Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology (01:070:108)
Murray 213, Tues & Fri, 9:50 – 11:10
Professor Laura M. Ahearn
Fall 2007

Overview

This course will provide you with a basic understanding of various anthropological approaches to the study of language. You will learn about how language both reflects and shapes thought, culture, and power. You will also learn how to apply the concepts we study to your everyday experiences with language. While this is an introductory course requiring no background, my expectations of you will be high. The format of most class sessions will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. The additional discussion sections will enable you to interact in smaller groups with our TA, Mr. Majumder. Come to all classes ready to engage actively with the readings, and be prepared to apply what you are learning to your own experiences with language in everyday settings.
Exams, Written Assignments, and Grading

There will be four pop quizzes, one midterm exam, a language autobiography essay, and a final exam. These assignments will require you to read, think, and write a lot. While I will not be taking attendance before each lecture, the pop quizzes may occur at any time, and there will be no make-ups for them. Your worst pop quiz grade will, however, be dropped. Mr. Majumder will be taking attendance at the sections, and that will be part of your final grade. Make-ups for the midterm and final exams will require a note from your Dean and will only be allowed in extreme emergencies. Travel arrangements that conflict with these exams will not be considered an acceptable excuse. Language autobiographies that are handed in late will be penalized one half-grade per day. Students found cheating on exams, handing in assignments containing plagiarized passages, or otherwise violating academic integrity policies will be turned in to the appropriate Dean for punishment. Please familiarize yourself, therefore, with the Rutgers academic integrity policy, posted online at http://ctaar.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pop quizzes (best three grades out of four)</td>
<td>15% (5% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm exam (Fri, Oct. 19)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language autobiography (due Fri, Dec. 14)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam (Tues, Dec. 18)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section attendance and participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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100%

You will also have many opportunities during the semester to earn extra credit through optional assignments, online participation in discussion boards on Sakai (http://sakai.rutgers.edu), and other projects.

Readings

There is no textbook for this class. Readings for this course will be available online through the Sakai course website (http://sakai.rutgers.edu). Readings will also be on electronic reserve at the Alexander Library on the College Ave. Campus. To gain access to the electronic reserves, go to IRIS (http://www.iris.rutgers.edu), click on the “Reserves” button on top of the screen, type in “Ahearn,” and click on “Instructor.” If you have any problems gaining access to the readings, please let me know. You will be expected to have read the assignment listed for each class period BEFORE class begins. Be prepared to discuss the reading assignment, ask questions about it, or debate the issues raised in it. There will also be four pop quizzes, so do not fall behind on the readings.

...And remember: the only dumb question is the one you don’t ask…

From time to time, we will be viewing videos during lectures or in section. If you miss class on the day a video is shown, you are responsible for viewing it yourself at the Media Center in the Kilmer Library on Livingston Campus. Exams will include questions about the content of the videos and about the remarks of any guest speakers who visit. Dates and assignments may change during the semester. All changes will be announced in class and/or noted on Sakai.

Classroom Atmosphere

My goal is to create a classroom environment that is relaxed and conducive to free intellectual exchange. In order to foster an atmosphere in which all students feel comfortable asking questions and sharing comments, it is essential that you demonstrate respect for one another as well as for me and the TA. Please
refrain from activities such as reading the newspaper, doing the crossword puzzle, talking on the phone, or working on assignments for other classes while in this classroom. Also, please come to class on time, and if you must have your cell phone on in case of an emergency, please put it in vibrate mode before class begins.

Part One: Acquiring Language in/through/with Culture (and vice versa)

Unit 1: The “Socially Charged” Life of Language (no section meetings this week)

Tu, 9/4 Introduction

F, 9/7 Ahearn, Laura M. “The Socially Charged Life of Language,” draft of Chapter One from Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology, forthcoming from Blackwell.

Unit 2: Language, Thought, and Culture


Extra credit reading: Ahearn, Laura M. “The Research Process in Linguistic Anthropology,” draft of Chapter Two from Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology, forthcoming from Blackwell. (No required reading for this class.)


VISIT IN CLASS by Ms. Tingting Gao, who will give a talk, entitled, “How Deaf People Use their Language: The Linguistics of American Sign Language”


Unit 3: Language Acquisition, Schooling, & Literacy


(VIDEO in lecture: “Acquiring the Human Language, Part 2: Playing the Language Game”)


Unit 4: Speech Communities


F, 10/19  IN-CLASS EXAM #1

Part Two: Language, Power, and Social Differentiation

Unit 5: Language Ideologies


(VIDEO in lecture: “American Tongues”)

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Unit 6: Language & Gender


Unit 7: Conversation Analysis


(VIDEO in lecture: “The Human Voice: Exploring Vocal Paralanguage”)


Unit 8: Performance and Verbal Art


Unit 9: Language, Race, & Ethnicity


(VIDEO in lecture: “The Story of English: Black on White”)
Thanksgiving Week – no classes or section meetings


(VIDEO in lecture: “Diverted to Delhi”)

Unit 10: Multilingualism around the Globe


Unit 11: Language Death and Revitalization (no section meetings this week)


Friday, December 14th, 4:00 p.m.
LANGUAGE AUTOBIOGRAPHIES DUE!!
(Electronic copies must be in Mr. Majumder’s e-mail inbox, and hard copies must be in my Anthro mailbox in 305 Ruth Adams Building by 4:00 p.m.)

Tu, 12/18, 8:00 – 11:00 a.m., this room – FINAL EXAM!!