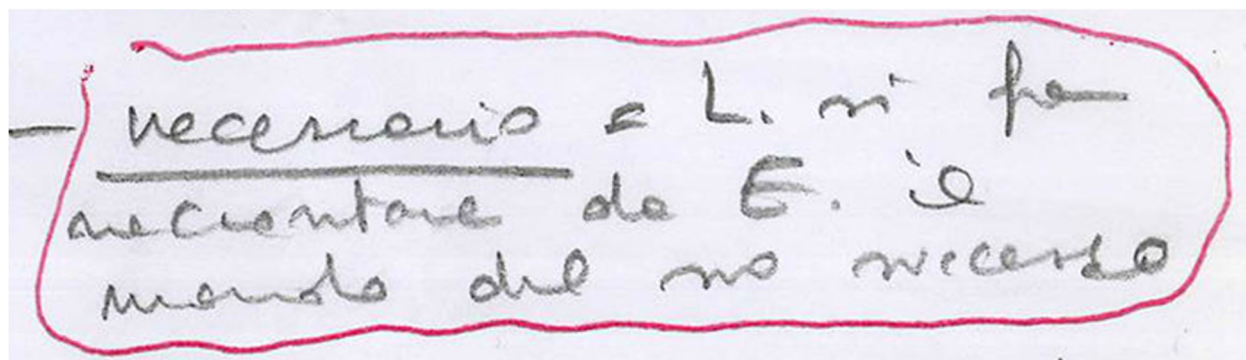


Sociolinguistics of Writing

LIN 4930 . LIN 6932
Spring 2025. T5-6 (11:45-1:40) & R6 (12:50-1:40) . Matherly 005

Instructor: Dr. Fiona Mc Laughlin
Office: 305 Pugh Hall
Hours: Wednesday 9:00-11:00am & by appt. (via Zoom)

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Handwritten notes from Elena Ferrante's final revisions to her novel, *The Story of the Lost Child*. From *The Paris Review*, Spring 2015

Course description

Welcome to the Sociolinguistics of Writing. This is a joint undergraduate/graduate course in sociolinguistics with a focus on writing as a sociolinguistic object. The general theoretical orientation of the course is that of a contemporary sociolinguistics of globalization with its emphasis on mobility, multilingualism, and superdiversity. The sociolinguistics of writing is a relatively new yet robust field of research within sociolinguistics, and there is plenty of room for exploration, discussion, debate, and contribution. We will be studying writing practices from a number of different perspectives, focusing variously on multimodality, grassroots literacy, the stakes of spelling, multilingual writing, digital writing, and writing in public space, also known as linguistic landscape. While there are no prerequisites for this course, it will build on a basic familiarity with the field of sociolinguistics on the part of students.

Course objectives

Writing has only recently become an object of sociolinguistic inquiry. The emergence of this new field has occurred hand-in-hand with – and is partially the result of – new ways of approaching the study of language in a globalized and often digitalized world. In this course we will engage with recent attempts to understand these new realities and focus on writing as our object of inquiry. The specific goals of the course are:

- To become familiar with sociolinguistic ways of talking about and analyzing writing
- To acquire the critical skills necessary for analyzing writing and learn how to apply those skills to instances of writing
- To survey the different paths of inquiry into writing within the field of sociolinguistics
- To gain experience in presenting oral and written arguments about writing
- To develop a deep understanding of the role of writing in society

Broader objectives

These are objectives that go beyond the topic of the course to contribute to your growth as an educated person:

- To become a better – and a more interesting – thinker and writer
- To develop your ability to make informed and articulate arguments

Class format

My aim in this class is to limit lecturing to one hour during a three-hour class week, and to spend the rest of the time on activities and discussion that will enable you to explore the material we are considering. The format of this class demands that you, the students, be the active participants in the learning process by a) doing the assigned readings; b) coming to class prepared and ready to contribute to conversations and activities on the day's topic; c) listening to your classmates, encouraging them, and sharing with them your thoughts, insights, or frustrations related to the material and topic at hand.

Requirements & attendance policy

To learn in this class you are required to attend class, complete readings and assignments on time, and participate in class discussions and activities. I consider these requirements to be interrelated: you cannot do one without the other. You are entitled to one unexcused absence during the course of the semester, but you must provide documentation of extenuating circumstances for any other absence. Otherwise they will count against your grade.

Readings

The following books are required, and are the ones you'll need for extended use:
Sebba, Mark. 2007. *Spelling and society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Blommaert, Jan. 2008. *Grassroots literacy: Writing, identity and voice in central Africa*. Abingdon & New York: Routledge.

We will be using additional selected articles and chapters which will be made available to you on our Canvas course web-page.

Grades

Undergraduate grades calculated as follows:		Graduate grades calculated as follows:	
Paper 1	15%	Paper 1	15%
Paper 1 rewrite	10%	Paper 2	20%
Paper 2	15%	Small assignments	20%
Paper 2 rewrite	10%	Classroom contribution	25%
Small assignments	25%	Final project	20%
Classroom contribution	25%		

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

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers may request academic accommodation through the Disability Resource Center <https://disability.ufl.edu>. You should share your accommodation letter with me as early as possible so that I can make appropriate arrangements.

Academic honesty

As a UF student you have subscribed to the Student Code of Honor. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism or the use of ChatGPT without attribution is a violation of that Code. Any student engaging in such activities will be dealt with in accordance with University policy.

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

SCHEDULE of TOPICS (subject to change according to class needs)

Readings must be done before the week for which they are assigned. For a schedule of readings see Canvas.

January 14-16

There will be no class this week because I will be away at a meeting in Paris. See our Canvas page for an assignment due on January 15.

January 21-23: Introduction to the sociolinguistics of writing

January 28-30: Writing and “regimes of language”

February 4-6: Spelling, scripts, orthography

Reading: Sebba, Mark.

February 11-13: Spelling, scripts, orthography

February 15: First paper due

February 18-20: Introduction to linguistic landscape

February 25-27: Linguistic landscape

March 1: First paper rewrite due

March 4-6: Linguistic landscape

March 11-13: Grassroots literacy

SPRING BREAK

March 25-27: Grassroots literacy

March 22: Second paper due

April 1-3: Digital writing

April 8-10: Digital writing

April 6: Second paper rewrite due

April 15-17: Multilingual writing and writing in multilingual contexts

April 22: Wrap-up