

Survey of Sociolinguistics

LIN 4600 . Section 2514 . Spring 2015 . T 5-6 R6 . AND 13

Instructor: Dr. Fiona Mc Laughlin

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Hours: Tuesdays: 2:30-4:30 & by appointment

Lu nekk, meneesna ko toxal, mu mel ni mu meloon, ba mu des wax

Anything can be moved and remain the same, except speech

Wolof proverb

Description

This course is an introduction to sociolinguistics, often described as the study of language in its social and cultural context. Through a variety of readings, discussions, and assignments, we will explore what this means, and come to some conclusions about what sociolinguistics is, has been, and where it is going next. Among the topics to be covered in the course are language variation, language use in social interaction, multilingualism, language ideology, language change over time, the relationship between language and culture, language and gender, and language and education. We will examine a variety of sociolinguistic contexts from around the world, and consider multiple modalities of spoken and written language.

Objectives

1. To provide students with a general understanding of the place of sociolinguistics within the discipline of linguistics as a whole, the major concerns of the field, the major theoretical approaches to the study of language in society, and an understanding of the tools necessary to apply such approaches to original research.
2. To train students to be able to propose and evaluate arguments about language in society in an informed and principled way.
3. To help students enhance their writing and expository skills.

Books and readings

The textbook for this course is Wardhaugh, Ronald & Janet M. Fuller. 2014. *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. (7th edition) Malden: Wiley-Blackwell. Additional readings will be made available to you by the instructor in electronic form. All readings are required.

Grades will be based on the following work.

	%
Sociolinguistic autobiography	5
Papers (3)	30 (10 points each)
Short class presentation	5
Exams 1 & 2	30 (15 points each)
Final paper	25
Participation	5
Total	100

The assignment of a final letter grade will be based on the following scale:

A 92-100	B 81-84.9	C 71-74.9	D 61-64.9
A- 88-91.9	B- 78-80.9	C- 68-70.9	D- 58-60.9
B+ 85-87.9	C+ 75-77.9	D+ 65-67.9	E Below 58

You may consult the following website to see how the final letter grade is weighted with regard to overall GPA: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

A note on participation, class involvement, and classroom policy

The classroom is where we will accomplish much of our work this semester and you are expected to be a contributing member of our classroom community. This means that attendance and preparation are of paramount importance. You are expected to attend class and participate actively in class discussion. Active and informed participation means that you must complete assigned readings before the class period in which we will discuss them, and come to class informed and prepared to talk about the topic of the day. I expect that our class discussions and debates will be lively, and that you will feel free to express your opinions and disagree with each other in a manner appropriate to an academic setting. Mutual respect for class members is expected at all times in order to ensure a positive learning environment for a productive and enjoyable semester.

Attendance

If you are repeatedly absent or late for class, you will lower your final grade. If you miss more than three classes without a documented medical or academic excuse, one percentage point will be deducted from your participation grade for each additional time you are absent.

Assignments

Students are required to hand in all assignments at the beginning of the class period they are due. Please contact the instructor *in advance* if you cannot make a deadline. There will be no make-up assignments or tests and no extension of deadlines except in the case of a documented emergency or illness. Please also make sure you have at least one external backup of the assignments you do for this class. Computer or printer problems will not be considered a valid excuse for missing assignments.

Electronics

Please make sure that your phones are turned off or in sleep mode and put away before class starts. You may use your laptop computer to take notes, but e-mailing, web browsing, face-booking, texting, chatting and other cell-phone or computer activity is not allowed during class.

Academic dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, including cheating on exams and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in such activities will be dealt with in accordance with University policy and receive a failing grade for the course (www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/academicguide.php) It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism. If you have any questions about it, please consult the professor.

Students with disabilities

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this class, you should contact the dean of Students Office (www.dso.ufl.edu/drpf/) so that special arrangements can be made to accommodate you.

Schedule of topics, readings and assignments (may be modified by the instructor to suit the needs of the class)

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
PART 1: LANGUAGES & COMMUNITIES			
Week 1 1/6-8	Introduction to sociolinguistics; Languages, dialects, varieties & more	W&F Chapter 1&2 Blommaert & Backus (2013)	
Week 2 1/13-15	Defining groups; Multilingual societies (intro)	W&F Chapter 3 &4	1/13:Sociolinguistic autobiography
Week 3 1/20-22	NO CLASS Work on assignment		
Week 4 1/27-29	Multilingual societies & multilingual discourse	W&F Chapter 4 Auer (2007)	1/27 Paper #1: Multilingualism
Week 5 2/3-5	Contact languages: pidgins, creoles & mixed languages	W&F Chapter 5 Mufwene (TBA)	
EXAM #1	February 10th		
PART 2: VARIATION			
Week 6 2/10-12	Language variation	W&F Chapter 6	
Week 7 2/17-19	Three waves of variation studies	W&F Chapter 7	
Week 8 2/24-26	Language change over time: what sociolinguistics can tell us	W&F Chapter 8	2/26 Paper #2: Variation
SPRING BREAK MARCH 1-8			
EXAM #2	March 12th		
PART 3: LANGUAGE & SOCIAL INTERACTION			
Week 9 3/10-12	Ethnographic approaches to sociolinguistics	W&F Chapter 9 Sherzer (1988)	
Week 10 3/17-19	Pragmatics	W&F Chapter 10	
Week 11 3/24-26	Discourse analysis	W&F Chapter 11 Irvine (1978)	3/26 Paper #3: Social interaction
Week 12 3/31-4/2	Language, gender and sexuality	W&F Chapter 12	

Week 13 4/7-9	Sociolinguistics & education	W&F Chapter 13
Week 14 4/14-16	Language policy & planning	W&F Chapter 14
Week 15 4/21	Retrospective	Final paper due

Description of assignments (more detailed descriptions of these assignments will be provided over the course of the semester)

Sociolinguistic autobiography: In this assignment you will describe your linguistic repertoire and how you acquired it. It will be worth 5% of your grade.

Short papers: 30% of your grade in this class comes from three papers that you will write on various topics. These papers should be no shorter than 1,500 words, and no longer than 2,000 words. The papers are a forum for you to articulate some of your ideas about sociolinguistics based on our readings and the observations you make about language in the real world, and to sharpen your powers of observation and develop a ‘nose’ for interesting sociolinguistic phenomena. In some cases the topics will be well defined by the instructor; in other cases you will be given more leeway to formulate your own topic within certain parameters.

Short presentation: Each student will make a five-minute presentation to the class once during the semester on a sociolinguistic topic of general interest. This may be a term that comes from your readings, such as, for example, *diglossia*, or it could be an item from popular media such as *vocal fry*. These may be grouped together for presentation on a specific day. This assignment is worth 5% of your grade.

Exams: There will be two exams during the course of the semester, after parts 1 and 2 of the course. They are each worth 15% of your grade.

Final paper: Your final paper will give you the opportunity to explore a sociolinguistic topic in more depth than we have time for in class. The paper should be 5-6,000 words in length, and the topic and bibliography must be approved by the professor in advance. The paper is worth 25% of your grade.