Culture & Communication (ANT 307) — Spring 2018

Monday/Wednesday 1-2.30 pm, SAC 4.118

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2-4 pm or by appointment

University Course Description

An introduction to the study of culture through communication and the theory of signs. May be counted toward the cultural diversity flag requirement. Meets core curriculum requirement for Social & Behavioral Science (I).

Detailed Course Description

Language is not only one of the quintessential attributes of “the human,” it plays a role in virtually everything we do. Yet we typically do not pay much attention to what it is that language does and how it does what it does. And when we do, language and its use in communication often appear lacking: it is disparaged as little more than an (imperfect) reflection of reality, as a medium incapable of adequately conveying thoughts, emotions, and experiences, or as a hollow activity devoid of significance (“all talk and no action”).

In this course, we look at language not as an inadequate version of some more fundamental reality, but as a medium that is a central part of reality for us as cultural beings living and acting in a social environment. Here we concentrate on two broad areas of concern: 1) language as a medium of social action, through which humans create & transform themselves and the world around them and 2) language as a medium of conceptualization, which provides a privileged lens on (or even constitutes a part of) mind. Attempts to understand language as a reflection of cognition divorced from sociocultural life and attempts to understand social life as composed of non-conceptual drives are equally limited from this perspective. The perspective on language developed here locates language squarely in culture and society and at the same time locates sociocultural life “in” language and communication.

Course schedule (subject to revision)

At the start of each week the thematic headings listed below most likely will not mean much to you. That’s okay. By the end of each week, the thematic headings for the week’s classes should be clear to you. That means you should be able to discuss how the readings relate to the issues mentioned in the thematic heading and how those issues relate to others we have discussed previously in class. If you find at the end of the week that you cannot do so, you should share your questions in class or come see me during office hours.

Required readings are marked with a dash (-), optional readings with a plus (+), and in-class readings with an equal sign (=). Graded activities are marked with asterisks (**).

All readings (except for the book) and reading questions will be available on Canvas:
https://utexas.instructure.com/

1. From the Picture Theory of Language to Performativity

Jan 17 - A Mirror of Nature & Mind: The Philosophical Inheritance
   = Genesis 2 (New International Version); Augustine: Confessions (1.8.13); John Wilkins: An Essay Toward a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language; Swift: Gulliver’s Travels (Part III, Chapter 5 selections); John Locke: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (Book 3:
chapters 2; Book 4, chapter 5); Rudolf Carnap: ‘The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis’

Jan 22 - Performativity & the Functions of Language
- Austin: Performative Utterances
- Jakobson: Linguistics and Poetics: Closing Statement (pp. 352-358)
+ Crapanzano: Preliminary Notes on the Glossing of Emotions
= Wittgenstein: Philosophical Investigations (para 23-27)

Jan 24 - The “Meaning” of Dude: Denotational and Indexical Signification
- Kiesling: Dude

2. The Functions of Sounds: Denotational & Indexical Meaning

Jan 29 - Phonetics, Phonology & the Functions of Linguistic Sounds
- Ladefoged: A Course in Phonetics (Chapter 1 and the section “Consonant & Vowel Charts” (pp. 34-36))
- Bloomfield: The Phoneme (pp. 75-85 in Language)
= Sapir: Sound Patterns in Language

Jan 31 - Sounds and Social Structure: Indicating Speaker Identities
- Labov: The Social Stratification of (r) in New York City Department Stores (pp. 43-57)
- Labov: The Reflection of Social Processes in Linguistic Structures (all)
+ Foley: Social Markers - Sociolinguistic Variables (pp. 328-333 in Anthropological Linguistics: An Introduction)

Feb 5- Sounds and Cultural Significance: Indicating Speaker Identities
- Eckert: Adolescent Social Structure & The Spread of Linguistic Change (p. 186
  “Adolescent Social Structure” through p. 207)
+ Eckert: Jocks and Burnouts: Social Categories and Identity in the High School (Chapters 1, 3-4)

3. Language Ideologies: Cultural Frameworks of Indexical Meaning

Feb 7 - The Culture of Standard: Ideological Reasoning and the Value(s) of Grammar
- Cameron: Dr Syntax and Mrs Grundy: the great grammar crusade
+ Heath: Standard English: Biography of a Symbol (in Standards & Dialects in English)
+ Shaklee: The Rise of Standard English (in Standards & Dialects in English)
+ Foley: Standard Languages and Linguistic Engineering (Chapter 20 in Anthropological Linguistics)
+ Collins: Hegemonic Practice: Literacy and Standard Language in Public Education
+ Agha: The Social Life of Cultural Value

Feb 12 - Register and Language: Language Mixing & Monolingual Ideology at the Margins
- Urciuoli: The Political Topography of Bilingualism & Good English as Symbolic Capital
  (Chapters 3 & 4 in Exposing Prejudice: Puerto Rican Experiences of Language, Race, and Class)
+ Foley: Language and Social Position (Chapter 16 in Anthropological Linguistics)
Feb 14  - Register and Language: Language Mixing & Monolingual Ideology at the Center
   - Hill: Language, Race, and White Public Space
   - Woolard: Sentences in the Language Prison
   + Hill: Is It Really “No Problemo”? Junk Spanish and Anglo Racism
   + Hill: Mock Spanish: A Site For The Indexical Reproduction Of Racism In American English
      (available at: http://language-culture.binghamton.edu/symposia/2/part1/)

**Feb 19 - Analyses of Contemporary Indexical Expressions**
** Assignment: Group Presentations**

4. The Makings of a Language

Feb 21 - Pidgins: Communicative Functions and the Creation of Languages
   - Gilmore: Kisisi (Intro, Chapters 1-2)

Feb 26 - Pidgins: Communicative Functions and the Creation of Languages
   - Gilmore: Kisisi (Chapters 3-4)

5. From the Picture Theory of Meaning to the Linguistic Mediation of Concepts

**Feb 28 - Structuralism: The Linguistic Mediation of Sound and Sense**
** Assignment: Group Participation Grades Due**

**Mar 5 - Assignment: Exam Essay 1 Due**

Mar 7 - Language Structure & Incommensurable Grammars
   - Greenberg: Language & Structure (Chapter 2 in An Invitation to Linguistics)
   - Evans: A Galapagos of Tongues (Chapter 3 in Dying Words)
   - Assignment: Group Participation Grades Due
      = Whorf: Language, Structure, and Reality
      = Lucy: Grammatical Categories and Cognition
      + Sapir: Form in Language: Grammatical Concepts (Chapter 5 in Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech)
      + Foley: pp. 33-40 in Anthropological Linguistics

— SPRING BREAK —

Mar 19 - Linguistic Universals: Cross-linguistic Features of Kin Terms
   - Kroeber: Classificatory Systems of Relationship (pp. 77-82)
   + Greenberg: Universals of Kinship Terminology: Their Nature and the Problem of Their Explanation
   + Greenberg: Language Universals (pp. 25-34, 72-87)
   + Foley: Anthropological Linguistics (Chapters 6-7)
5. Cultural Frameworks of Linguistic Meaning

Mar 21 - Linguistic Meaning and Cultural Knowledge
- Basso: Speaking with Names
  + Bulmer: Why is the Cassowary Not a Bird? A Problem of Zoological Taxonomy among the Karam of the New Guinea Highlands
  + Schneider & Homans: Kinship Terminology & the American Kinship System
  + Foley: *Anthropological Linguistics* (Chapter 5)

Mar 26 - Cultural Knowledge & Institutional Authority
- Hacking: Kind-Making: The Case of Child Abuse
- Mehan: The Construction of an LD student: A Case Study in the Politics of Representation

6. Cultural Concepts & Linguistic Practice

***Mar 28 - Cultural Concepts Beyond the Word: Discourse & Text
- Halliday & Hasan: Introduction (from *Cohesion in English*)
  *** Assignment: Bring a Song to Analyze
  + Jakobson: Closing Statement - Linguistics and Poetics (pp. 350-58)
  + Hasan: The Texture of a Text

Apr 2 - Language & the Speech Event: Deictics
- Benveniste: The Nature of Pronouns
- Jakobson: Shifters, Verbal Categories and the Russian Verb

7. Linguistic Action, Social Meaning, and Cultural Concepts

**Apr 4- Ritual: Parallelism, Deixis & the Performativity of Language
- Sebeok: The Structure and Content of Cheremis Charms (Parts 1-3 and part 5; focus in particular on Part 3 ‘Sample Analysis’ and Part 5 ‘The Texture of a Cheremis Incantation’)
  *** Assignment: Group Presentations (Song Analyses)

Apr 9 - Contextual Parallelisms & Performativity in Interaction Rituals
- Caton: “Salaam tahiya” - Greetings from the highlands of Yemen
- Carr & Smith: The Poetics of Therapeutic Practice - Motivational Interviewing and the Powers of Pause

Apr 11 - Narrated Event & Narrating Event: Contextual Parallelism & the Performativity of Stories
- Basso: Stalking with Stories

Apr 16 - The Emergence of Parallelistic Structure (Text) in Everyday Interaction
- Goffman: Replies & Responses

** Apr 18 - Performativity in Impromptu Interaction
  *** Assignment: Exam Essay 2 Due
    = Bucholtz: Word up - Social meanings of slang in California youth culture
Course requirements and general policies

Required Materials — There are two books you will need to purchase at the bookstore:


All other readings are available electronically through Canvas at: https://utexas.instructure.com/

Reading as an Anthropological Practice — Though anthropologists and linguists often spend some period of time doing research “in the field,” we gain access to other social, cultural, and linguistic environments largely through reading the accounts of other anthropologists and linguists. This course will be no different; we will glimpse other social and linguistic worlds only through careful reading. That means paying close attention to the evidence we are presented with, the interpretation of that evidence, and the claims the evidence is used to support. Reading is not a passive activity, it is an argument that we are taking part in. We should train ourselves to constantly be outlining the argument of the readings and assessing the evidence and reasons supporting the argument. What is the main claim of the reading? What position is the author arguing against? What is surprising in the author’s account? Why did it surprise you? What evidence does the author supply to support this claim? Is it possible to interpret the evidence in a different way? What additional evidence would it be useful to have? As you do the readings, keep these questions in mind.

As anthropologists and linguists, we are often confused by what we encounter in the field. In this course, we simulate that confusion by grappling with challenging data presented in articles and books written by anthropologists, linguists, and philosophers for other trained academics. This course has no textbook. Our goal—through reading and discussion—is to come up with anthropological and linguistic interpretations of this data and to understand the larger anthropological and linguistic issues and concepts raised by the data and its interpretation. You should treat the reading as a challenge, working to come to grips with the material presented with the help of our authors, the questions I provide to guide your reading, your discussion groups, and the general discussion in class. The aim is not just to help you become savvy readers of anthropological and linguistic arguments, but to help you to become better readers more generally, closely tracking arguments that marshal evidence and reasons in support of contestable, “surprising” claims.
Preparation, Participation & Readings — To assist your reading for each class, questions for each reading will be posted on the Canvas website. You should use these question to guide your reading; they point out the particular issues and data that you need ultimately to take away from the reading. I recommend that you do your best to answer these questions as you do the reading before class. You are welcome to work with classmates to develop your answers to these questions ahead of time. Then, bring your answers along with the reading to the next class. You will have the first 10 minutes of each class to go over the readings and reading questions in groups before we begin our discussion. Use this time to help one another better understand the reading and answer the questions. This is also time to figure out what remains unclear in the reading. You then can raise questions and help to supply answers in the general class discussion that follows. After class, you should be comfortable answering the questions on the reading. Again, I encourage you to speak with your classmates about the answers to these questions before, during, and after class.

Seven times during the semester you will have a pop quiz that consists of one of the questions on that day’s readings. At this point, if you have done the reading, worked in groups to develop answers to the questions, raised any residual questions during class, participated in the discussion... at this point, it should prove easy to answer any of the questions from that day’s readings. The reading questions will also inform the prompts for the exams, so you are encouraged to retain your answers to these questions to use when writing your exams.

Student Evaluation — Your grade consists of three components:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-question Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam Essays</td>
<td>40% (20% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
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One-question quizzes: Over the course of the semester, you will be quizzed 7 times at the end of class. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped before calculating your final grade. Your best 6 quiz grades compose 20% of your final grade. These quizzes will consist of one reading question selected from the questions on that day’s readings. Quizzes are closed book. You are allowed—encouraged, in fact—to discuss the questions ahead of time with classmates. Quizzes will be graded with either a check plus, check, check minus, or zero.

A check plus (= 96) is reserved for responses that are particularly thoughtful and draw connections to other readings or larger themes discussed in the class.
A check (= 86) is given for responses that offer a satisfactory but not particularly developed response to the question.
A check minus (= 76) is given for answers that are not, for the most part, satisfactory but show some familiarity with the reading.
A zero (=0) is given for missed quizzes and answers that show no familiarity with the reading.

Exam Essays: There will be two exam essays during the semester. You will have a week to respond individually to a prompt with a 4-5 page essay that draws connections between the themes discussed during the previous weeks of the course. The best preparation for exam essays is to: 1) work through the reading questions in the way described above; 2) attend class and take notes, paying attention not only to answering the reading questions, but to other materials introduced in discussion that are not in the readings; 3) review your notes and discuss them with classmates; 4) raise any questions you have about lectures during the following lecture; 5) if questions remain, raise your questions in office hours with me or the TAs; and 6) attend the review sessions for the exams. The midterm and final are each worth 33% of your final grade.

Participation: Your participation grade consists of several elements:

1) Group Presentations: there are two group presentations during the semester. You will be graded by your fellow group members and me on the check, check plus, etc. scale for your contribution to the presentation.
2) Group Discussions: At the start of each class there will be 10 minutes devoted to group
discussion of the readings and the reading questions. Your fellow group members will evaluate
your contribution to these discussions toward the midpoint and at the end of the course.
3) Self-Evaluation: During the semester there will be several “pop” self-evaluations of your
participation in individual class sessions. You will evaluate your participation in that class session
on a check, check plus, etc. scale and provide comments in support of your evaluation.
4) Class Discussions: The instructor will evaluate your overall participation in class discussions at
the end of the semester in light of your own and your fellow group members’ assessments.

Final Project: You will choose and analyze a linguistic genre that you find to be particularly important to some
group of people. Your analysis will be 8-10 pages and include: 1) an analytic description of the genre supported
with examples; 2) the identification of key cultural concepts found in the genre; 3) the identification of key social
actions accomplished in the performance of the genre; and 4) an argument about why this genre is significant to a
particular group of people. More details later.

Make-ups & Excused Absences — The only absences that will be considered excused are for religious holidays and
for extenuating circumstances due to an emergency (with a note from a doctor, nurse, or university official
documenting the emergency). If you plan to miss class due to observance of a religious holiday, you must notify the
instructor at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of the religious holiday. You will be given an
opportunity to complete missed work within a reasonable time after the absence. Otherwise, there will be no
make-up quizzes or exams without a note from a doctor, nurse, or university official excusing your absence.

Inside & Outside the Classroom — Readings for the day’s class should always be brought to class. I recommend
that you print out readings available electronically on Canvas so that you are not dependent on electronic devices
to do class readings. Computers, phones, and other electronic devices are allowed in class so long as they are not
disruptive to others. If these devices become disruptive, I will ask that they not be brought into class. As long as
these devices are not disruptive to others, you are solely responsible for how you use these devices in class. The
TAs and I are not responsible for rehashing material that you miss because you are distracted in class or because
you are absent (unless you have a note from a doctor, nurse, or university official). If you miss a class, you should
speak with your classmates to catch up on course announcements and notes. If you attend class, ask question
there, and still feel uncertain about class materials, please see me or one of the TAs during office hours. It is your
responsibility to ensure that you are keeping up with all that is being done in class. Do not hesitate to ask
questions in class or during office hours.

Academic Integrity — Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code:

“As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and
uphold academic integrity.”

This means that work you produce on assignments, tests and exams is all your own work, unless it is assigned as
group work. You are welcome to work with classmates to prepare for quizzes and exams, but you may not help
each other in any way while taking quizzes and exams. All quizzes and exams are closed book. Copying answers
from any source during quiz or exam periods is a serious offense and you will be subject to academic disciplinary
action, including failure of the course.
You are responsible for understanding UT’s Academic Honesty Policy which can be found at the following web
address: [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sis/acint_student.php]

Students with Disabilities — Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from
the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259,
[http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/]

- Please request a meeting as soon as possible for us to discuss any accommodations
- Please notify me as soon as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible
- Please notify me if any of the physical space is difficult for you
University Policies

Religious Holy Days — By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Q Drop Policy — If you want to drop a class after the 12th class day, you’ll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see: http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop

University Resources for Students — The university has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning. Use these to help you succeed in your classes.

The Sanger Learning Center: Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center’s classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slcc or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).

The University Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT student, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance we provide is intended to foster students’ resourcefulness and self-reliance. http://uwc.utexas.edu/

The Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) provides counseling, psychiatric, consultation, and prevention services that facilitate students’ academic and life goals and enhance their personal growth and well-being. http://cmhc.utexas.edu/

Student Emergency Services: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/

ITS: Need help with technology? http://www.utexas.edu/its/


Canvas help is available 24/7 at https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/633028/pages/student-tutorials


- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.
- Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050
- Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: utexas.edu/emergency.