

Sociolinguistics of Writing

LIN 6932 . Section 17325 . LIN 4930 . Section 17689

Fall 2018. MWF 7 (1:55-2:45) . AND 013

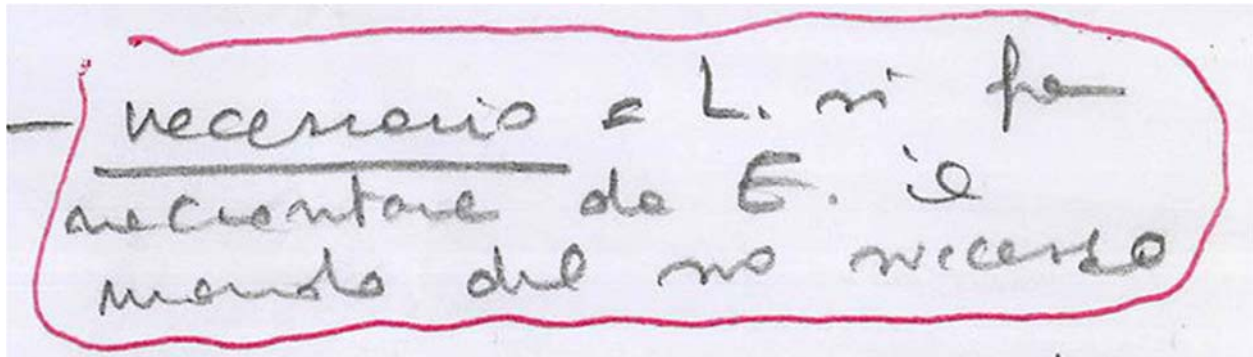
Instructor: Dr. Fiona Mc Laughlin

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Hours: Wednesday 9:00-11:00am & by appt.

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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 new sociolinguistics of globalization with its focus 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 discussion and debate. We will be studying writing practices from a number of different perspectives, focusing variously on grassroots literacy, the stakes of spelling, multilingual writing, digital writing, and writing in public space, also known as linguistic landscape. The class format demands that students be active participants in the learning process by engaging in conversations about the topic in class. 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.

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

Requirements

Students are required to complete the readings in advance of the class for which they are assigned. All students will be required to write two 8,000 word papers on specific topics, and to participate in classroom activities that include writing and discussion. Undergraduates will take two tests, while

graduate students will design a research project within the sociolinguistics of writing and present their research design to the class. Please note that attendance does not count towards your grade, but failure to attend will have an adverse effect because classroom activities constitute 20% of your grade. These activities will include, but are not limited to, short writing assignments and group discussions.

Readings

We will be using *selected chapters* from the following books in this course:

Lillis, Theresa. 2013. *The sociolinguistics of writing*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Blommaert, Jan. 2010. *The sociolinguistics of globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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. (\$48.99 on Amazon, with some cheaper options from other sellers).

Blommaert, Jan. 2008. *Grassroots literacy: Writing, identity and voice in central Africa*. Abingdon & New York: Routledge. (\$48.68 on Amazon, with some cheaper options from other sellers).

In addition, several required articles and chapters are available to students on the course website at <https://elearning.ufl.edu>

Grades

Undergraduate grades calculated as follows:

Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	20%
Test 1	20%
Test 2	20%
Classroom activities	20%

Graduate grades calculated as follows:

Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	20%
Oral presentation	10%
Final project	30%
Classroom activities	20%

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/drp/) and let me know in any way that you are comfortable with so that I can make arrangements to accommodate you.

Academic honesty

As a UF student you have subscribed to the Student Code of Honor. 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 me. I'm happy to explain it to you.

SCHEDULE (subject to change according to class needs and interests)

August 31: Writing as a sociolinguistic object

Readings: Lillis, Chapter 1

September 5-7: Introduction to the sociolinguistics of writing

Readings: Lillis, Chapter 2 and Chapter 4

September 10-14: Writing and regimes of language

Readings: Excerpt from Blommaert, Jan. 2010. *The sociolinguistics of globalization* pp. 80-101.

Juffermans, Kasper. 2011. Unequal literacy regimes and grassroots spelling practices in peri-urban Gambia. *International Journal of Educational Development* 31:643-653.

September 17-21: Writing and voice

Readings: Excerpt from Blommaert, Jan. 2010. *The sociolinguistics of globalization* pp. 102-136.

September 24-28: Spelling, scripts, orthography

Readings: Sebba, Mark. 2011. *Spelling and society*, chapters 1-3.

October 1-5: Spelling, scripts, orthography

Readings: Sebba, Mark. 2011. *Spelling and society*, chapters 4-7.

October 8: Test 1**October 10-12: Linguistic landscape**

Selections from Shohamy, Elana, Eliezer Ben-Rafael & Monica Barni, eds. 2010. *Linguistic landscape in the city*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

October 15-19: Linguistic landscape**October 22: First paper due****October 22-26: Grassroots literacy**

Readings: Blommaert, Jan. 2008. *Grassroots literacy*, parts I and II, pp. 3-96.

October 29-31: Grassroots literacy

Readings: Blommaert, Jan. 2008. *Grassroots literacy*, parts III and IV, pp. 97-200.

November 5-9: Digital writing

Thurlow, Crispin & Kristine Mroczek. 2011. Fresh perspectives on new media sociolinguistics. In C. Thurlow & K. Mroczek, eds. *Digital discourse: Language in the new media*. Oxford: Oxford UP. xix-xliv.

Androutsopoulos, Jannis. 2006. Introduction: Sociolinguistics and computer-mediated communication. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 10(4):419-438.

November 14-16: Digital writing

Readings: Lee, Carmen & David Barton. 2012. Multilingual texts on Web 2.0: The case of Flickr.com. In M. Sebba, S. Mahootian & C. Jonsson, eds. *Language mixing and code-switching in writing*. New York & London: Routledge.

November 16: Second paper due**November 19: Multilingual writing and writing in multilingual contexts**

Readings: Sebba, Mark. 2012. Researching and theorizing multilingual texts. In M. Sebba, S. Mahootian & C. Jonsson, eds. *Language mixing and code-switching in writing*. New York & London: Routledge

November 26-28: Multilingual writing and writing in multilingual contexts**November 30: Test 2****December 3-5: Research presentations (graduate students)**