

**Socio-historical linguistics**  
**FR 392K (#36780)**

Spring 2012

Monday & Wednesday, 2:00 – 3:30 pm, HRH 2.112

**Professor**

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**Office Hours**

Wednesday & Friday 10:00 – 11:00 am, and by appointment

**Description**

In this course, we will examine recent work in the field of sociohistorical linguistics (or historical sociolinguistics), in which the objective is to determine how social factors contributed to and interacted with both synchronic and diachronic variation and change in historical data. We will also pay particular attention to the methods used in conducting such research. Labov (1994) characterized historical data as “bad” or impoverished compared to the types of data available for modern sociolinguistic inquiries. Nonetheless, despite limitations imposed by the types of data available, scholars have been able to demonstrate the relevance of sociolinguistic factors (including speaker age, regional provenance, gender, social status, language register, discourse pragmatics, degree of bilingualism, degree of urbanization, etc.) in explaining historical variation and change. The course will begin by discussing Romaine (1982) and other seminal works before focusing on recent work on French (e.g., Ayres-Bennett, 2004; Lodge, 2004; Marchello-Nizia, to appear). Studies on English that have made a significant contribution to the field will also be included (e.g., Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003; Trudgill, 2010), and several meetings will be reserved for topics chosen by the class. In addition to small assignments (e.g., presentation of an article, problem set), students will design and conduct an original individual or collaborative research project. The results of this research will form the basis for an abstract, suitable for submission to a professional conference, and a research article. The course will be conducted in English; most of the planned readings are in English, but several are in French. A working knowledge of French is strongly recommended, as is a basic familiarity with sociolinguistics.

**Required texts**

Ayres-Bennett, W. (2004). *Sociolinguistic variation in seventeenth-century France: Methodology and case studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
Lodge, R. A. (2004). *A sociolinguistic history of Parisian French*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Highly recommended for purchase (but not required)

Nevalainen, T., & Raumolin-Brunberg, H. (2003). *Historical sociolinguistics*. London: Longman.  
Romaine, S. (1982). *Socio-historical linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## **Evaluation**

The course grade will be determined as follows:

1. participation, preparation, *assiduité, sérieux* (20%)

Diligent attendance, active participation, clear evidence of thoughtful and careful preparation, insightful questions and critiques – all the things that make the class richer, more productive, more interesting, more lively.

2. quiz (10%)

A short mid-semester check-up (take-home).

3. presentations/discussions of readings (10% x 2 = 20%)

Each student will lead discussion of two articles or chapters. The first article/chapter is one already given on the syllabus. The second will be a reading of the student's choice (more details below).

25 minute presentation with handout (if useful). Please be sure to do the following:

- briefly situate the reading in the field: why was it written, who is the author, what previous research does it follow from/respond to/challenge
- present the problem and the research questions/hypotheses
- discuss the type of data used
- present the analysis, discuss it, illustrate, etc., and anticipate questions from your audience
- discuss how the analysis does or does not address the problem/question/hypotheses
- discuss the claims/larger implications
- how does the article relate to previous class discussions
- offer a critique of the article: how well does it accomplish its goals, are the data appropriately exploited, is the method appropriate, is the analysis original, etc.
- be sure to leave something for the discussion – no need to say everything!
- please practice your discussion to make sure you finish in 25 minutes

Each student will nominate one article to be discussed in class (weeks 13 and 14).

Logically, this article will be centrally related to the chosen research project. Feel free to choose an article or chapter from the course bibliography (but not already included on the syllabus) or to propose a reading you have found published elsewhere (research journal, conference proceedings, collected volume, festschrift, etc.). This reading does not need to deal specifically with French. In general, avoid manuscripts circulating on the internet but not published elsewhere—they have likely not been peer-reviewed. You will need to provide a PDF copy of the article (this can be done on the copy machine in the FRIT office) to me so I can distribute it to the class (see course schedule for dates).

4. Research project (50%)

Each student will design and conduct an original sociohistorical investigation that involves French. The most successful projects are fairly narrowly concentrated; it is most prudent to start with a highly constrained question, which can be elaborated later if necessary. Please feel free to discuss your ideas with me as you decide on your topic. Your eventual goal should be to build this project into a conference presentation and a publication.

You may either work collaboratively (2-3 people) or individually, depending on your preferences and research interests. Suggested length: Single-author papers: 20-25 pages, double-spaced. Co-authored papers: 35-40 pages, double-spaced.

The research project includes several steps (see course schedule for due dates):

—1-page prospectus (5%)

- Typed, single space
- include a tentative bibliography (8-10 references)
- give an overview, state the problem, describe how you intend to approach the problem and the type of data you intend to use

—conference-style abstract (5%)

- Prepare a 1-page abstract (including data and references) in the style of a professional conference abstract submission (search online for past calls for papers for LSRL, LSA, NWAV, Diachro, etc.
- single-spaced, typed
- send me the abstract as an electronic file (email attachment)
- the abstract will be made public as part of the invitation to the final presentations

—conference-style presentation (10%)

- 20-minute presentation (+ 10 minutes for audience questions and discussion)
- handout (3-6 pages) and PowerPoint (or equivalent) presentation
- please rehearse so that you need only 20 minutes
- guideline: no more than 5-6 minutes of introduction/literature review/set-up
- FRIT and linguistics community at UT will be invited

—research paper (30%)

- typed, double-spaced, with consistent use of a style sheet (APA, MLA, etc.). Please make sure references are consistent! The paper will be graded on clarity and concision, readability, presentation and interpretation of results, and strength of argumentation.

### **University of Texas Honor Code**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

### **Documented Disability Statement**

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>

### **Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students**

E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>

### **Religious Holy Days**

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

### **Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)**

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>

## Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Date	Discussion	Assignments
1	Jan. 18	Introduction & overview	
2	Jan. 23	Chambers 2002 Labov 1994, ch. 1	
	Jan. 25	Posner 1997, ch. 2	
3	Jan. 30	Milroy 1992, ch 1 & 2	
	Feb. 1	Romaine 1982, pp. 1-25 Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003, ch. 1 & 2	
4	Feb. 6	Sankoff 1980, pp. 81-93 (updated version of Sankoff 1972/3) Lavandera 1978 Romaine 1982, pp. 29-37	
	Feb. 8	Lodge 1991 Lodge 1996	
5	Feb. 13	Ayres-Bennett 2004, pp. 1-37	
	Feb. 15	Ayres-Bennett 2004, pp. 37-60	
6	Feb. 20	Ayres-Bennett 2004, pp. 61-99	
	Feb. 22	Ayres-Bennett 2004, pp. 99-110 Bullock & Eilderts 2009	
7	Feb. 27	Ayres-Bennett 2004, pp. 111-143	
	Feb. 29	Ayres-Bennett 2004, pp. 143-180	quiz handed out
8	Mar. 5	Ayres-Bennett 2004, pp. 181-224	
	Mar. 7	Ayres-Bennett 1994 Martineau & Mougeon 2003	quiz due
SPRING BREAK			
9	Mar. 19	Lodge 2004, ch. 1 & 2	prospectus due
	Mar. 21	Lodge 2004, ch. 3 & 4	
10	Mar. 26	Lodge 2004, ch. 5	

	Mar. 28	Lodge 2004, ch. 6 & 7	
11	Apr. 2	Lodge 2004, ch. 8 & 9	
	Apr. 4	Lodge 2004, ch. 10 & 11	article nominations due
12	Apr. 9	Lodge 2004, ch 12 & conclusion	
	Apr. 11	Trips & Stein 2008 Kemp 2002	
13	Apr. 16	Valli 1983 Marchello-Nizia to appear student-nominated articles TBA	
	Apr. 18	student-nominated articles TBA	abstract due (send by email)
14	Apr. 23	student-nominated articles TBA	
	Apr. 25	Student research presentations	
15	Apr. 30	Student research presentations	
	May 2	Student research presentations	
	May 9	(no class)	research paper due by 5 pm (hard copy)

### **Select bibliography**

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- Lodge, R. A. (2002). The medieval sources of standardisation. In R. Sampson & W. Ayres-Bennett (Eds.), *Interpreting the history of French* (pp. 261-296). Amsterdam: Rodopi.
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