

# ECOLINGUISTICS

LIN 4930 . LIN 6932. Fall 2024  
Tuesday Periods 5-6 (11:45-1:40) TUR 2306  
Thursday, Period 6 (12:50-1:40) MAT 05

**Instructor:** Dr. Fiona Mc Laughlin  
<https://people.clas.ufl.edu/fmcl/>  
**Hours:** Thursday 10:00-12:00 or by appt.

**e-mail:** [fmcl@ufl.edu](mailto:fmcl@ufl.edu)  
**Office:** 305 Pugh Hall  
**Phone:** (352) 392-4829



*Florida Mangroves*

*Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation/Tim Donovan*

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Welcome to ecolinguistics, a multifaceted and interdisciplinary field of investigation that aims to probe the relationship between language and the natural environment. We are currently living in what some call the Anthropocene, the informal name for an epoch marked by substantial human-made change to the natural environment, resulting in seemingly intractable problems such as accelerating climate change and the global dispersion of plastics and other pollutants that degrade the environment. This course will consider the ways in which people talk about their natural environment and the effects this has on human thought and behavior, on grammar, and on the environment. We will then turn our attention to the relationship between language endangerment and ecology in hotspots of linguistic diversity in the world to understand what language loss means for the planet.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The specific objectives of this course are:

- To gain a general familiarity with the field of ecolinguistics
- To acquire critical skills for analyzing discourses on the environment
- To gain experience in presenting oral and written arguments about language and the environment and language endangerment
- To develop a deeper understanding of the role of language in mitigating threats to the environment

## **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 more interesting – writer
- To develop your ability to make informed and articulate arguments, especially those related to language and the environment

## **Class format**

This course relies primarily on discussion of the material we will consider. The format of this class demands that you, the students, be 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, and questions related to the material and topic at hand.

## **Classroom culture**

Our guidelines on classroom culture reflect respect for yourself, your classmates, and your professor. Cell phones must be silenced and put away in a backpack or purse by the time class begins. Please do not leave them sitting on your desk as they will distract you from our lectures and discussions. You may take notes on your laptop if you prefer that to a notebook, but please do not engage in activities on your laptop that are not related to class because it can be distracting to students sitting behind you. Please be punctual and arrive on time for class. When we discuss controversial topics in class, please be respectful of other students, including those who have points of view that may differ from your own. The university classroom should be an open space for debate and the exchange of ideas.

## **Communication**

I communicate with students outside of class through e-mail. Please be sure to check your UF e-mail on a regular basis. You should familiarize yourself with professional e-mail etiquette [here](#) and apply it in your communications with all your professors.

## **Requirements & attendance policy**

As part of our classroom community, 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. There may of course be times when something such as illness, an emergency, a religious holiday, or an activity will prevent your attendance, in which case you will be given the opportunity to make up the missed work. This provision will not apply to non-emergencies like oversleeping or working. In the case of illness or an emergency, please contact me by e-mail as soon as it is feasible for you to do so, to discuss how you will make up what you have missed. If you are participating in a university or athletic event that requires travel, or if you will be observing a religious holiday, please let me know in advance by e-mail so that we can make arrangements regarding readings and assignments.

## READINGS

The following textbooks are **required** for this class:

Evans, Nicholas. 2022. *Words of wonder: Endangered languages and what they tell us*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Wiley Blackwell. Second Edition.

Ghosh, Amitav. 2016. *The great derangement: Climate change and the unthinkable*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Stibbe, Arran. 2021. *Ecolinguistics: Language, ecology and the stories we live by*. London & New York: Routledge. Second Edition.

Additional required readings are available on CANVAS (<https://elearning.ufl.edu>).

## GRADES

**Grades** calculated as follows:

Canvas posts (weekly)	20%
Class discussion (ongoing)	20%
Short written assignments (5)	20%
Papers (2)	40%

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/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

**SCHEDULE of TOPICS** (subject to minor changes according to class rhythm and needs)

\*Please consult CANVAS for materials other than those drawn from our textbooks. Readings on CANVAS are marked by an asterisk below.

**Week 1**                    **Introduction to ecolinguistics**  
Th 8/22                    What we will be doing in this course

**Week 2**                    **Ecosophy and ideologies**  
T 8/27-29                Readings: Stibbe Ch.1 & 2

**Week 3**                    **Framing and metaphors**  
T 9/3-5                    Readings: Stibbe Ch.3 & 4  
Short written assignment due 9/6

**Week 4**                    **Evaluations and identities**  
T 9/10-12                Readings: Stibbe Ch.5 & 6

**Week 5**                    **Convictions and erasure**  
T 9/17-19                Readings: Stibbe Ch.7 & 8

**Week 6**                    **Salience and narratives**  
T 9/24-26                Readings: Stibbe Ch.9-10

- Week 7**                    **Conclusions**  
T 10/1-3                    Reading: Stibbe Ch. 11
- Week 8**                    **Interlude**  
T 10/8-10                    Reading: Amitav Ghosh *The great derangement: Climate change and the unthinkable*
- Week 9**                    **The ecology of language endangerment**  
T 10/15-10/17              Reading: Gorenflo et al. 2013  
<https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.1117511109>  
  
Watch: "Endangered languages: why it matters." Mandana Seyfeddinipur, Director, Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR). [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7HZOsQYx\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7HZOsQYx_U)
- Week 10**                    **'The library of Babel'**  
T 10/22-24                    Evans Part I (Ch. 1 & 2)
- Week 11**                    **'A great feast of languages'**  
T 10/29-31                    Readings: Evans Part II (Ch. 3 & 4)
- Week 12**                    **'Faint tracks in an ancient wordscape: Language and deep world history'**  
T 11/5-7                    Readings: Evans Part III (Ch. 5, 6 & 7)
- Week 13**                    **'Ratchetting up each other: The coevolution of language, culture, and thought'**  
T 11/12-14                    Readings: Evans Part IV (Ch. 8 & 9)
- Week 14**                    **'On the brink'**  
T 11/19-21                    Readings: Evans Parts V and VI (Ch. 10 & afterword)
- Week 15**                    **Wrap-up**  
Th 12/3

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Access**

Students who require academic accommodation to access the full benefits of this class may apply 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, as well as the use of generative AI programs such as ChatGPT without explicit permission, is a violation of that Code. Any student engaging in such activities will be dealt with in accordance with University policy and receive a failing grade for the course. <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

### **Course evaluation**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students

will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>.

### **Campus resources**

#### Health and Wellness

*U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

*Counseling and Wellness Center:* Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

*Student Health Care Center:* Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).

*University Police Department:* Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

*UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:* For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

#### Academic Resources

*E-learning technical support:* Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

*Career Connections Center:* Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

*Library Support:* Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

*Teaching Center:* Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

*Writing Studio:* 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

*Student Complaints On-Campus:* [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.](#)