/Friday, December 5

Final Exam Date/Time/Location: TBA