

**Department of Linguistics
Spring 2010**

Language and People

Course Number: LIN 350

Instructor: Robert King

Unique Number: 41155

Time and Place: MWF 2-3, CBA 4.328

LIN 350 “Language and People” deals with a number of different topics about language.

Some of the topics we cover in this course are: an overview of linguistics; myths about language; ethnicity and language; language and nation-building (India, Belgium, Turkey, and South Tyrol as case histories); language politics in the USA; language issues in language-troubled countries around the world; language death and language revival; history of English and English as a world language; the relation between language, thought, and behavior (the Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis); language and gender; the origins of African-American English; the language dilemma of the post-colonial writer; the origins of written and spoken language.

Almost all of the reading will be from a book I have written specifically for this course, called *Language and People: Language in Private and Public Life*. The chapters of this book will be posted on-line on Blackboard in pdf-format under Course Documents. There is no course packet for this course; you don’t need to buy anything. This is the cheapest course you will ever take.

Course content is adjusted according to the interests of the students, meaning that if there’s something you want me to take up in class, all you have to do is let me know. The course will consist of lectures and class discussions.

My regular office hours are M 1-2 and WF 11-12 in Calhoun Hall 507. Usually it’s simpler to grab me before or after class.

There will be two tests and occasional homework assignments from the exercises at the end of each chapter and on questions that arise in class. Sometimes I require the homework to be handed in, sometimes I don’t. **There will not be a Final Examination.** Your grade will be based almost completely on the test grades, but homework grades, speaking up in class, and asking questions will help decide close cases

Attendance is not required, but you probably won’t get an A in the course if you miss very much because I put on the tests things that arise in class but which aren’t in the textbook.

Textbooks

Robert D. King, *Language and People* (available on Blackboard only, in pdf-format)

Syllabus for Linguistics 350, LANGUAGE AND PEOPLE, Spring 2010

Chapter numbers under Reading refer to the on-line textbook available only on Blackboard under “Course Documents.” Homework (chapter exercises) will be discussed, not handed in; and test questions will be taken largely from the exercises.

| Week | Starting | Topic | Reading |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|--|
| 1 | 1/18 | Introduction | Introduction |
| 2 | 1/25 | Linguistics | Chapter 1 |
| 3 | 2/1 | Myths about language | Chapter 2 |
| 4 | 2/8 | Ethnicity, nationalism | Chapter 3, Chapter 4 |
| 5 | 2/15 | Language in India, USA | Chapter 5, Chapter 6 |
| 6 | 2/22 | Case histories | Chapter 7 |
| 7 | 2/27 | Death and revival | Chapter 8 |
| 8 | 3/1 | Consolidation | |
| 9 | 3/8 | Review | Test, Wednesday, March 10 No class Friday, March 12 |
| 10 | 3/15 | SPRING BREAK | |
| 11 | 3/22 | English | Chapter 10 |
| 12 | 3/29 | World Language | Chapter 11 |
| 13 | 4/5 | Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis | Chapter 12 |
| 14 | 4/12 | Gender | Chapter 13 |
| 15 | 4/19 | Origins of AAE | Chapter 14 |
| 16 | 4/26 | Origins of language | Chapter 16 |
| 17 | 5/3 | Review | Test, Wednesday, May 5 |