

Fall 2012

LANGUAGE in CULTURE and SOCIETY

Introduction to the Study of Language in Culture and Society

ANT 325m (31220), LIN 373 (40805), SOC 352m (45635)
TTH 11-12:30

Instructor: Brian Stross

bstross@mail.utexas.edu

Office Hours TTH 12:30-2:00 & by appt in SAC 4.124

Web Page: http://www.utexas.edu/courses/stross/ant325m_files/ant325m.htm

FINAL EXAM Wednesday, December 12, 7:00-10:00 pm

Goals - The goals of this course are to introduce students to the study of language use from a sociocultural perspective and to develop skills (through fieldwork and data analysis) in analyzing the role that language plays in the structure and interpretation of human interaction. Students will collect language data from a "speech community" in a setting of their choice, and will use this data: 1) collectively as a basis for examining and questioning concepts discussed in lectures and [readings](#), such as ethnicity, identity, power, and gender as they are constructed through language, and 2) individually as a basis from which to generate an analytical paper, which shows an understanding of the major ideas covered in the course but which is specific to student interests.

Description - This course is an upper division introduction to topics in linguistic anthropology. Languages, like other communication systems, are adapted to new and different environments in which they are spoken, creating and maintaining social realities, reproducing cultural traditions, and conveying messages in a complex interplay of new and old information, sometimes necessary and sometimes frivolous, packaging meaning in various ways that generally conform to standards that can be articulated. As speech is an important mode of human communication, we start by outlining basic concepts allowing for the description of linguistic form. In the end we will focus as much on language use as on language structure, and in the process we will examine various expressive speech genres, metaphors that we live by, the power of language, gender preferences in communication, language learning, proverbs, jokes, and multilingualism, among other topics. We will examine these forms, processes, and contexts in an effort to deliver the tools necessary for describing and understanding the multiple ways in which language, culture, and society interact.

Requirements / Exams, Paper, Attendance

The course grade will be based on **two midterm exams** (25% each), a 10 page analytical paper based

on fieldwork due on the last class day (25%), and **one final exam** (25%). The final is comprehensive. No penalty for one unexcused absence, but further such absences can lower one's course grade by two and a half percentage points for each instance. Exams include information from lectures, [readings](#), and films.

Texts: Required: Susan Blum (ed.) 2009 1st ed. *Making sense of Language*. Oxford

[The Analytical Paper](#)

WEEKS Film info may be revised **during the semester**

WEEK 1. 8/30

Introduction - *Culture, Language, Communication, Meaning*

Topics: culture, communication, language, ([semiotics](#) and the theory of signs), ([sociolinguistics](#)), ethnography of speaking, discourse, reality and its social construction,

[the speech act and its functions](#),

Homework: Read Blum 1-4, [seeing the other](#) (click on this URL) (watch this Video on [Malinowski](#) [or [here](#)], and come to class prepared to say what [impressed you most](#))

Optional Further Background: *The Silent Language* (Hall),
Portraits of the Whiteman (Basso)

Film on Thursday [A World of Differences](#) (Audio-Visual library video 30 min.),

WEEK 2. 9/4, 6

Message Form - *Sounds, Words, Sentences*

Topics: What are ([phonemes](#), [morphemes](#), lexemes, [sentences](#); meaning),

Homework: read Blum 5-8;

[revisit the phoneme](#);

study this [notes](#) link for the midterm exam.

Film on Thursday [Secrets of Body Language](#) (100 minutes ½ shown)

WEEK 3. 9/11, 13

Message Form II - *More Sounds, Words, Sentences*

Topics: Manual language, ([nonverbal communication](#). [Documentary film](#).*)
IM-ing. Twitter. Walling (facebook)

Homework: , Read Blum 9-12; read online essay on [documentary film](#)

Film on Thursday [Do You Speak American: Up North](#)

WEEK 4. 9/18, 20

Language and Cultural Meaning - *The Expression of Meaning*

Topics: linguistic [Moonhawk on Sapir-Whorf](#), [Deutscher on S-W](#)
lexical and semantic components, classification,
[markedness](#)/implicational universals, fuzzy sets and focal meanings,
cultural [presuppositions](#) (D. Jensen), language as a [theory of reality](#) (S. Pinker),
metaphor and metonym,

Homework: read Hotchkiss, Children & Conduct (PDF on Blackboard),

Frake, How to Ask for a Drink (PDF on Blackboard)

Film on Thursday [Do You Speak American: Down South](#)

WEEK 5. 9/25, 27

Contextual Components: *Ethnography of Speaking*

Topics: Evolution of language (autonomous, non-autonomous; rhetorical style; (involvement vs non-involvement)

Participants: Power and solidarity, performance, respect,

Homework: Read Youssouf et al, Greetings in the Desert (pdf on Blackboard)

First Midterm Exam - Thursday Sept 27

WEEK 6 10/2, 4

Communicative Interactions

Topics: interactional synchrony; conversational structure, conversational postulates, (directives and responses), routines (greetings, apologies), politeness, social networks,* networking,* verbal art*

Homework: read Blum 23-25.

Start thinking about the topic of your [10 page analytical paper](#), due the last day of class

Film on Thursday 10/4 [Do You Speak American: Out West](#)

WEEK 7 10/9, 11

Societal Segmentation and Linguistic Variation: *Language and Class*

Topics: social stratification (class, caste); phonology, morphology, syntax.

What is an [accent](#)?

Homework: read Blum 26-29, and Labov (pdf on Blackboard).

Film on Thursday - [American Tongues](#) (dept. video, 56min)

WEEK 8 10/16, 18

Societal Segmentation: *Language and Ethnicity*

Topics: Black English in the US, the structure of AAVE. Romani language, Roma people; settings and contexts.

Homework: read Blum 30-34

Film on Thursday [Language of the Body](#) (D Morris 48 min)

Now is a good time to start work on 10 page analytical paper (**due on last day of class**)

WEEK 9 10/23, 25

Societal Segmentation: *Language and Gender*

Topics: [English and English Speakers](#): Pronunciation, intonation, grammatical Variation, vocabulary, conversational style, gender bias.

Cross-Cultural: power, complexity of form, linguistic marking of gender, Gender-exclusive vs gender preferential patterns, linguistic and stylistic preferences,

Images of gender in linguistic form.

Homework: read Blum 35-37

Film on Thursday [Gender Issues](#)

WEEK 10 10/30, 11/1

Language Learning and Language Change

Topics: language acquisition, LAD, rule vs. rote, sequences in sounds, Grammar, vocabulary, speech socialization, change. ([instructional strategies](#)) (feral children [1](#), [2](#))

Homework: read Blum 38-40 ([are there “bad” words](#))

Second Midterm Exam on Thursday Nov. 1

WEEK 11 11/6, 8

Acquisition of Communicative Competence

Topics: learning communicative styles (functional categories, politeness, Expressing feelings, disputing), learning status and role, learning The rules of conversation (turn taking, affirmations, narration), speech play and verbal art, gossip (see week 5).

Homework: read Blum 13-15, 20, 21, [Watch Learning from Advertising](#)
What can be learned from this?

Film on Thursday [Teaching Sign Language to the Chimpanzee Washoe](#) (48 min)

WEEK 12 11/13, 15

Societal Multilingualism

Topics: linguistic diversity, language standardization, language minorities, attitudes Towards other languages and speakers, bilingual education, indigenous/ Native languages, Creole languages. ([Ignorance Speaks Up](#))

Homework: read Blum 16-19, 22

Film on Thursday : *First Contact* (dept. video 54 min)

WEEK 13 11/20, (no class on 11/22)

Individual Multilingualism

Topics: language change (contact, innovation), language use in bilingual speech communities, bilingual conversational strategies, code switching, ([language revitalization](#)), ([language shift](#)), ([intercommunity miscommunication](#)).

Homework: read Blum 41-45; think about an encounter you've had recently in an educational, media, legal, or medical institutional setting, and come prepared to discuss it in class. Watch video at this [URL](#), or [this one](#), or [this](#).

WEEK 14 11/27, 29

Language and Institutional Encounters

Topics: language labels and status, institutional contexts. ([Literacy](#)), ([Salasaca: magical writing, literacy and power](#)), (education, health, law, [military](#))

Homework: Watch the video at [this link](#) [“Spin”] and come to class Prepared to discuss the language ideology that it reveals. Watch the video

at [this link](#) (or [ordering pizza](#)) and come prepared to discuss it in class.
Film on **Thursday** : *I'm British, but...* (dept. video, 30 min.)

WEEK 15 12/4, 6

Language and Institutional Encounters II

Topics: language ideology and institutions - [the media](#) ; [Media 2](#); [Media3](#);

Homework (suggestion only): Rewrite your lecture notes as an aid

To study for the final exam.

Make sure you have the 10 page analytical paper ready to turn in on last class day

Final Exam will be held at the scheduled time (Wednesday, December 12, 7:00-10:00 pm)

SAMPLE EXAMS

The exams will cover lectures, reading assignments, and films. Participation is appreciated, attendance is expected, and both can affect the course grade.

The following books will be useful to those who would like to pursue some of the course topics in more depth.

BOOK RESOURCES

Keith Basso. 1979. *Portraits of the Whiteman*. ISBN: 0-521-29593-9

Deborah Tannen 1986. *That's Not What I Meant* ISBN: 0-345-34090-6

Deborah Tannen 1998. *The Argument Culture*

Nancy Bonvillian. *Language, Culture, and Communication*.

Joel Sherzer 2002. *Speech Play and Verbal Art*.

Zdenek Salzman. 2007 *Language, Culture, and Society*.

Robin Lakoff 1990. *Talking Power: The politics of Language*

Robert L. Young. 1999. *Understanding Misunderstandings*.

Phil Agre [Information Studies \(home page\)](#)

S.U. Philips, S. Steele & C. Tanz. 1987. *Language, Gender & Sex in Comparative Perspective*.

VIDEO RESOURCES

[That's Not What I Meant](#) (AV library video VIDCASS 9706) a taped lecture of Tannen

[The Human Animal – Language of the Body](#) (Desmond Morris)

The Adventure of English (Melvyn Bragg) a tv series, has a few bright moments

The Tailenders

INTERNET RESOURCES

WEBSITES (for the curious)

VARIOUS Modes of Communication, how to:

Teach someone something technical

Approach Graduate School

Make contacts and network

Organize a conference

Design effective e-mail action alerts

Find your voice

Be a leader in your field

Host a speaker

**The following information comes from official UT policies
Please, read carefully**

Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University Code of Academic Integrity. No plagiarized work will be accepted. Sources consulted from books, journals, or web pages should be acknowledged. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Papers bought online or otherwise plagiarized will receive a zero.

You are encouraged to study together and to discuss concepts covered in lecture and sessions. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in the form of an e mail, an e-mail attachment file, a diskette, or a hard copy.

Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action. [During examinations, you must do your own work. Talking or discussion, comparing notes, and copying from others are not permitted during examinations. Any such behavior will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and University disciplinary action.]

Accommodations for students with disabilities

In compliance with the UT Austin policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students 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 the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed. See Web site below for more information: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/providing.php>

University Electronic Mail Notification Policy

(Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students)

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in e-mail address. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at

<http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

In this course e-mail will be used to communicate with students. You are responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class announcements.

The 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.

Religious Holidays

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holyday you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence.

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus

[Home](#)

[Department Page](#)