

LING-UA 15: Language and Society
Course Information

Please visit our **Brightspace** page to access the online version of this document, which will be updated with links throughout the semester.

1. Course logistics

Lecture time Tue/Thu 11:00am–12:15pm

Location Silver 401

Instructors Dr. Laurel MacKenzie
laurel.mackenzie@nyu.edu

Dr. Lisa Davidson
lisa.davidson@nyu.edu

Office 10 Washington Pl., Rm. 305

10 Washington Pl., Rm. 505

Office hours By appointment (in-person or virtually) via
<https://calendly.com/laurel-mackenzie>

Tues 1:30pm-2:30pm or
by appointment

If you need to contact a professor, please send your email to both of us.

TAs Jailyn Peña
jailynpena@nyu.edu

Office 10 Washington Pl., Rm. 309

Office hours Mon 2pm - 3pm

Recitation time Mon 12:30pm–1:45pm

Recitation location 60 Fifth Ave. 110

Chiara Repetti-Ludlow
cr12@nyu.edu

10 Washington Pl., Rm. 508

Wed 3pm - 4pm

Mon 11:00am–12:15pm

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2. Required text, readings, and materials

- Textbook: Van Herk, Gerard. 2018. *What is Sociolinguistics?* Second edition. Wiley.
 - Available electronically through NYU Drive and NYU eBooks.
- Supplementary readings will be made available in PDF on NYU Classes.
- You're expected to have done each reading **before** its associated lecture.
- All course materials are linked from the syllabus. **Access is restricted to NYU Google accounts.** If you're told that you "do not have permission" to access some course material, you are likely logged in through a personal Google account. Switch to your NYU account and try again.

3. Overview

This course investigates the ways in which language reflects and creates the social order. We'll study how variation in language relates to social factors like gender, age, social class, and ethnicity, and we'll explore the social contexts under which languages are born, die, and change. The course will feature hands-on research, allowing you to collect and analyze data on how people use language in real life.

Through successfully completing this course, you will

- be familiar with the major social correlates of variation and change in language.
- understand the theory and methods underlying the field of sociolinguistics.
- collect, analyze, and write about real-world linguistic data.
- be able to discuss matters of sociolinguistic variation with scientific rigor and cultural sensitivity.

4. Assignments & grades

4.1. Class participation & attendance: 10%

Class participation will be assessed on the basis of your recitation attendance record and your level and quality of participation in class discussions and exercises. Lecture and recitation will meet in person, but **if you feel unwell, have been exposed to Covid, or have to quarantine, stay home**. As long as you **inform us in advance** that you can't attend, this won't count against your grade.

If you have to miss class and feel well enough to join over Zoom, **contact a professor or TA at least 30 minutes before class**, and we will connect you. If you are too unwell to participate at all, contact a classmate once you've recovered to get the class notes, and contact a professor or TA to fill in any gaps in your understanding.

Don't be afraid to ask questions in class! If you are shy, come to office hours to get your questions answered and to strategize about how you can participate in class in a way that you're comfortable with.

4.2. Digital portfolio: 35%

Most Thursdays, you will be given a brief assignment asking you to observe something particular in the language around you over the coming days. You will record your observations and reflections on them in a digital portfolio using the app Padlet, with entries due on Wednesdays. There will be nine portfolio entries in total. Portfolio entries will be graded, with the lowest grade dropped, and students will share their entries in the following recitation. Each student will be expected to share at least one entry during the course of the semester, counting toward the recitation participation grade, with entries submitted past the deadline ineligible for sharing. More information on this assignment will be provided at the first lecture.

4.3. Midterm exam: 15%

This will be a take-home essay exam distributed on March 24 to be submitted by March 31. More information about the exam will be provided closer to the date.

4.4. Research project: 25%

You will carry out a short research project in the second half of the semester, due on April 14. You will get to choose between several possible topics. Detailed instructions for this assignment will be provided later in the semester.

4.5. Final exam: 15%

This will be a take-home essay exam distributed on May 5 to be submitted by May 12. More information about the exam will be provided closer to the date.

5. Course policies

5.1. Late work and extensions

We realize that life is somewhat unpredictable right now. Thus, all students are entitled to a **one-day grace period** on all assigned work, no questions asked.

If you are using this one-day grace period to complete a portfolio (Padlet) entry late, **we request that you email your TA before the Wednesday evening deadline informing them of this.** A one-sentence email is all that's needed — you don't need to ask permission, you just need to give your TA a heads-up so they know to come back to your portfolio after the grace period has ended.

Please recognize that your grade and feedback on late work will be delayed, and late portfolio entries will not be able to be shared in recitation.

This grace period **cannot be extended without explicit permission from Prof. Davidson or Prof. MacKenzie.** If you are going to be more than a day late in completing a portfolio entry or submitting your research project, you must set up a meeting with one of the professors to arrange a revised deadline. **Work that is more than a day late will not be accepted without this in-person meeting with the professor.** Your TA cannot grant extensions. Extensions will not be granted by email.

Please plan ahead, comparing the syllabi for your courses now, to see when you have conflicting deadlines or difficult weeks. If things look impossible, please talk to one of the professors with plenty of advance notice.

The very last day on which work for this course will be accepted is May 19. No work will be accepted past this date in any circumstances.

5.2. Extra credit

The midterm and final exams may include some extra credit questions, and additional extra credit opportunities may be offered throughout the semester. Extra credit is an equal opportunity for everyone in the class to improve their grades, so it will not be issued to individual students upon request. If you want some grade security, we suggest completing all the portfolio entries in a timely fashion, doing all the readings, and staying on top of class content.

5.3. Laptops

You're welcome to take notes on your laptop during lectures, but please try to avoid distractions out of consideration for your classmates' concentration.

5.4. Academic honesty

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated, and may result in a zero on an assignment. **You must complete all work individually, without help from other students.** If you use any resource other than the textbook and lecture slides as you prepare your portfolio entries or research project, you must provide a scholarly citation for the resource.

5.5. Academic accommodations for students with disabilities

Please don't hesitate to talk to the professors and your TA if there's anything we can do differently to better accommodate your learning needs.

Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, or learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities over the phone at 212-998-4980, in person at 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, or online at www.nyu.edu/csd.

5.6. Questions and comments in lecture

- If you have a **clarification question** about part of the lecture content, or are otherwise uncertain about anything that is said, please don't hesitate to put up your hand and ask it. Someone else almost certainly has the same question.
- If you have a **curiosity question** — that is, if something said in lecture sparks your curiosity about something else — please consider two things before you ask it:
 1. Is this a question that can be **answered quickly**? We have a preselected amount of material to cover each day in order to stay on track. Questions that require a long answer can delay us.
 2. Is this a question that **all students can benefit** from? You may have much more linguistics experience than your classmates, and they may not understand your question, or the answer. Classroom time is for all students' benefit.

If the answer to one or both of the above questions is no, your question is still valid! But please **write it down**, and then send it to your professor or TA via email, or bring it to office hours or recitation. If the answer to both questions is yes, ask away!

- **Comments** about how the lecture material connects to your personal life or experiences are usually better communicated after class, via email, or during office hours, unless part of the lecture is specifically dedicated to them. But don't be shy! Learning about how the course material connects to your life is one of our favorite parts of teaching this class. It's just not what class time is generally for.

6. How to succeed in this (or any!) course

- Attend all lectures and recitations, pay attention, and take notes.
- Do the reading assigned to a lecture **before** the lecture it's assigned to.

- As soon as you get a chance after each lecture, revisit and organize your notes from class by looking back over the lecture slides and the reading to solidify your understanding.
- Make note of where you have questions about the lectures or the readings.
- Bring your questions to recitation or office hours.
- Start your assignments as soon as you get them.
- Seek help on your assignments well before they are due.

7. Want to learn more?

- Come to your professor or TA's office hour!
- Check out the following podcasts about linguistics:
 - Lingthusiasm
 - The Vocal Fries
 - Spectacular Vernacular
- Take another course from NYU's Linguistics Department!

LING-UA 15: Language and Society
Syllabus

Please visit our Brightspace page to access the online version of this document, which will be updated with links throughout the semester.

Wk. 1	M 1/24	<i>No recitation!</i> First day of classes.
	T 1/25	Lecture 1 (Laurel): Introduction & overview. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 1 'Introduction' Complete student info questionnaire by the end of the week.
	Th 1/27	Lecture 2 (Laurel): Defining language: Dialect, variety, standard, non-standard. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 2 'Language and Society' Portfolio entry #1 assigned, due 2/2.
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Wk. 2	M 1/31	Recitation 1: Introductions, expectations. Your sociolinguistic history.
	T 2/1	Lecture 3 (Laurel): Defining language & society: Language differences, social groups.
	Th 2/3	Lecture 4 (Laurel): Sociolinguistic methods: Linguistic variables, data elicitation. Reading: Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015, excerpts from ch. 6 'Language variation' Portfolio entry #2 assigned, due 2/9.
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Wk. 3	M 2/7	Recitation 2: Sharing portfolio entry #1. The standard language ideology. Sociolinguistic variation and social groups.
	T 2/8	Lecture 5 (Laurel): Sociolinguistic methods: Data collection, data analysis.
	Th 2/10	Lecture 6 (Lisa): Language & place: Dialectology. Reading: Giamo 2016, 'Do you like dialect quizzes?' Reading: Van Herk, ch. 3 'Place' — don't worry about memorizing all the linguistic characteristics of the different varieties, but make sure you don't miss the section "method: dialect geography" at the end. Portfolio entry #3 assigned, due 2/16.
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Wk. 4	M 2/14	Recitation 3: Sharing portfolio entry #2. Sociolinguistic research methods.
	T 2/15	Lecture 7 (Lisa): Language & place: Regional varieties of American English.
	Th 2/17	Lecture 8 (Lisa): Language & social status: Identifying groups, basic linguistic patterns. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 4 'Social Status' Portfolio entry #4 assigned, due 2/23.

Wk. 5	M 2/21	<i>No recitation!</i> Presidents' Day holiday.
	T 2/22	Lecture 9 (Lisa): Language & social status: More linguistic patterns. Reading (for recitation on 2/28): Labov 1966/2006 'The social stratification of (r) in New York City department stores'
	Th 2/24	Lecture 10 (Chiara): Language & time: Language change. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 5 'Time' Portfolio entry #5 assigned, due 3/2.
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Wk. 6	M 2/28	Recitation 4: Sharing portfolio entry #3. Discussing Labov 1966.
	T 3/1	Lecture 11 (Laurel): Language & time: Language & age.
	Th 3/3	Lecture 12 (Laurel): Language & gender: Direct indexing, difference & dominance. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 7 'Gender' Portfolio entry #6 assigned, due 3/9. Research project assigned, due 4/14.
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Wk. 7	M 3/7	Recitation 5: Sharing portfolio entry #4 & 5.
	T 3/8	Lecture 13 (Lisa): Language & gender, continued: Labov's principles, the Gender Paradox, gender beyond the binary.
	Th 3/10	Lecture 14 (Lisa): Language & gender, continued: Voice, sexuality, & pronouns.
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	M 3/14–F 3/18	<i>Spring Break!</i>
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Wk. 8	M 3/21	Recitation 6: Sharing portfolio entry #6. Exploring semantic change and sexism in the OED.
	T 3/22	Lecture 15 (Laurel): Data analysis tutorial – bring a laptop!
	Th 3/24	Lecture 16 (Laurel): Language & ethnicity. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 6 'Ethnicity' Midterm exam assigned.
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Wk. 9	M 3/28	Recitation 7: Research project workshop.
	T 3/29	Lecture 17 (Laurel): Language & ethnicity: African American English. Reading (for recitation on 4/4): Rickford & King 2016, 'Language and linguistics on trial'
	Th 3/31	<i>Signing Black in America</i> film screening and discussion. Midterm exam due.

Wk. 10	M 4/4	Recitation 8: Discussing Rickford & King 2016.
	T 4/5	Lecture 18 (Lisa): Language & style. Reading: Van Herk, 'Interlude' Reading: Van Herk, ch. 8 'Style' through the first paragraph under 'identity performance' plus the 'summinz up' section at the end
	Th 4/7	Lecture 19 (Lisa): Language & identity. Readings: Dyer 2007 on language & identity Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015 on Martha's Vineyard Portfolio entry #7 assigned, due 4/13.
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Wk. 11	M 4/11	Recitation 9: Midterm discussion.
	T 4/12	Lecture 20 (Jai): Multilingualism. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 10 'Multilingualism'
	Th 4/14	Lecture 21 (Lisa): Language contact. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 11 'Language Contact' Portfolio entry #8 assigned, due 4/20. Research project due.
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Wk. 12	M 4/18	Recitation 10: Sharing portfolio entry #7. Multilingualism, language contact.
	T 4/19	Lecture 22 (Lisa): Language as a social entity. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 13 'Language as a Social Entity'
	Th 4/21	Lecture 23 (Laurel): Language & interaction: Communicative competence, conversation. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 9 'Interaction' Portfolio entry #9 assigned, due 4/27.
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Wk. 13	M 4/25	Recitation 11: Sharing portfolio entry #8. Language, politeness, and interaction.
	T 4/26	Lecture 24 (Laurel): Language & interaction: Politeness.
	Th 4/28	Lecture 25 (Lisa): Language attitudes and ideologies. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 12 'Attitudes and Ideologies,' but skip the sections "Reading, responding, and representing" and "Representing language." Bonus portfolio entry assigned! due 5/4.
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Wk. 14	M 5/2	Recitation 12: Sharing portfolio entry #9.
	T 5/3	Lecture 26: Language and the internet.
	Th 5/5	Lecture 27: Wrap-up and summary. Final exam assigned.

Wk. 15 M 5/9 *No recitation!* Last day of classes.
 Th 5/12 (*After classes end*) **Final exam due.**