Language Endangerment/Rights (ANT 320L [31225]/LIN 373 [41005])

Tuesday & Thursday 11-12.30 pm, SAC 4.174

Instructor: James Slotta

Course Description

The 21st century, linguists say, could see the “death or doom” of 90 percent of the world’s languages. In response, non-governmental organizations, academics, and activists have responded with campaigns to preserve and revitalize “dying” languages. At the same time, lawyers, legislators, and political theorists have built the groundwork for the recognition of “language rights” as a tool for defending small-scale and minority language communities against the spread of national and global languages. In this course, we examine such efforts in order to ask: why does the idea of language death inspire all of this work and attention? What is “a language” – what properties are seen to inhere in language – that drives these activities? Here we will explore views of language that underpin the anxieties and efforts of the language rights and revitalization movements: from the place of language in the 19th and 20th century politics of national autonomy to the role of language as a repository of worldviews and an emblem of our shared humanity. In the process, we see how “language” and distinct “languages” are situated at the center of imaginations of community and moral anxieties over autonomy, with all of the political and ethical implications that result for people who are recognized as having their own language as well as those who recognize the “languagedness” of others.

Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

(*) indicates days when there are presentations
(**) indicates days when there are written assignments due
(-) indicates readings that are obligatory
(+) indicates readings that are optional

All readings and reading questions will be available on Canvas: https://utexas.instructure.com/

Language Diversity

1-17 - Introduction: How Many Languages?
   + Nicholas Evans. Warramurrungunji's Children. In Dying Words, pp 5-22

1-19 - What is Language Diversity?
   - Nicholas Evans. A Great Feast of Languages & A Galapagos of Tongues. In Dying Words, pp. 45-68

*1-24 & 26 - The Range of Linguistic Diversity & It’s Value (to Linguists)

   Everyone read for Tuesday (1-24):

   Group presentations on one of the following:
      (A) RMW Dixon. Today's Priorities. In The Rise & Fall of Languages, pp. 116-127
      (B) Marianne Mithun. The significance of diversity in language endangerment and preservation. In Endangered Languages, pp. 163-182
      (C) Ken Hale. On endangered languages and the importance of linguistic diversity In Endangered Languages, pp. 192-216
(D) K David Harrison, An Extinction of (Ideas about) Species. In When Languages Die, pp. 23-55
(F) K David Harrison. Worlds within Words. In When Languages Die, pp. 205-233

I-31- Library Session (Pick a Language)

Language, Thought & Culture

2-2 - Linguistic Relativity & Cultural Concepts
- Franz Boas. On Alternating Sounds (pp. 72-77)
- Benjamin Lee Whorf. A Linguistic Consideration of Thinking in Primitive Communities (pp. 65-86) & Languages and Logic (pp. 233-245.)

2-7 - Linguistic Relativity & Human Cognition

*2-9 - Language Loss is Culture Lost?
- Kwachka & Basham. Literacy acts and cultural artifacts: on the extension of English modals. (Pp. 413-429)
- Anthony Woodbury. Documenting rhetorical, aesthetic, and expressive loss in language shift. In Endangered Languages, pp. 234-258

*2-14 - Language Loss is Culture Preserved?
- Don Kulick. Language Shift & Cultural Reproduction, Prologue (ix-x) & Introduction (1-20)
- Don Kulick. Anger, Gender, Language Shift, and the Politics of Revelation in a Papua New Guinean Village (Pp. 89-100)

*2-16 - Where is Culture?: Language vs. Speech (Guest: Tony Webster)
- Peterson & Webster. Speech play and language ideologies in Navajo terminology development

Language, Identity & Autonomy

*2-21 - Kultur & Language, Political Autonomy & Hierarchy
- Norbert Elias. On the sociogenesis of the concepts of “civilization” and “culture.” In The Civilizing Process.
  + Wilhelm von Humboldt. Linguistic Variability and Intellectual Development. (Chapters 1-4: pp. 1-25)
  + Joseph Errington. Linguistics in a Colonial World (Chapters 3-4)

*2-23 - Colonialism, Nationalism, and Vernacular Languages
- UNESCO. The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education. (Pp. 8-22 & 45-59)
*2-28 - Minority Languages & Ethnonationalism
  - Richard Handler. *Nationalism & the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (Chapters 2, 7)
  + Fischman, Joshua. “What Do You Lose when You Lose Your Language?”

*3-2 - Purism & Identity
  - Jane & Kenneth Hill. Mixed grammar, purist grammar, and language attitudes in modern Nahuatl.

3-7 - Revitalization & Indigeneity
  - Film: *Heenetiineyoo3eiiho’* (The Language Healers)
  + Eleanor Nevins. Indigenous Languages and the Mediation of Communities.

3-9 - Writing Workshop

3-14/3-16 - SPRING BREAK

The Nation-State, Globalization & the Value of Communication

3-21 - Postcolonial Globalization & the Consolidation of Global Languages
  + Chaise LaDousa. Disparate markets: Language, nation, and education in North India
  + Lavanya Murali Proctor. English and Globalization in India: The Fractal Nature of Discourse
  + Hans Raj Dua. The National Language and the ex-Colonial Language as Rivals: The Case of India.

**3-23 - Globalization & the Commodification of Language
  - Film: *Diverted to Delhi*
  - *Annotated Bibliographies Due*

*3-28 - Globalization, Commodification, and Minority Languages
  - Monica Heller. Globalization, the new economy, and the commodification of language and identity.

*3-30 - Language & Autonomy: Identity vs. Choice
  - Peter Ladefoged. Another View of Endangered Languages. (Pp 809-811)
  - Nancy Dorian. Discussion note: A response to Ladefoged’s other view of endangered languages.

Preservative Measures: Language Rights & Revitalization

*4-4 - Language Rights: A Liberal Response to Dominant Languages
  - Patten & Kymlicka. Introduction: Language rights and political theory: contexts, issues, and approaches.

*4-6 - The Limits of Language Rights: Autonomy or Inequality?
  - Joshua Fishmann. On the Limits of Ethnolinguistic Democracy.
  - Jan Blommaert. The Asmara Declaration as a Sociolinguistic Problem: Reflections on Scholarship and Linguistic Rights (Pp. 131-142)
  + Jacques Maurais. Regional majority languages, language planning, and linguistic rights.
*4.11 - Possessive Individualism & Language Rights: Are Language Rights Cultural Wrongs?

*4.13 - Revitalization: Preservation vs. Transformation, Authenticity vs. Authority

+ Eleanor Nevins. Learning to Listen: Confronting Two Meanings of Language Loss in the Contemporary White Mountain Apache Speech Community
+ Patrick Eisenlohr. Language revitalization and new technologies: cultures of electronic mediation and the refiguring of communities. (Pp. 21-45)

Discourses of Endangerment

*4.18 - The Language of Language Endangerment
- Bernard Perley. Zombie linguistics: Experts, endangered languages and the curse of undead voices.

+ Wayt Gibbs. Saving Dying Languages. (Pp. 79-85)
+ Joseph Errington. Getting Language Rights: The Rhetorics of Language Endangerment and Loss

4.20 - The Heroic Age of Linguistics
- Film: The Linguists

+ K David Harrison. When Languages Die, pp. 3–21
+ Film: Language Matters with Bob Holman (http://www.languagemattersfilm.com/)

4.25 - Unique and Fragile Creations: Language, Humanity, and Life
- Robert Moore. Disappearing, Inc.: Glimpsing the sublime in the politics of access to endangered languages.

+ Loh & Harmon. Biocultural Diversity: Threatened Species, Endangered Languages
+ Michael Krauss. Linguistics and biology: Threatened linguistics and biological diversity compared.
+ Nettle & Romaine. Vanishing Voices (Chapters 3 & 4)
+ UNESCO/Terralingua. Sharing a world of difference

+ Joshua Fishman. Whorfianism of the Third Kind: Ethnolinguistic Diversity as a Worldwide Societal Asset

*4.27 - Final Poster Presentations

*5.2 - Final Poster Presentations

**5.4 - Wrap Up
- Final Papers Due
Course requirements and general policies

Required Materials — There are no books you will need to purchase at the bookstore. All the readings are available electronically through Canvas at: https://utexas.instructure.com/

Reading as an Anthropological & Linguistic Practice — Though anthropologists and linguists often spend some period of time doing research “in the field,” we gain access to other social and linguistic environments largely through reading the accounts of other scholars. 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 question in mind.

Preparation for Class — To assist your reading for each class session, questions for each reading will be posted on the Canvas website. You should use these questions 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. Then, bring your answers along with the reading to the class, where the reading will be discussed further. Following 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 and after class. If you are uncertain how to answer some of the questions, please raise your questions in class. I am not here to provide answers to these questions, though I will facilitate discussion and ask questions that help you to answer the reading questions.

Student Evaluation — Your grade consists of a number of components:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Language Overview</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Argument of Paper</td>
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<td>Final Poster Presentation</td>
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<td>Paper</td>
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<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
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One-question quizzes: There will be 6 pop quizzes over the course of the semester. These quizzes will consist of one reading question for the readings for that day’s class. Quizzes will be given at the end of class, so there will be time to discuss the material first. You are allowed—encouraged, in fact—to discuss the questions ahead of time with classmates. Quizzes will be graded with either a check, check plus, check minus, or zero. A check is given for responses that offer a satisfactory but not particularly developed response to the question. A check plus is reserved for responses that are particularly thoughtful: they draw connections to other readings or larger themes discussed in the class; they insightfully discuss data and its relationship to the question; they outline key parts of the argument made in the reading that are relevant to answering the question. A check minus is given for answers that are not, for the most part, satisfactory but show some familiarity with the reading. A zero is given for missed quizzes and answers that show no familiarity with the reading.

Check Plus - A (96)
Check   - B+ (89)
Check Minus - C (76)
Zero    - 0
There will be 6 quizzes over the course of the semester and your lowest quiz grade will be dropped before calculating your final grade. Your 5 best quiz grades compose 25% of your final grade.

*Participation:* This course depends on your engagement and participation to succeed. Participation will be graded on the same check, check plus, etc. scale as the quizzes. Regular participation will receive a check. Informed and engaged participation in most class meetings will receive a check plus. Occasional participation that is not particularly well informed will receive a check minus. Irregular attendance and failure to participate will receive a zero.

*Presentations & Papers:* Over the course of the semester you will develop an independent research project on a language of your choosing. We will have a library session on January 31 to get acquainted with resources that are available to you for this project. Around that time, you should choose a language and an area of the world to focus on. The sooner you start considering what you would like to work on, the better. Please feel free to choose a language and area of the world that interests you, but be sure that there are primary and secondary materials available on that area before you commit yourself to it. Your project will evolve over several stages:

- **Language Overview:** A short (5-10 minute) presentation on the language you will focus on, providing some background on its linguistic features as well as the social situation of its users. (Check, check plus etc.)
- **Annotated Bibliography:** A discussion of 7-10 sources you will use in your final paper, including both materials we have discussed in class and materials you have uncovered on your own. (Letter Grade)
- **Argument of Paper:** A short (5-10 minute) presentation of the major claim you will be making in your final paper with an indication of the sorts of evidence you will draw on to back it up. (Letter Grade)
- **Final Poster Presentation:** A poster presentation of the argument and evidence in your final paper. (Letter Grade)
- **Final Paper:** An 8-10 page paper on a language of your choosing that makes a contestable claim about the significance of that language for discussions of language endangerment/rights. (Letter Grade)

More details about each of these stages will be provided at the appropriate time in class.

*Group Presentation:* During the second week of class we will break up into 6 groups, each of which will be responsible for presenting an article to the rest of the class. These articles deal with various ways in which languages vary and collectively will serve to give us a sense of the diversity of languages found in the world. Your task will be to relay key points from the article to the rest of us and back those points up with linguistic examples from the article. What are some significant ways that languages vary according to the author and the data they cite? Why are these sorts of variations significant? You do not need to summarize the entire article. Rather, in 20-25 minutes, you should aim to clearly introduce some linguistic examples presented by the author and explain to us what they reveal about language diversity and its significance. (Check, check plus etc.)

The grade ranges are as follows. The highest possible numerical grade in the class is a 96. Decimal values will not be rounded up when calculating final grades.

- A 93-96 (96)
- A- 90-92 (92)
- B+ 87-89 (89)
- B 83-86 (86)
- B- 80-82 (82)
- C+ 77-79 (79)
- C 73-76 (76)
- C- 70-72 (72)
- D+ 67-69 (69)
- D 63-66 (66)
- D- 60-62 (62)
- F Less than 60
**Excused Absences & Make-ups** — 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** — Computers, phones, and other electronic devices may not be used in class. You should be sure to print out readings for the day’s class so that you can reference them during our discussion. If you miss a class, you should speak with your classmates to catch up on course announcements and notes. If you attend class and still have questions about class materials, please see me 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 written assignments, quizzes and presentations is all your own work, unless it is assigned as group work. You are welcome to work with and consult classmates to prepare for quizzes and, more generally, to get a better grasp on what is going on in the readings and the course. Copying other people’s work or using their words or suggestions without acknowledgement 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/sjs/acint_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/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/](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/slc 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.