Fall 2011

LANGUAGE in CULTURE and SOCIETY
Introduction to the Study of Language in Culture and Society

ANT 325m (31045), LIN 373 (40740), SOC 325m (45450)

MWF 11-12 UTC 4.132

Instructor: Brian Stross
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Office Hours W 12-3 & by appointment in SAC 4.124

Teaching Assistant: TBA
Office Hours & by appt. TBA

Web Page:  http://www.utexas.edu/courses/stross/ant325m_files/ant325m.htm
Instead of Blackboard, this course will utilize the current webpage (above) along with e-mail for syllabus, notices and student support

FINAL EXAM - Tuesday, December 13, 9:00-12:00 noon. location TBA

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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   2009. (ed.) Making sense of Language. Oxford

**The Analytical Paper**

WEEKS  
Film info may be revised during the semester

**WEEK 1. 8/24, 8/26**
**Introduction** -  Culture, Language, Communication, Meaning  (**notes**)  
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 Friday 8/26  *A World of Differences*  (Audio-Visual library video  30 min.),

**WEEK 2. 8/29, 8/31, 9/2**
**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 Friday 9/2  *Secrets of Body Language*  (100 minutes  ½ shown),

**WEEK 3. 9/7, 9/9**
**Message Form II** -  More Sounds, Words, Sentence  
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 Friday 9/9  *Do You Speak American: Up North*  

**WEEK 4. 9/12, 9/14, 9/16**
**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 Friday 9/16 Do You Speak American: Down South

WEEK 5. 9/19, 9/21, 9/23
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 on Friday 9/23

WEEK 6. 9/26, 9/28, 9/30
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 Friday 9/30 Do You Speak American: Out West

WEEK 7. 10/3, 10/5, 10/7
Societal Segmentation and Linguistic Variation: Language and Class
Topics: social stratification (class, caste); phonology, morphology, syntax
Homework: read Blum 26-29, and Labov (PDF on Blackboard),
Film on Friday 10/7 American Tongues (dept. video, 56 min)

WEEK 8. 10/10, 10/12, 10/14
Societal Segmentation: Language and Race:
Topics: Black English in the US, the structure of AAVE, settings and contexts,
Homework: read Blum 30-34
Film on Friday 10/14 To Make the Balance (Audio-Visual library, 33 min)

WEEK 9 10/17, 10/19, 10/21
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 preference patterns, linguistic and stylistic preferences, images of gender in linguistic form.

**Homework:** read Blum 35-37

**Film on Friday 10/21**  Gender Issues

**WEEK 10. 10/24, 10/26, 10/28**

**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 Friday 10/28.**

**WEEK 11. 10/31, 11/2, 11/4**

**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 & verbal art, gossip (see week 5).

**Homework:** read: Blum 13-15, 20, 21

Watch: learning from advertising - think what can be learned from this?

**Film on Friday 11/4**  *Teaching Sign Language to the Chimpanzee Washoe* (48 min)

**WEEK 12. 11/7, 11/9, 11/11**

**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 Friday 11/11:**  *First Contact* (dept. video 54 min.)

**WEEK 13. 11/14, 11/16, 11/18**

**Individual Multilingualism**

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

**Homework:** read Blum 41-45;

Think about an encounter you've had recently in an Educational, Media, Legal, or Medical institutional framework and come prepared to discuss it in class. Watch video at this URL, or this one, and this URL.

**Film on Friday 11/18:**  *I'm British, but...* (dept. video, 30 min.)
WEEK 14.  11/21, 11/23 (Thanksgiving holiday 11/24-26)

Language and Institutional Encounters
Topics: language labels and status, institutional contexts. Literacy, Salasaca: magical writing, literacy and power (education, health, law, the 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 and come prepared to discuss it in class.

WEEK 15.  11/28, 11/30, 12/2

Language and Institutional Encounters 2
Topics: language ideology and institutions - the media; Review of semester

Homework (suggestion): Rewrite your lecture notes as an aid to study for the final exam. (this is only a suggestion)

Make sure you have the 10 page analytical paper ready to turn in on 12/2/11 (you can e-mail me)
A digital copy to save paper, rtf or doc, but not docx [you can save it as Word 95/2000/XP]

Final Exam will be held at scheduled time (Final is Wednesday, December 8, 9:00-12:00 noon. Location To Be Announced). (sample final exam)

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

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

BOOK RESOURCES

Deborah Tannen 1998. The Argument Culture
Nancy Bonvillain. Language, Culture, and Communication.
Robin Lakoff 1990. Talking Power: The politics of Language
Phil Agre  Information Studies (home page)
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

WEBSEES (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

Although I encourage you to work together, you are expected to do your own work and acknowledge use of anyone else's work or ideas. Academic dishonesty includes: (a) copying another student’s work or letting another student copy your work and (b) copying passages or
ideas directly from another source and passing them off as your own; that is, without properly referencing them. When scholastic dishonesty is suspected, I am required to notify you and possibly turn the matter over to the Dean of Students office. Penalties for academic dishonesty include a failing grade on the assignment or in this course and possible expulsion from the university. If you have specific questions about these issues, contact the Office of the Dean of Students in FAC 248.

[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 a 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](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/providing.php)

**University Electronic Mail Notification Policy**

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](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.