**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” (more accurately “languages”). 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:**

Anthony K. Webster  
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**Requirements:** There are two exams (25% each for 50% of grade). These are to be taken in class on Feb. 20th and April 10th. There is also an essay (2-3 pages) that is due May 3rd. This essay (20% 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 seven films. For four of these films (you get to decide which four), 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 20% 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 tangled and emergent nature of the world, this syllabus is a tentative outline and subject to change if so needed.

**Grading:**

Two exams 50% (25% each)
Essay 20%
Film Responses 20%
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. They should also be read prior to class.

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

**On Laptops in Class:** No.

**Schedule:**

**Week One:** Introductions
Language? Culture? Communication?
Week Two: Socially Charged Language
   Ahearn: Chapter One and Twelve
   Webster: Introduction

Week Three: Doing Linguistic Anthropology
   Ahearn: Chapter Two
   Film 1 (Whistle speech)

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

Week Six: Film 3 (Finding My Talk)

Week Seven: Communities
   Ahearn: Chapter Five
   Webster: Chapter One

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

Week Nine: SPRING BREAK: No Class (Mar 11-18)

Week Ten: Literacies
   Ahearn: Chapter Seven
   Webster: Chapter Two

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

Week Twelve: More performance
   Webster: Chapter Three and Four
Week Thirteen: Taking Stock again
April 10: SECOND TAKING STOCK (exam 2)
April 12: Film 6: (First Language)

Week Fourteen: Race and Gender
Ahearn: Chapter Ten and Nine
Hill: Language White Public Space (Canvas)
        Film 7 (A life without words)

Week Fifteen: Poetics
Webster: Chapter Five and Conclusion
         Essay Topic Announced

Week Sixteen: May 1-3: Language, Culture and Communication redux
             Essay due

Addendums (or for elite indexicals Addenda):

This is a Flagged Course (what does that mean?)
This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

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.