

Introduction to Sociolinguistics

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Office Hours: Wed 2-4pm, and by appointment.

Course Description:

This course serves as an introduction to sociolinguistics, an inter-disciplinary enterprise which draws on linguistic, anthropological, and social theory. We will examine the idea that social relations and language variation are mutually imbricated. The overall goal of this course is to provide you with the theoretical and methodological knowledge to pursue research in sociolinguistics.

We open with a discussion of dialects and language variation, moving on to an examination of methods used to study the relations between the social and the linguistic.

The topic of language variation and social organization takes up a four-week section in the class, providing you with a variety of ways to view the interrelatedness of fluid, social groupings and linguistic variation.

Other topics, including language and place, style, language attitudes, and stance, will be covered during the semester.

Texts: (1) Meyerhoff (2006): *Introducing Sociolinguistics* (required)
(2) Milroy & Gordon (2003): *Sociolinguistics: Method and interpretation* (SMI; required)

There will be additional readings on ereserve at the library.

I have also put some books on reserve that you will find useful to (selectively) thumb through during the semester. These books include:

Language Myths. 1998. Bauer, Laurie and Peter Trudgill, eds.
American English. 1998. Wolfram, Walt and Natalie Schilling-Estes.
Language and Gender. 2003. Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet.

Homework:

There will be five homework assignments total. They include two one-page reaction papers, as well as three somewhat longer papers (~5-7 pages) based on small projects. These projects will provide you with an opportunity to carry out small-scale sociolinguistic research. Papers based on these projects, as well as the reaction papers, should incorporate ideas from lecture and the readings in discussing information and/or explaining data.

Papers should be **typed, stapled** (when more than one page), and handed in the day they are due in class. I will not accept emailed submissions. If you know you will not be in class the day an assignment is due, please contact me ahead of time. Late papers will be accepted only in cases of emergency (if such a situation arises, please contact me).

Midterm and Final Paper:

Midway through the semester there will be an exam based on material covered up to that point. There will be no final exam. Instead, there will be a final paper (~7 pages), similar in aims and format to the other three papers written earlier in the semester.

Grading:

2 Reaction Papers @ 5----10
 3 Papers @ 15-----45
 Midterm-----20
 Final Paper-----25
 TOTAL-----**100**

Grading:

4 Reaction Papers @ 5---- 20 %
 2 Essays @ 20----- 40
 Final Essay----- 40
 TOTAL-----**100 %**

Grade Scale: 98-100: A+, 94-97: A, 91-93: A-, 88-90: B+, 84-87: B, 81-83: B-, 78-80: C+, 74-77: C, 71-73: C-, 68-70: D+, 64-67: D, 61-63: D-, < or = 60: F.

Tentative Schedule:

	Topics	Readings (for class days)	Assignments
Week 1: 8/27	Overview / Syllabus	(syllabus)	
8/29	Introduction to sociolinguistics	Meyerhoff : Ch 1	
8/31	Social worlds through language	Coupland and Jaworski (2009): Ch 1	
Week 2: 9/3	No class: <i>Labor day</i>		
9/5	Dialects, standards, and vernaculars	Wolfram & Schilling-Estes (2005)	
9/7	Why dialects?	Wolfram & Schilling-Estes (2005)	

Week 3: 9/10	Sociolinguistics: Models and methods	SMI: Ch 1	
9/12	Locating and selecting subjects	SMI: Ch 2	
9/14	Data collection	SMI: Ch 3	
Week 4: 9/17	Investigating linguistic variation	Meyerhoff: Ch 2	Variation assignment handed out
9/19	Phonological variation	SMI: Ch 6	
9/21	Interpreting higher-level variation	SMI: Ch 7	
Week 5: 9/24	Language change	Meyerhoff: Ch 7	
9/26	The social motivation of a sound change	Labov (2010)	
9/28	Accents in time	Chambers (2008)	
Week 6: 10/1	Language attitudes	Meyerhoff: Ch 4	Variation due / Lang. attitudes handed out
10/3	Language with an attitude	Preston (2010)	
10/5	Cross-dialectal variation in Arabic: Competing prestigious forms	Abd-El-Jawad (1987)	
Week 7: 10/8	Style	Meyerhoff: Ch 3	Reaction Paper One handed out
10/10	The anatomy of style-shifting	Labov (2001)	
10/12	Style and social meaning	Eckert (2001)	
Week 8: 10/15	Language and Place: Some origins	Chambers & Trudgill (1998)	
10/17	Place, globalization, and linguistic variation	Johnstone (2004)	
10/19	Variation and a sense of place	Eckert (2004)	Lang. attitudes due / Place and lang. handed out
Week 9: 10/22	Language & Social Organization I: Communities & Networks	SMI: Ch 5	
10/24	The speech community	Patrick (2004)	
10/26	Speech community and beyond	Rampton (2010)	Reaction Paper One due
Week 10: 10/29	Language & Social Organization II: Class	Meyerhoff: Ch 8	
10/31	Social Class	Ash (2004)	
11/2	Dialect Style, Social Class and Metacultural Performance	Coupland (2009)	Place and lang. due
Week 11: 11/5	Language & Social Organization III: Gender	Meyerhoff: Ch 10	Final paper instructions handed out
11/7	The power and language of men	Kiesling (2010)	
11/9	Humour, power, and gender in the workplace	Holmes (2009)	Reaction paper two handed out

Week 12: 11/12	Language & Social Organization IV: Sexuality	Cameron & Kulick (2003)	
11/14	Lip service on the fantasy lines	Hall (1995)	
11/16	The use of falsetto in constructing a persona	Podesva (2007)	
Week 13: 11/19	Stance(taking)	Jaffe (2009)	
11/21	Stance, style, and the linguistic individual	Johnstone (2009)	
11/23	No class: <i>Thanksgiving</i>		
Week 14: 11/26	Multilingualism and code-switching	Meyerhoff: Ch 6	Reaction paper two due
11/28	Code-switching	Myers-Scotton (2009)	
11/30	Social meaning in linguistic structure: Code-switching in Norway	Blom & Gumperz (2010)	
Week 15: 12/3	Whose language? Styling the other	Rampton (1999)	
12/5	Yorkville crossing	Cutler (1999)	
12/7	Use of Southern-sounding speech	Johnstone (1999)	Final paper due

Other Things to Note:

If you have a documented disability please set up a time with me to discuss your needs; you must also register with Disability Services in the Student Center if you haven't already.

The Honor Code applies in this class. You are encouraged to discuss the homework assignments and final paper with classmates, but you must write them up on your own.

One Final Note:

If you carry a cell phone, please turn it off or set it to silent before class begins.