

LING-GA 1510: Sociolinguistics
Course Information

Instructor Dr. Laurel MacKenzie
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Office 10 Washington Pl. #305
Office hour By appointment

Time MW 2:00–3:15pm
Location 10 Washington Pl. #103

Course description

This course is an introduction to the theory, methods, and central concerns of sociolinguistics, the study of the relationship between language and society. By reading and discussing classic and contemporary papers in the field, we will address a number of fundamental questions about how language varies: across speaker groups, within individuals, and over time. Emphasis will be placed on exposing students to topics of current interest and active debate in sociolinguistic research, with the aim of preparing students to contribute to the field. The course assumes a basic familiarity with phonetics, phonology, morphology, and syntax.

Requirements

- **Readings and participation (10%).** All participants are expected to do the assigned reading and to participate in the discussion of the material in class.
- **Article presentation/discussion leading (30%).** One person will lead the discussion for each article we read in class. Given our class size, each enrolled student will lead discussion twice. Your two discussion days must occur during two different units on the syllabus. As the discussion leader, your job will be to situate the article within a broader context; to summarize its novel contributions; to provide constructive criticism; and to identify avenues of further research and unanswered questions.
- **Assignments (60%).** Three assignments will be due throughout the semester, as follows:
 - Assignment 1: Sociolinguistic interview, due Mon. Sep. 30
 - Assignment 2: Quantitative sociolinguistic study, due Mon. Nov. 6
 - Assignment 3: Research paper, due Mon. Dec. 16

Logistics

All course materials (assignment instructions, readings, class notes) are available in our class Google Drive folder, which is shared with enrolled students. All assignments should be typed, PDFed, and submitted by email.

Syllabus

Readings marked with * have been taken from

Coupland, Nikolas, and Adam Jaworski. 1997. *Sociolinguistics: A Reader*. New York, NY: Macmillan Education.

and may be abridged from the original published version.

Unit one: Sociolinguistic foundations

- W 9/4 Perspectives & approaches: (LM)
Weinreich, Labov, & Herzog 1968 §0, §3.4, §3.5; Eckert 2012; Fishman 1972*;
Gumperz 1981*
- M 9/9 Methods: data collection, research ethics: (LM)
Tagliamonte 2006 ch. 1–4, Wolfram & Fasold 1974*
- W 9/11 Methods, cont.: data analysis: Bayley 2013 (LM)

Unit two: Defining the group

- M 9/16 Overview/foundations: Dodsworth 2010 (LM)
- W 9/18 Social networks: Milroy & Milroy 1985
- M 9/23 Social networks, cont.: Dodsworth & Benton 2017
- W 9/25 Communities of practice: Kirkham 2015

Unit three: Time & age

- M 9/30 Overview/foundations: Tagliamonte & D'Arcy 2009 §1–3 (LM)
Assignment 1 (sociolinguistic interview) due.
- W 10/2 Language change over the lifespan: Sankoff 2019
- M 10/7 Age-grading: Wagner 2012

Unit four: Style

- W 10/9 Overview/foundations: Giles & Powesland 1975*, Bell 1997* (LM)
- Tu 10/15 **Legislative Day! Note Tuesday class meeting!**
Speaker design: Eckert 2008
- W 10/16 Awareness & agency: Sharma 2018

Unit five: Gender

- M 10/21 Overview/foundations: (LM)
Labov 1990 up to “The intersection of sex & social class” (pg. 220)
- W 10/23 Gender as social practice: Eckert 1989*
- M 10/28 Gender as style: Zimman 2017

Unit six: Ethnicity & contact

- W 10/30 Overview/foundations: Laferriere 1979 (LM)
- M 11/4 The ethnolinguistic repertoire: Benor 2010
- W 11/6 The multiethnolect: Cheshire et al. 2011
Assignment 2 (quantitative sociolinguistic study) due.
- M 11/11 Dialect contact: Otheguy et al. 2007

Unit seven: Sociolinguistic perception & cognition

- W 11/13 Overview/foundations: Labov et al. 2011 (LM)
- M 11/18 Sociolinguistic cognition: Campbell-Kibler 2016
- W 11/20 Social meaning & phonology: Eckert & Labov 2017
- M 11/25 Social meaning & morphosyntax: MacKenzie & Robinson ms. (LM)

— Thanksgiving Break! —

Unit eight: Topic(s) TBD based on student interests. Possibilities include: experimental sociolinguistics; child acquisition of sociolinguistic variation; applications of sociolinguistics to education and/or the law; individual multilingualism (e.g. code-switching, language choice); societal multilingualism (e.g. language maintenance & shift, language policy & planning); language attitudes.

- M 12/2 TBD
- W 12/4 TBD
- M 12/9 TBD
- W 12/11 TBD

12/16 (after classes end): Assignment 3 (research paper) due.

Bibliography

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- Bell, Allan. 1997. Language style as audience design. In *Sociolinguistics: A Reader*, ed. Nikolas Coupland and Adam Jaworski, 240–250. New York, NY: Macmillan Education.
- Benor, Sarah Bunin. 2010. Ethnolinguistic repertoire: Shifting the analytic focus in language and ethnicity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 14:159–183.
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- Cheshire, Jenny, Paul Kerswill, Sue Fox, and Eivind Torgersen. 2011. Contact, the feature pool and the speech community: The emergence of Multicultural London English. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15:151–196.
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- Milroy, James, and Lesley Milroy. 1985. Linguistic change, social network and speaker innovation. *Journal of Linguistics* 21:339–384.
- Otheguy, Ricardo, Ana Celia Zentella, and David Livert. 2007. Language and dialect contact in Spanish in New York: Toward the formation of a speech community. *Language* 83:770–802.
- Sankoff, Gillian. 2019. Language change across the lifespan: Three trajectory types. *Language* 95:197–229.

- Sharma, Devyani. 2018. Style dominance: Attention, audience, and the 'real me'. *Language in Society* 47:1–31.
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