LANGUAGE in CULTURE and SOCIETY

ANT 325m (30175), LIN 373 (40760), SOC 352m (45610)

Fall Semester 2010   MWF 11-noon     UTC  4.132

Instructor:  Brian Stross   EPS 2.204  hours MF 12-1pm bstross@mail.utexas.edu
Teaching Assistant:  Amber O’Connor  hours  (tbaic) aoconnor@austin.rr.com

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

Instead of Blackboard, this course will use the current webpage (above), along with e-mail, for syllabus, notices, and student support

Final Exam:  Wednesday, December 9, 7:00–10:00 pm.

Prerequisites:  none

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, 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 describable ways. 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 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.

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 and negotiated 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 the individual student’s interests.

Requirements / Exams, Paper, Attendance:
The course grade will be based on two midterm exams (25% each), a comprehensive final exam (25%), and a 10 page (double spaced) analytical paper, derived from fieldwork, that is due on the last class day (see this URL
Exams include information from lectures, readings, and films.

Attendance: No penalty for one unexcused absence, but each additional unexcused absence can lower one’s course grade by two and a half percentage points.

**Text:** Susan Blum (ed.) 2009. *Making Sense of Language.*

**Brief Overview of Major Course Requirements:** will include attending class, doing the assigned homework, taking the exams, and writing the analytical paper. 1st Mid-term exam is on September 25, 2nd Mid-term exam is on October 30, Final exam is on December 9.

**Weekly Lecture and Discussion Topics:**

**WEEK 1. 8/26, 8/28**
**Introduction** - Culture, Language, Communication, Meaning, Semiotics,
The Speech Act and its Functions.

**WEEK 2. 8/31, 9/2, 9/4**
**Message Form I** - Sounds, Words, Sentences; phonemes, morphemes, lexemes, phrases, clauses, sentences.

**WEEK 3. 9/9, 9/11**
**Message Form II** - More Sounds, Words, Sentences; manual language, Non-verbal communication, documentary film, IM-ing, Twitter, Walling (facebook).

**WEEK 4. 9/14, 9/16, 9/18**
**Language and Cultural Meaning** - The Expression of Meaning; Linguistic determinism/Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, semantic components, classification, recoding, markedness/implicational universals, fuzzy sets and focal meanings, metaphor & metonym.

**WEEK 5. 9/21, 9/23, 9/25**
**Contextual Components: Ethnography of Speaking:**
Evolution of language (autonomous, non-autonomous; rhetorical style; (involvement vs non-involvement)
Participants: Power and solidarity, performance, respect, gossip
**First Midterm Exam - Friday 9/25**

**WEEK 6. 9/28, 9/30, 10/2**
**Communicative Interactions:** interactional synchrony, conversational structure, conversational postulates, (directives and responses), routines (greetings, apologies), politeness, social networks, networking, verbal art and speech play.
WEEK 7. 10/5, 10/7, 10/9
Societal Segmentation and Linguistic Variation: Language and Class;
social stratification (class, caste); phonology, morphology, syntax

WEEK 8. 10/12, 10/14, 10/16
Societal Segmentation: Language and Race:
Black English in the US, the structure of AAVE, settings and contexts.

WEEK 9 10/19, 10/21, 10/23
Societal Segmentation: Language and Gender: 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.

WEEK 10. 10/26, 10/28, 10/30
Language Learning and Language change: language acquisition, LAD,
rule vs. rote, sequences in sounds, grammar, vocabulary, speech
socialization, change, instructional strategies, feral children. taboowords
Second Midterm Exam; Friday 10/30

WEEK 11. 11/2, 11/4, 11/6
Acquisition of Communicative Competence; Learning communicative
styles (functional categories, politeness, expressing feelings, disputing),
learning status and role, learning the rules of conversation (turn taking,
back-channel cues, narration), speech play & verbal art, gossip (see week 5),

WEEK 12. 11/9, 11/11, 11/13
Societal Multilingualism: linguistic diversity, language standardization,
language minorities, code switching, attitudes towards other languages
and speakers, bilingual education, indigenous/native languages, Creole
languages.

WEEK 13. 11/16, 11/18, 11/20
Individual Multilingualism: language change (contact, innovation), language use
in bilingual speech communities, bilingual conversational strategies,
language revitalization, language shift, interethnic miscommunication.

Language and Institutional Encounters; language labels and status,
institutional contexts, literacy, salasaca: magical writing, literacy and power,
education, health, law, the military.

WEEK 15. 11/30, 12/2, 12/4
Language and Institutional Encounters 2
Topics: language ideology and institutions - the media; Review of semester

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 the 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 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
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
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 Holy days**

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 holy day 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