

Language and Culture

Anthropology 335, Fall 2007

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Office hours: Tuesdays 3:45 – 4:45pm and 8:00 – 9:00pm

Course description:

This course provides a foundation in linguistic anthropology, one of the four basic subfields of anthropology. Linguistic anthropologists seek to examine language as a form of social action in order to understand the way culture and society emerge through its use. Throughout the course, we will examine language ethnographically and work toward a critical awareness of the role language plays in social, cultural and political relations. Students will become familiar with several key concepts important to the study of language and culture, including *indexicality*, *interdiscursivity* and *ideology*. Topics to be addressed include the following: language, thought and reality; meaning and interpretation; linguistic diversity and language endangerment; language and identity; pidgins, creoles and language change; language, gender and race; and language, the nation, and politics.

Books and readings:

- Alessandro Duranti. (1997). *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press (ISBN 0 521 44993 6). ---noted as LA on schedule---
- Keith Basso. (1996). *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*. University of New Mexico Press (ISBN 0 8263 1724 3).
- Julie Lindquist. (2002). *A Place to Stand: Politics and Persuasion in a Working-class Bar*. Oxford University Press (ISBN 0 19 514038 9).
- Additional readings will be placed on E-Reserve (noted as ER on schedule) and on RamCT (noted as RCT on schedule).

Course format and expectations:

The course will use a mixture of lectures, class discussions, and student-led presentations. Students are expected to read the assigned material prior to class and come prepared to discuss it each week. To prepare, you will want to jot down notes and questions that you think of while reading. It is up to you to make a personal commitment to your learning and make the most of all aspects of the class, including readings, class discussions, peer feedback, etc. A strong commitment to your learning will inevitably pay off in the knowledge you take away from the class at the end of the semester -- and of course, also result in higher grades.

What you can expect from me:

Timely feedback on your work. Interest in you, your ideas and your contributions to the course. Please take advantage of my office hours to meet with me outside of class to get feedback on assignments, clarify questions or to further discuss topics of interest to you. I am here to help you make the most of your learning experience in this course!

Critical thinking, reading, writing, discussion:

Anthropology has given us a way to step outside our own cultural reference points in order to examine diverse cultures on their own terms. Similarly, scholarly inquiry requires stepping outside our usual frames of reference to examine issues from various angles. In order to critically evaluate ideas, we must first understand those ideas as laid out by authors and classmates. You are encouraged to try on ideas and examine topics from different angles, to challenge ideas and

rethink your own positions throughout the semester as we engage in a collaborative process of scholarly inquiry into language and culture.

Class ambience and academic respect:

Academic courses are a place for intellectual challenges and interactive discussions. Everyone benefits from an atmosphere of creativity, diversity, and expressive freedom as we negotiate new understandings of concepts, and explore ideas from different angles. Practice the art of thoughtfully challenging a person's ideas while respecting the person, so we can create a supportive atmosphere where everyone can build on each other's knowledge and experience, and learn from each other.

Academic integrity and conduct:

Cheating and/or plagiarism on any assignment/exam will result in an automatic grade of 0 and could also result in an automatic F for the course. Each student is expected to know and adhere to the Student Honor Code and follow the policy laid out therein. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. More information on the CSU Student Conduct Code can be found at www.studentaffairs.colostate.edu/resources/students/policies.asp. Additional information on CSU's Policies and Guiding Principles can be found in the General Catalog at www.catalog.colostate.edu/index.asp?url=catalog_04-06/policies.

Special accommodations, religious observances and absences:

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability please submit to me a letter from disability services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. You will not be penalized for missing class due to a religious observance or travel to a university sponsored function; but you are responsible for notifying me of any conflicts *prior to* the missed class. Please make arrangements for alternate exams/assignments *at least two weeks prior* to a legitimate absence.

GRADE REQUIREMENTS:

- **4 critical response essays (incl. peer review) @ 100 points per essay = 400 points**
These essays will reflect your considered analysis of course material. Specific topics/questions and length requirements for the essays will be given out in class. These are not summaries of class notes or research papers, but should represent your own creative, critical, and well-organized thoughts on the course material. Essay #1 will be turned in solely to me for feedback. Thereafter, essays #2 through #4 will first be turned in to 2 peers for review. This means you will need to give copies of your essay to two classmates who will provide you with constructive feedback. In turn, you will provide feedback to them. With that feedback, you will then revise your essay. As a final product, you will turn in to me your revised essay along with the two peer reviews of the original draft (please staple). Due dates for each of these steps are indicated in the course schedule.
- **1 group presentation over assigned readings @ 100 points**
Each student (with a partner) is responsible for presenting and facilitating discussion for one of the assigned readings during the semester. This requires providing the class with an overview of the reading's key ideas and your considered reflections on them (~20 minutes), and then engaging the class with questions and facilitating discussion (~20 minutes) as we examine the issues. A handout or some other type of audio-visual aid is required, and a typed outline (see form on RamCT) needs to be turned in on the day of the presentation. Groups are encouraged to be creative. Grades will take into account group, peer and instructor evaluations.

- **Midterm exam @ 100 points**
The format will combine objective, short answer and essay questions.
- **Final exam @ 200 points**
The format will be similar to the midterm exam, and the exam will be cumulative. Final exam date is Tuesday, December 11 from 8-10pm in the same room as the class.
- **Optional: Short oral reports of current news on language, culture and society**
Each week, you will have the opportunity to gain 1 extra credit point by sharing with the class a recent news story that deals with language and culture. You will need to summarize the story to the class, and say a few words about how the topic relates to what we are studying this semester. To gain your extra credit point, you will need to turn in a copy of the story with your name on it.
- *Final course grade is out of 800 points.*

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- Aug 21 **Introduction to language and culture**
- Aug 28 **Linguistic relativity**
- “The scope of linguistic anthropology” (LA pgs.1-22)
 - “Theories of culture” (LA pgs.23-50)
 - *Optional:* “The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis,” Koerner (RCT)
- DUE:** Critical Response Essay #1
- Sept 4 **Linguistic diversity and language endangerment**
- “Linguistic diversity” (LA pgs.51-83)
 - “Expert Rhetorics’ in Advocacy for Endangered Languages: Who Is Listening, and What Do They Hear?” by Hill – *plus at least 1 of the 4 accompanying commentaries* by Fishman, England, Dorian or Hinton (RCT)
- *Drop/Add Deadline Sept 5
- Sept 11 **Meaning and interpretation**
- “Speaking as social action” (LA pgs.214-244)
 - “Conclusions” (LA pgs.331-339) *GROUP #1
 - *Optional:* “Dialogic emergence of culture,” Mannheim & Tedlock (RCT)
 - *Optional:* “Theories of meaning,” Taylor (pgs.248-273) (RCT)
- DUE:** Critical Response Essay #2 to peers
- Sept 18 **Ethnography of communication**
- *Wisdom Sits in Places* by Keith Basso *GROUPS #2-3
- DUE:** Feedback to peers on their Critical Response Essay #2
- Sept 25 **Identity and interaction**
- “Language and Identity,” Bucholtz and Hall (ER) *GROUP #4
 - “The ‘Father Knows Best’ dynamic in dinnertime narratives,” Ochs and Taylor (RCT) *GROUP #5
 - *Optional:* “Identity and interaction,” Bucholtz and Hall (RCT)
- DUE:** Revised Critical Response Essay #2 along with copy of peer reviews

- Oct 2 **Gender, identity and language**
- “Fashioning selves,” Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (RCT) *GROUP #6
 - “‘Why be normal?’: Language and identity practices in a community of nerd girls,” Bucholtz (RCT) *GROUP #7
 - *Optional*: “Introduction” and “Constructing, Deconstructing and Reconstructing Gender,” Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (RCT)
- DUE:** Critical Response Essay #3 to peers
- Oct 9 **Midterm Exam**
- DUE:** Feedback to peers on their Critical Response Essay #3
- Oct 16 **Pidgins, creoles, and language change**
- “Creole Languages: Forging New Identities,” Nichols (ER) *GROUP #8
 - “Language Variation and Change,” Thomason (RCT)
- DUE:** Revised Critical Response Essay #3 along with copy of peer reviews
- Oct 23 **African American English / Ebonics**
- “African American English,” Green (ER) *GROUP #9
 - “Ebonics and Its Controversy,” Baugh (ER) *GROUP #10
- Oct 30 **Race and language ideologies**
- “Three Questions about Race, Human Biological Variation and Racism,” Goodman (RCT)
 - “Language Ideology and Lang. Prejudice,” Lippi-Green (ER) *GROUP #11
 - “Language, race and white public space,” Hill (RCT) *GROUP #12
- DUE:** Critical Response Essay #4 to peers
- Nov 6 **Politics of language**
- “Language planning, language policy and the English-Only movement,” Wiley (ER) *GROUP #13
 - “A nation divided by one language,” Crawford (RCT)
- DUE:** Feedback to peers on their Critical Response Essay #4
- Nov 13 **Connections across discursive encounters**
- “Language, Struggle and Voice: The Bakhtin/Volosinov Writings,” Maybin (RCT)
 - “The social circulation of media discourse and the mediation of communities,” Spitulnik (RCT) *GROUP #14
 - “Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse,” Hall (RCT) *GROUP #15
- DUE:** Revised Critical Response Essay #4 along with copy of peer reviews
- Nov 20 **Fall Break**
- Nov 27 **Rhetoric, culture and politics**
A Place to Stand by Julie Lindquist (Chaps. 1-5) *GROUPS #16-17
- Dec 4 *A Place to Stand* by Julie Lindquist (Chaps. 6-7) *GROUPS #18-19
- Dec 11 **Final Exam, 8-10pm**

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF COURSE READINGS

- Basso, Keith. 1996. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Baugh, John. 2004. "Ebonics and Its Controversy." In E. Finegan and J. Rickford (eds) *Language in the USA: Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, pgs. 305-318. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bucholtz, Mary. 1999. "'Why be normal?': Language and Identity Practices in a Community of Nerd Girls." *Language in Society* 28: 203-223.
- Bucholtz, Mary and Kira Hall. 2004. "Language and Identity." In Alessandro Duranti (ed) *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, pgs. 369-394. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Bucholtz, Mary and Kira Hall. 2005. "Identity and Interaction: A Sociocultural Linguistic Approach." *Discourse Studies* 7(4-5): 585-614.
- Crawford, James. 2001, March 8. "A Nation Divided by One Language." *Guardian*. Available: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4147870,00.html>.
- Dorian, Nancy C. 2002. "Commentary: Broadening the Rhetorical and Descriptive Horizons in Endangered-Language Linguistics." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 12(2): 134-140.
- Duranti, Alessandro. 1997. *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2003. "Introduction" and "Constructing, Deconstructing and Reconstructing Gender." In *Language and Gender*, pgs. 1-51. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2003. "Fashioning Selves." In *Language and Gender*, pgs. 305-332. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- England, Nora C. 2002. "Commentary: Further Rhetorical Concerns." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 12(2): 141-143.
- Fishman, Joshua. 2002. "Commentary: What a Difference 40 Years Make!" *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 12(2): 144-149.
- Goodman, Alan. 2005, September. "Three Questions about Race, Human Biological Variation and Racism." *Anthropology News*.
- Green, Lisa. 2004. "African American English." In E. Finegan and J. Rickford (eds) *Language in the USA: Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, pgs. 76-91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hall, Stuart. 2001. "Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse." In Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor and Simeon J. Yates (eds) *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, pgs. 72-81. London: Sage.
- Hill, Jane. 2001. "Language, Race and White Public Space." In Alessandro Duranti (ed) *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*, pgs. 450-464. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Hill, Jane. 2002. "'Expert Rhetorics' in Advocacy for Endangered Languages: Who is Listening, and What Do They Hear?" *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 12(2): 119-133.

- Hinton, Leanne. 2002. "Commentary: Internal and External Language Advocacy." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 12(2): 150-156.
- Koerner, E.F. Konrad. 1992. "The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis: A Preliminary History and a Bibliographical Essay." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 2(2): 173-198.
- Lindquist, Julie. 2002. *A Place to Stand: Politics and Persuasion in a Working-class Bar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lippi-Green, Rosina. 2004. "Language Ideology and Language Prejudice." In E. Finegan and J. Rickford (eds) *Language in the USA: Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, pgs. 289-304. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maybin, Janet. 2001. "Language, Struggle and Voice: The Bakhtin/Volosinov Writings." In Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor and Simeon J. Yates (eds) *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, pgs. 64-71. London: Sage.
- Nichols, Patricia. 2004. "Creole Languages: Forging New Identities." In E. Finegan and J. Rickford (eds) *Language in the USA: Themes for the Twenty-first Century*, pgs. 133-152. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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- Spitulnik, Debra. 2001. "The Social Circulation of Media Discourse and the Mediation of Communities." In Alessandro Duranti (ed) *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*, pgs. 95-118. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Taylor, Charles. 1985. "Theories of Meaning." In *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers 1*, pgs. 248-292.
- Tedlock, Dennis and Bruce Mannheim. 1995. "Introduction." In *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture*, pgs. 1-32. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Thomason, Sarah G. Nd. "Language Variation and Change." Website of the Linguistic Society of America. Available: <http://lsadc.org/info/ling-fields-change.cfm>.
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Resources for Further Exploration

- Blommaert, Jan. 2005. *Discourse: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blount, Ben G. 1995. *Language, Culture, and Society: A Book of Readings*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Duranti, Alessandro (ed.). 2001. *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Duranti, Alessandro (ed.). 2004. *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Finegan, Edward and Rickford, John R. (eds.). 2004. *Language in the USA: Themes for the Twenty-first Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jaworski, Adam and Coupland, Nikolas (eds.). 2006. *The Discourse Reader*, Second Edition. New York: Routledge.