

TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY
Spring 2008

LING 210 Language and Society (2 semester hours)

COURSE SYLLABUS

Class hours: Tuesday, 2:35-4:15 pm, CanIL Room 209
Faculty: Dave Jeffery (dave.jeffery@twu.ca)
Sudharsan Seshadri-Nagarajan (SudharsanSN@gmail.com)
Course Website: <https://courses.mytwu.ca>
Contact Info: Ext. 3951, CanIL Harvest Centre, Room 324
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 10-Noon
Textbook: Agar, Michael. 2001. *Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Communication*. New York: William Morrow.

Course Description

Language within its social context through dealing with topics such as dialect and language definition, the role of the mother tongue in defining self-identity, language attitudes, the maintenance, loss, shift or spread of language domains, multilingualism, and sociolinguistic survey. Linguistic issues in cross-cultural field work: language study within a worldview context, sociolinguistic factors affecting literacy programs, and methods of second language acquisition.

Objectives

1. To give an overview of how language operates in society, with special reference to multilingual/multicultural societies.
2. To integrate the inventory of language issues into the larger framework of society and culture.
3. To become aware of some of the social and political implications of cross-cultural education (TESOL) and cross-cultural language research projects.

Grading

Participation/Online Discussion	10%
Assignments	25%
Mid-term Project	25%
A-Gar Files presentation and Agar Book Report	15%
Final Exam	25%

Grade scale

A+	95-100	B+	82-84	C+	72-74	D+	60-64
A	90-94	B	78-81	C	68-71	D	55-59
A-	85-89	B-	75-77	C-	65-67	F	Below 55

Course Requirements

1. **Class/Online Discussion Participation (10%)** – Students will be given a grade based on their participation in class discussions and in the online discussions found on the *MyCourses* site. The online discussions are based on questions derived from the course text, class lectures and other sources. After the first day of classes, students must sign on to the class website and follow the instructions provided on the site. See note about class website below.
2. **Mid-term Project (25%)** – The mid-term project takes the place of a mid-term exam. Students will be required to compose a twelve- to fifteen-page Sociolinguistic Repertoire, a descriptive narrative of their sociolinguistic make-up and a window into their own idiolects. The assignment will be introduced on January 29 and is due on Tuesday, March 4 at the beginning of class.
3. **Assignments (25%)** – Students are required to do **any two** of the three class assignments. Class assignments range from library research to observation of specific facets/phenomena of real language occurring in society. Some of these projects may require students to conduct interviews, log elementary linguistic information, or spend time observing verbal or non-verbal interaction between individuals. Reports are 2-3 double-spaced pages and may be submitted at the beginning of class or emailed to the instructor.
4. **The “A-Gar Files” and Book Report (15%)** – The course text, *Language Shock* by Michael Agar, reads more like a linguistic novel than a sociolinguistic text. It provides a brief overview of the fields that have influenced sociolinguistics and through a series of anecdotal real-life stories, challenges the reader to re-examine their view of language and culture, as well as what part he/she plays in this multicultural world. In the **A-Gar Files** assignment, groups of students will act out a short skit dramatizing one of Agar’s key insights. The **Book Report** assignment is a paper with three parts: a brief summary of Agar’s book, present a critical analysis, and then articulate your view of language and culture. The A-Gar Files will be presented on March 11, and the Book Report is due the last day of class, Tuesday, April 8.
5. **Final Exam (25%)** – The final exam will be an open-book, open note, group project, dealing with a case study that assesses your ability to integrate materials from the course and from the Agar text. The details of the final will be discussed in class. The final exam will take place during the final exam period, place and time to be announced.

NOTE: Students are encouraged to check the website regularly, not only to participate in the online discussions, but to access course materials, handouts and web-based resources. Each student who is registered for the course has access to the course website. Type <https://courses.mytwu.ca> into your web browser and follow the LOGIN instructions. If you are having difficulties accessing the website, please contact esupport@twu.ca and they will guide you through the process.

Other important stuff...

Attendance Policy

It is the responsibility of the student to attend all class sessions. Responsibility in this sense is intended to include participation in class discussions as well as receiving the benefits of class lectures and reports. Students who miss 3 or more classes may be prohibited from writing the final. Any material missed during class is the student's responsibility.

Late Assignment Policy

To receive full credit, assignments should be submitted by the beginning of class on the date indicated on the course outline. If there are extenuating circumstances, it is the responsibility of the student to consult with your instructor **prior** to the due date to see what kind of arrangement can be made. Otherwise, late assignments will be subject to a 5% deduction per day.

Campus Closure

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions overnight or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), MAX (850 AM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM) by 6:30 a.m., and an announcement will be placed on the University's switchboard as well as on the TWU website <http://www.twu.ca/conditions>. The first announcement regarding a closure will cover the period up to 1:00 p.m. only. If classes are to be cancelled beyond 1:00 p.m., this decision will be announced by the same means before 11:00 a.m. that day. Students and faculty should assume that all night classes will continue to operate. If the emergency continues into the evening, students and faculty may check for a closure notice on the University's switchboard and website after 3:00 p.m. that day.

Academic Honesty

A fundamental expectation for anyone involved in academic work at TWU is that he/she practice academic honesty. Students must become familiar with, and adhere to, the principles and requirements associated with academic honesty. Further details on this subject are contained in the TWU 2007-8 Academic Calendar on page 35. The handbook is available online on the TWU webpage <http://www.twu.ca>.

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the Equity of Access Office of that fact before the beginning of a course so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the students learning experience. Within the first two weeks of the semester, students must meet with their instructors to agree on accommodations appropriate to each class. See the TWU 2007-8 Academic Calendar p. 36 for more information.

Course Calendar

Tuesday, Jan 8

Topic: (1) **Introduction to Language and Society**
Assignment: **Go to course website and fill in your online profile**

Tuesday, Jan 15

DUE: **Online profile**
Topic: (2) **Language and Dialect**
Readings: Agar: *Preface, Culture Blends* (ch1)

Tuesday, Jan 22

Topics: (3) **Social Dialects – Language Variation – Style and Register**
Readings: Agar: *The Circle* (ch2)
Assignment: **Assignment #1: Dialect Survey**

Tuesday, Jan 29

DUE: **Assignment #1**
Topics: (4) **Multilingualism: Introduction**
Readings: Agar: *The Circle and the Field* (ch3), *Cultural Signified* (ch4)
Assignment: **Assignment #2: Bilingualism in Canada/A multilingual country you know**
Online question set 1
Explanation of the Midterm Project: Sociolinguistic Repertoire

Tuesday, Feb 5

DUE: **Responses to online question set 1**
Topics: (5) **Multilingualism: Code switching – Diglossia – Language Planning**
Readings: Agar: *Similarities and Differences* (ch5), *Situations* (ch6)
Assignment: **Work on Assignment #2**
Work on midterm project

Tuesday, Feb 12

DUE: **Assignment #2**
Topics: (6) **Language and Identity - Language Attitudes**
Readings: Agar: *Culture* (ch7)
Assignment: **Explanation of the A-Gar Files Group Project**
Work on midterm project

Tuesday, Feb 19

DUE: **None**
Topics: (7) **Language and Culture**
Readings: Agar: *Speech Acts* (ch8)
Assignment: **Work on midterm project and A-Gar Files Group Project**
Explanation of the Agar Book Report

Tuesday, Mar 4

DUE: *Midterm Project*
Topics: **(8) Language and Gender**
Readings: Agar: *Speech Act Lumber and Paint* (ch 9)
Assignment: **Assignment #3: Observing Cross-Gender Communication**
Work on A-Gar Files and Agar report

Tuesday, Mar 11

DUE: *A-Gar Files Group Project*
Topics: **(9) The A-Gar Files - Solidarity & Politeness**
Readings: Agar: *Coherence* (ch 10)
Assignment: **Work on Assignment #3 and Agar Report**

Tuesday, Mar 18

DUE: *Assignment #3*
Topics: **(10) Languages in Contact: Pidgins & Creoles – Language Change**
Readings: Agar: *Variations on a Frame* (ch 11)
Assignment: **Online question set 2**
Work on Agar Report

Tuesday, Mar 25

DUE: *Responses to online question set 2*
Topics: **(11) Languages in Contact 2: Maintenance, Shift and Death**
Readings: Agar: *Sailors and Immigrants* (ch 12)
Assignment: **Work on Agar Report**

Tuesday, Apr 1

DUE: *None*
Topics: **(12) Language and Technology – World English**
Readings: None
Assignment: **Work on Agar Report**

Tuesday, Apr 8

DUE: *Agar Report*
Topics: **(13) Language and Education**
Readings: Walter: *Education and/in/via/without One's First Language (MyCourses)*

Time and date to be announced

Group final exam

References

- Baron, Naomi S. 2000. *Alphabet to email: How written English evolved and where it's heading*. New York: Routledge.
- Bergman, Ted G. 1991. Rapid appraisal of language. In *Notes on Literature in Use and Language Programs*, 28:3-11.
- Brown, Rick. 1995. Designing programs for oral cultures. In *Notes on Literature in Use and Language Programs*, 46:14-38.
- Bryson, Bill. 1990. *The mother tongue: English & how it got that way*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.
- Crystal, David. 2000. *Language death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. 2006. *Language and the internet*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dalby, Andrew. 2002. *Language in danger: How language loss threatens our future*. London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press.
- Fromkin, Victoria, Robert Rodman, Neil Hultin and Harry Logan. 2000. *An Introduction to Language* (2nd Canadian ed.). Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company.
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- Ong, Walter. 1982. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. New York: Methuen.
- Robinson, Andrew. 2002. *Lost languages: The enigma of the world's undeciphered scripts*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Romaine, Suzanne. *Language in society: An introduction to sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Trudgill, Peter. 2000, *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*, 4th ed. London: Penguin Books.
- Tannen, Deborah. 1994. *Talking from 9 to 5: How women's and men's conversational styles affect who gets heard, who gets credit, and what gets done at work*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.
- _____. 1994. *Gender & discourse*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Walter, Stephen. n.d. *Education in/with/without the mother tongue*. Prepublication manuscript.
- Wardhaugh, Ronald. 2006. *An introduction to sociolinguistics*, 5th ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.