

LING 210 Language and Society (2 sem/hrs)
COURSE SYLLABUS
Summer

Course Description:

This course introduces language within its social context through dealing with topics such as dialect and language definition, orality, the role of the mother tongue in defining self-identity and language attitudes, as well as the maintenance, loss, shift or spread of language domains, and multilingualism. In addition, as a means of helping students develop realistic expectations and appropriate approaches for linguistic issues in cross-cultural field work and classroom ESL/EFL settings, attention is given to issues surrounding the globalization of English and sociolinguistic factors affecting language programs.

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	20%
Assignments (including Orality Project)	20%
Mid-term Project (Take Home)	20%
Book Report	10%
Final Exam	30%

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

Textbook: Agar, Michael. 2001. *Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Communication*. New York: William Morrow.

Notes: Attendance is required at all class sessions unless prior arrangements have been made with the course head. The instructor reserves the right to deduct marks for missed classes or habitual lateness. 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 assignments will be penalized a letter grade per class day. Students with disabilities should discuss their limitations with the instructor by the first day of class. For information regarding Campus Closure, Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism, and other policies, please refer to the *Academic Calendar*.

Course Requirements:

1. Participation/Online Discussion (20%) – Students will be required to participate in class discussions and reply to online questions to discuss/respond to topics from the course text and/or class lectures.¹ This provides students with the opportunity to ask relevant questions, or voice their opinions in a safe, non-threatening environment. At times, students may be required to read an article prior to specific classes in order to gain more of a background understanding of the lecture topic. Extra readings are cited on the website and are either available online or in the hanging files in the CanIL library. See note about class website below.
2. Mid-term Project (20%) – 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 July 12th and is due on August 2nd.
3. Assignments (20%) – Class assignments are observation/interview-based rather than research based. Most of the assignments require students to get out and observe 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 of the same or different culture. Reports are generally 2-3 double-spaced pages and may be submitted during class or emailed to the instructor.
4. Agar Summary and Response (10%) – The course text, although not a sociolinguistic text, reads more like a linguistic novel than a heady 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. Though it is not expected that you agree with all of the author’s pluralistic idea(l)s, it is our expectation that you grapple with your views of language and culture and be able to articulate these views through your own experience, the course content and Agar’s book. In this assignment, you will provide a brief summary of Agar’s book, present a critical analysis, and then articulate your view of language and culture.
5. Final Exam (30%) – Given the brevity of the course, the final exam will be an open-book, open note, work with your friends, group case study that assesses your ability to integrate materials from the course and Agar. The actual delivery and details of the final will be discussed in class.

NOTE: Students are encouraged to check the website daily, not only to complete projects, but to access course materials, handouts and class notes. Each student who is registered for the course has access to the course website. Type <http://ecourses.twu.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.

¹ Each student is required to participate in online discussions throughout the 6-week period. After the first day of classes, students must sign on to the class website and follow the instructions provided on the site.

Tentative Course Calendar:

Tuesday, July 5

Topic: Overview – Language and Society
Assignment: **Go to course website and answer questions.**

Thursday, July 7

DUE: **Course Website**
Topic: Language and Identity
Readings: Agar: *Preface, Culture Blends*(ch1)
Assignment: **Assignment #1**

Tuesday, July 12

DUE: **Assignment #1**
Topic: Language and Communication
Readings: Agar: *The Circle*(ch2), *The Circle and the Field* (ch3)
Assignment: **Respond to online questions**

Thursday, July 14

DUE: **Responses to online questions**
Topics: Multilingualism
Readings: Agar: *Cultural Signified*(ch4)
Assignment: **Assignment #2**

Tuesday, July 19

DUE: **Assignment #2**
Topics: Language and Gender
Readings: Agar: *Similarities and Differences*(ch5), *Situations*(ch6)
Assignment: **Respond to online questions**

Thursday, July 21

DUE: **Responses to online questions**
Topics: Language and Culture
Readings: Agar: *Culture*(ch7)
Assignment: **Assignment #3**

Tuesday, July 26

DUE: **Assignment #3**
Topics: Catch-Up Class or Special Topic
Readings: Agar: *Speech Acts*(ch8), *Speech Act Lumber and Paint*(ch9)
Assignment: **Work on Midterm Project and Respond to online questions**

Thursday, July 28

DUE: **Responses to online questions**
Topics: Language Change: Maintenance, Spread, Shift and Death
Readings: Agar: *Coherence*(ch10)
Assignment: **Work on Orality project and Midterm Project**

Tuesday, August 2

DUE: Midterm Project

Topics: Language and Literacies

Readings: Variations on a Frame(ch11), Sailors and Immigrants(ch12)

Assignment: Work on Orality Project and Assignment #3

Thursday, August 4

DUE: Assignment #3

Topics: Language and Globalization of English

Assignment: Work on Orality Project and Agar Report

Tuesday, August 9

DUE: Orality Project

Topics: Language and Orality

Assignment: Work on Agar Report

Thursday, August 11

DUE: Agar Book Report

Topics: FINAL EXAM