

Sociolinguistics of Writing

LIN 4930 . LIN 6932

Spring 2021. T 7 (1:55-2:45) & Th 7-8 (1:55-3:50) . Matherly 117 & online
(see below, under Special information for Spring 2021, for details)

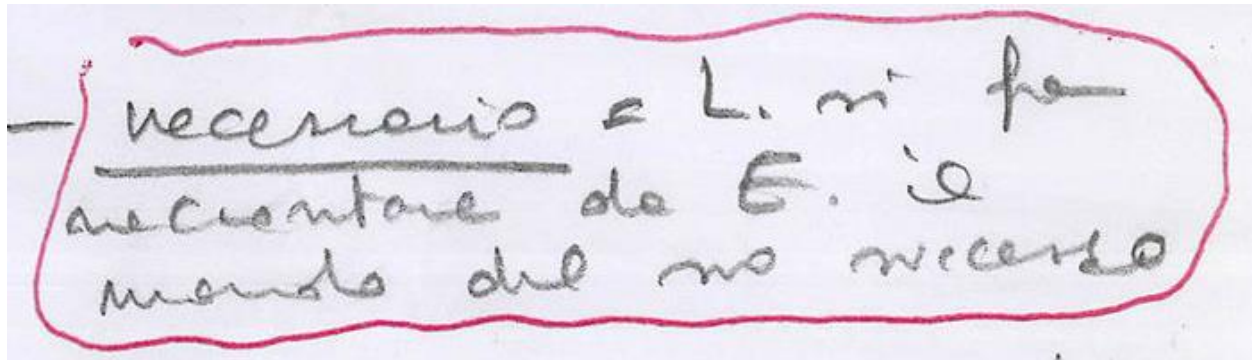
Instructor: Dr. Fiona Mc Laughlin

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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 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 – writer
- To develop your ability to make informed and articulate arguments

Class format

My aim is to limit lecturing to at most 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 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, frustrations, and (yes!) problems related to the material and topic at hand. Class assignments will be posted to Canvas two weeks in advance, so be sure to check it on a regular basis.

Requirements & attendance policy

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.

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:

Paper 1	15%
Paper 1 rewrite	10%
Paper 2	15%
Paper 2 rewrite	10%
Small assignments	25%
Classroom contribution	25%

Graduate grades calculated as follows:

Paper 1	15%
Paper 2	20%
Small assignments	20%
Classroom contribution	25%
Final project	20%

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, 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/>

***Special information for Spring 2021**

UF has implemented a hybrid teaching model for this semester which will allow some students to attend class in person while others participate simultaneously via Zoom. This will be a new experience for me as well as for you, and it will present some unique challenges. In this sense it will be an experimental semester, so I ask for your patience and flexibility, and I welcome your input into how best to make the hybrid model work.

Beginning the second week of the semester, Tuesday classes will be online for everyone, and Thursday classes will be hybrid. Those of you who signed up for the face-to-face section will meet on Thursdays in Matherly 117, and online on Tuesdays.

COVID safety requirements

In order to protect the University community, including staff, students, and faculty, UF has established a set of COVID safety rules and requirements for students. I expect your full cooperation with these. Most pertinent to our class are the following:

1. If you are enrolled in a face-to-face section of this class, you must be cleared for being on campus in One UF. You must be tested for COVID on a regular basis and will only be allowed on campus if your test results are negative. **If you are not cleared, you will not be allowed to attend class.**
2. You are required to wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose at all times in this class. **If you fail to wear a mask you will be denied entry or asked to leave the classroom.**

The use of Zoom during the current pandemic has resulted in a number of best practices. These are outlined on our Canvas web-page under Files>Netiquette. Please read them and apply them to your participation by Zoom.

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

Please check the CANVAS pages for details of weekly readings and assignments. These will be posted two weeks in advance.

January 12-14: Introduction to the sociolinguistics of writing

January 19-21: Writing and “regimes of language”

January 26-28: Writing and voice

February 2-4: Spelling, scripts, orthography

February 9-11: Spelling, scripts, orthography

February 15: First paper due

February 16-18: Introduction to linguistic landscape

February 23: Linguistic landscape

March 1: First paper rewrite due

March 2-4: Linguistic landscape

March 9-10: Grassroots literacy

March 16-17: Grassroots literacy

March 22: Second paper due

March 23-25: Digital writing

March 30-April 1: Digital writing

April 6: Second paper rewrite due

April 6-8: NO CLASS (ACAL)

April 13-15: Multilingual writing and writing in multilingual contexts

April 20: Wrap-up