Description: An introduction to the study of culture in and through communication and the theory of signs. This class introduces and explores the nature and structure of the “uniquely” human achievement known as “language.” In so doing, we attend to the structural properties of languages and the social and cultural embeddedness of language in use. Languages are social and cultural practices and linguistic anthropologists attend to that interface between languages, cultures, and the individual.

Instructor information:

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Requirements: There are two exams (25% each for 50% of grade). These are to be taken in class on Feb. 23rd and April 12th. There is also an essay (2-3 pages) that is due May 3rd. This essay (25% of grade) will be a response to a question posed in class on April 26th (it will be a big picture question and hence will tap into the content of the entire class). The essay should be typed and double-spaced.

Over the course of the semester we will watch six films. For three of these films (you get to decide which three), you will write a film response. This should identify the key point of the film and your informed reaction to the film and how it relates to the course. They should be a paragraph or two in length. Bring paper on the days of the films so that you can write the film response. Write legibly. They should be turned in at the end of the class the film was shown in (there are
no make-ups for missing the film or the film response). These responses are worth 15% of your grade (5% each).

**Class participation** (10% of grade) is vital for a successful course and will be encouraged. I encourage students to ask questions and to speak freely in class.

I will not accept late assignments. Please do not ask. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Given the nature of the world, this syllabus is a tentative outline and subject to change if so needed.

**Grading:**
Two exams 50% (25% each)
Essay 25%
Film Responses 15%
Class participation 10%

**Grades:**
A 90%-100%
B 80%-89%
C 70%-79%
D 60%-69%
F Below 60%

**Required Texts:**

**On Reading:** I expect that students will do the bulk of their reading from Ahearn and Webster for the course over the weekends. Those readings that do not come from either Ahearn or Webster can be found in Files on Canvas.

**Canvas:** The syllabus and outside readings will be available via Canvas.

**On Laptops in Class:** No.

**Schedule:**

**Week One: Jan 19-22: Introductions**
Language? Culture? Communication?
Week Two: Jan 26-28: Socially Charged Language  
Ahearn: Chapter One and Twelve  
Webster: Introduction

Week Three: Feb 2-4: Doing Linguistic Anthropology  
Ahearn: Chapter Two  
Feb 4: Film 1 (Whistle speech)

Week Four: Feb 9-11: Linguistic Relativity  
Ahearn: Chapter Four  
Boas: On Alternating Sounds (Canvas)  
Whorf: Relation of habitual thought and behavior to language (Canvas)  
Sherzer: Discourse-Centered approach (Canvas)

Week Five: Feb 16-18: More Linguistic Relativity and Endangered Languages  
Ahearn: Chapter Eleven  
Webster: Why the world doesn’t sound the same in any language (Canvas)  
Feb. 18: Film 2 (Rising Voices)

Week Six: Feb 23-25: Taking Stock One  
FEB 23: FIRST TAKING STOCK (exam)  
Feb.25: Film 3 (Finding My Talk)

Week Seven: Mar 1-3: Communities  
Ahearn: Chapter Five  
Webster: Chapter One

Week Eight: Mar 8-10: The norm (multilingualism)  
Ahearn: Chapter Six  
Mar 10: Film 4 (Pibdin: The Voice of Hawai‘i)

Week Nine: SPRING BREAK (Mar 15-17)

Week Ten: Mar 22-24: Literacies  
Ahearn: Chapter Seven  
Webster: Chapter Two

Week Eleven: Mar 29-31: Performance  
Ahearn: Chapter Eight  
Mar 31: Film 5 (One Voice)

Week Twelve: April 5-7: More performance  
Webster: Chapter Three and Four
Week Thirteen: April 12-14: Taking Stock again
   April 12: SECOND TAKING STOCK (exam 2)
   April 14: Film 6: (A life without words)

Week Fourteen: April 19-21: Race and Gender
   Ahearn: Continue: Chapter Ten and Nine
   Hill: Language White Public Space (Canvas)

Week Fifteen: April 26-28: Poetics
   Webster: Chapter Five and Conclusion
   April 26: Essay Topic Announced

Week Sixteen: May 3-5: Language, Culture and Communication redux
   May 3: Essay due

Special Needs
Students with disabilities who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to me at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. See following website for more information: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/providing.php

Emergency Evacuation Policy
Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation: Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building.

Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building. If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.