

Introduction to Language, Culture, and Society

Reed College
Spring 2010

Ling/Anth 212
S01: T/Th 14:40-16:00
[E414]
S02: T/Th 18:10-19:30
[VCC126]

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course—the second semester of the Linguistic Department’s year-long introduction to language and the study of language—begins, in a sense, where the first semester’s *Introduction to Linguistic Analysis* concludes, namely, with the realm of intrinsic *variation* universally manifest by language systems, with the causes and consequences of that variation, and with the spectrum of meaning expressed or constituted by language and by variation in language.

We examine a range of approaches that, in a variety of ways, complicate or critique the view that language is best theorized, and most productively studied and analyzed, as a self-contained, autonomous, fundamentally cognitive or psychological system, a system, moreover, firmly located in the mind/brains of individual speakers. Socioculturally “realist” approaches, in contrast, conceive of language as inherently constituted by a relational nexus of structure, discursive interaction, and linguistic ideology, a fundamentally sociocultural and ideological (as well as—or rather than—a cognitive or psychological) object, best understood to exist primarily in the realm of socioculture, and only secondarily or derivatively ‘in’ or for individuals.

The class proceeds by introducing, first of all, the basic contours and chief theoretical components of such approaches to language and the study of language, followed by a presentation of the nature of linguistic variation—both sociocultural/spatial and historical—and the principal ways in which such variation has been studied (i.e., as sociolinguistics on the one hand and as historical linguistics on the other—both insofar as it seeks to account for the range of relationships languages seem to contract one with another, and insofar as it pursues a theory of language change), and concludes with a variety of semiotic and linguistic anthropological accounts—some strictly theoretical, others more empirically oriented and ethnographically grounded—of language and the language/socioculture nexus.

Students are responsible for writing a short, weekly, reaction paper, to be submitted to me (via e-mail) prior to the first class devoted to the topic at hand (normally, then, reaction papers will be due on Monday). These reaction papers might be as short as one page, or as long as five pages—depending on the student, and the student’s degree of interest in the topic and/or the assigned readings. Reaction papers are *not* meant to be literature reviews; rather, they should reflect your own creative reaction(s)/

response(s) to one or more of the focus questions, or, otherwise, to any (topic-relevant) issue or question that moves, excites, bothers, confuses, distracts, annoys, or otherwise touches you.

Note that focus questions for each conference are included in the course schedule, under the assigned readings, below. Important: whatever else we do in conference, we will *always* discuss the focus questions; students, therefore, are expected to engage thoughtfully, seriously, and consistently with the focus questions as an essential feature of their work for this class; more concretely, students will be expected to be able to address—in some way and to some degree, whether in writing or otherwise—each of the relevant focus questions for every conference.

Note, as well, that every effort should be made to read the assigned texts in the order in which they appear on the course schedule.

GRADING

Type	Percentage of Final Grade	Description
In-Class Essays	25%	Every so often, quite unannounced, I will ask you to write a short—10 to 15 minute—essay, in class, on a theme centrally relevant to the current topic.
Final Essay	25%	A 7-10 page essay on a topic chosen from a set of contenders I will provide (unless you have a better idea).
Reactions/ Participation	50%	<p>(i) Participation in conference is <i>obligatory</i>; satisfactory participation means—at a minimum—being prepared to address <i>each</i> of the relevant focus questions. I take participation very seriously (as reflected in the fact that it represents the larger part of your final grade): it is extraordinarily difficult, in fact, to earn an “A” in this class without contributing to conference.</p> <p>(ii) Note that “contribution,” should not be taken to mean “talking a great deal”; rather, it means engaging in class discussion in such a way that it is clear to me that you have (a) made a real effort to read (and understand) the assignments, and (b) spent some quality time with the relevant focus questions. Note that both conditions (a) and (b) may be nicely satisfied by posing questions to, or sharing confusions with, the conference at large; asking good questions about the more difficult or confusing aspects of the assigned reading—in a sense, that is, being able to express just what it is you <i>don’t</i> understand—can be a uniquely positive, productive way to contribute to class discussion.</p> <p>(iii) Participation in class and engagement with the assigned readings are mutually informing; it is a virtual certainty that you will not be able to keep up either with my mini-lectures or with class discussion if you are not, also, keeping up with the</p>


readings. Similarly, the assigned readings will likely remain opaque to you should you not actively engage in conference.


- (iv) Students are expected to email their weekly reactions/ responses to me *prior* to the first class of the week; typically, this means they will be due on Monday night. Note that the reactions/ responses are not “graded” as such, nor, as a rule, will I return them. Instead, I take the responses as a particularly significant measure of the degree to which you are engaging with, and also understanding, the assignments—and so, too, they help me determine which topics, themes, aspects of the assignments, etc., deserve the most attention in class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

TOPIC 1 *Introduction; Tools of the Trade, Part I: Structuralism*




Class 1 Linguistic Anthropology, Culture, Meaning, and Context

 **Duranti**, *Linguistic Anthropology*, Chapter 1: “The Scope of Linguistic Anthropology,” and Chapter 2: “Theories of Culture”


 **Hanks**: 1-17; 229-242


 **Foley**: 3-40

Handouts/emailed docs: Cheat-sheet—i.e., my answers—for Topic 1/Class 1 Focus Questions

- ⇒ What are the distinctive features of linguistic anthropology?
- ⇒ What does it mean to conceive of socioculture as “embodied practice”?
 - ↖ What perspective(s) and or theoretical position(s) are (implicitly) criticized in conceiving of sociocultural phenomena in terms of *practice*?
- ⇒ What is the distinction between “tacit” and “articulate” knowledge?
 - ↖ Is this distinction relevant to the study of language and/or discursive interaction? If so, how?
-  **What is meant by “linguistic practice”?**
 -  **What is the *point* of employing this term?**
 -  **What perspective(s) and/or theoretical position(s) are (implicitly) rejected in adopting a practice-based approach to language?**
- ⇒ **Arguably, (Peircean) indexicality is *the* privileged object of contemporary linguistic and semiotic anthropology**
 - ↖ **Why should this be?**
 - ↖ What are the most important distinguishing features of indexical value?
 - ↖ What is it about these distinguishing features that recommend the concept of indexicality to the theory and practice of linguistic and semiotic anthropology?

Class 2 Language as System: Saussurian Structuralism

 **Saussure**, *Selections from the Cours*

 **Chandler**, *Semiotics for Beginners: Signs* [on disc as .pdf, .doc, and .html]

 **Foley**: 92-105

 **Jakobson**, [*Signs and System of Language: A*] *Reassessment of Saussure’s Doctrine*

Handouts/emailed docs: The Key Saussurian Dichotomies

- ⇒ The basic structure of the Saussurian sign (signifier, signified)
- ⇒ What is the principle of (Saussurian) arbitrariness?
- ⇒ Be able to discuss the core Saussurian binary oppositions (langue, parole; paradigmatic, syntagmatic; motivation, transparency).
- ⇒ What is “structuralist” about Prague School functionalism—in particular, the concept of the phoneme?
- ⇒ What is “structuralist” about Levi-Straussian anthropological methodology?
- ⇒ Which aspects of Saussure’s project does Jakobson criticize, or outright reject? Do his criticisms seem sound?
- ✎ **Are there any aspects of Saussurian structuralism that stand up against Jakobson’s critique**
 - ✎ If so, what are they
 - ✎ In sum: what, in Saussure’s ‘doctrine’ seem compelling or productive?

TOPIC 2

Tools of the Trade, Part II: Peircian Semiotics

Class 1 Peirce’s System from the “Ground” Up, Part I

- 📁 **Peirce**, *What is a Sign?*
- 📁 **Chandler**, *Semiotics for Beginners: Strengths of Semiotic Analysis*
- 📁 **Ransdell**, *Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914)* [Entry in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics*]
- 📁 **Hoffman**, *The 1903 Classification of Triadic Sign-Relations*
- 📁 CSP Study Guide-I: Key Terms in Quotation
- 📁 CSP Study Guide-II: 76 Definitions of the Sign in Quotation

Handouts/emailed docs: (i) The Birds and the Bees; (ii) Sign-Relation Formalism and Analysis-I & II

- ⇒ Grasp, to the best of your ability, the three most fundamental trichotomies in Peirce’s architectonic
 - ↔ Trichotomy of the Sign [*Representamen*]-Relation (Qualisign, Sinsign, Legisign)
 - ↔ Trichotomy of the Ground-Relation (Icon, Index, Symbol)
 - ↔ Trichotomy of the Interpretant-Relation (Rheme, Dicot, Argument)
 - ↔ What do each of these mean?
 - ↔ How are they related to one another?
- ⇒ In Peirce’s Semeiotic, what role does “culture” play?
 - ↔ What role does the individual interpreter or mind play?
 - ↔ What role does the “real” world of objects play?
- ⇒ What are the most important differences—and, if any, similarities as well—between Peircean Semeiotic and Saussurian structuralist semiology? [see TOPIC 1, Class 2]
- ⇒ (Esp. for those with an interest in philosophical issues): what is the status of the “Subject/Object” dichotomy in Peirce’s Semeiotic?
- ✎ In what sense are Qualities/Qualisigns and Regularities/Types/Legisigns “real”?
 - ✎ Are you prepared to believe in the reality of Qualities? Of Types?
- ⇒ What is the relation between Peirce’s metaphysics/cosmology and his Semeiotic?
 - ↔ Do we have to subscribe to Peircean metaphysical principles to subscribe to his Semeiotic?
 - ↔ Do you find Peirce’s categories (whether conceived as stipulating the structure of Reality or the structure of phenomenological experience) [i.e., Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness] compelling?

Class 2 Peirce’s System from the “Ground” Up, Part II

- 📁 **Lee**, *Peirce’s Semiotic* [unnecessarily difficult in places; focus on *Classes of Signs*]
- 📁 **Hanks**, *Indexicality*
- 📁 **Merrell**, *Semiotics versus Semiology, or How We Can Get a Handle on Semiosis*

Handouts/emailed docs: Handout on Peirce with Exercises

- ⇒ Explain, in as much formal detail as you can, Peirce’s notion of semiosis as a (potentially) infinite process
- ⇒ What are the basic constituents of any (linguistic) proposition for Peirce?
- ✎ What is the type/token dichotomy?
 - ✎ What role does the type/token distinction play in Peirce’s Semeiotic?

- ⇒ What is the definition of a “sign” for Peirce?
 - ↪ Is the Peircean sign “arbitrary” in the Saussurian sense?
- ⇒ Is Peirce’s approach to semiosis compatible with Saussure’s?
- ⇒ **Arguably, (Peircean) indexicality is the privileged object of contemporary linguistic and semiotic anthropology**
 - ↪ **Why should this be?**
 - ↪ What are the most relevant distinguishing features of indexical value?
 - ↪ What is it about these distinguishing features that recommend indexicality to linguistic and semiotic anthropology?
- ⇒ Grasp, to the best of your ability, Peirce’s 10 basic sign-types (or sign-functions)
- ✍ **Do all the exercises in the Peirce Handout** (to be submitted)

TOPIC 3 *Variation in Language–I: Sociocultural Variation, its “Traditional” Study, and Beyond*

Class 1 The Theory and Practice of Sociolinguistics

- 📁 **Labov(a)**, [The] *Social Stratification [of (r) in New York City Department Stores]*
- 📁 **Labov(b)**, [The Isolation of] *Contextual Styles*
- 📁 **Wolfram**, *Variation and Language, an Overview*
- 📁 **Chambers**, *Sociolinguistic Theory*, “Correlations”]

Handouts/mailed docs: Study Guide: Emblematic-Variationist, Quantitative Sociolinguistics

- ⇒ Be able to give an account of Labov’s *Department Store* study
 - ↪ What are “sociolinguistic variables”?
 - ↪ What are “index scores”?
 - ↪ What, in general, was Labov able to demonstrate in this study?
- ⇒ What is the semiotic, sign-functional, status of Labovian “indexes”
- ⇒ What are Labovian contextual “styles”?
- ⇒ What is the “problem” of casual speech?
 - ↪ In what sense does casual speech have a special status for sociolinguistics?
- ⇒ How is Labovian stylistic variation structured?
- ⇒ What seems to *cause* Labovian stylistic variation?
- ✍ **What is the core goal of sociolinguistics, traditionally defined (i.e., what kind of knowledge do traditional sociolinguistic studies produce)?**
 - ✍ What is the semiotic, sign-functional status of traditional sociolinguistic correlations?
 - ✍ **Evaluate/critique Chambers’ claim to the effect that correlations are the only scientifically valid and methodologically sound form of sociolinguistic study**

Class 2 Beyond “Traditional” Approaches to Sociolinguistics

- 📁 **Baugh**, *Variation*
- 📁 **Bucholtz(a)**, *On Sociolinguistic Nostalgia [and the Authentication of Identity]*
- 📁 **Bucholtz(b)**, *Reflexivity and Critique in Discourse Analysis*
- 📁 **Eckert**, *Constructing Meaning in Linguistic Variation*
- 📁 **Eckert**, *Variation, convention, and social meaning*
- 📁 **Eckert**, *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice*[: Introduction, “Variation and Agency”]
- 📁 **Irvine**, *Status and Style in Language*

- ⇒ Why does sociolinguistic variation *exist* (that is, why don’t all member of a linguistic community speak identically)?
- ⇒ Does the very existence of sociolinguistic variation tell us anything important or interesting...
 - ↪ About language in general?
 - ↪ About socioculture in general?
 - ↪ About anything else?
- ⇒ In what sense is traditional sociolinguistics a “nostalgic” approach?
 - ↪ In what sense does an ideology of “authenticity” underwrite traditional sociolinguistics?

- ⇒ Be able to give an account of Bucholtz's proposals for a more reflexive, politically-engaged, sociolinguistics
- ⇒ How does Eckert's approach to the "meaning of variation" differ from the traditional Labovian approach?
 - ↪ In what sense(s) is Eckert's approach a critique of traditional sociolinguistics?
- ⇒ What, in Eckert's view, *should* be the role of individual agency in sociolinguistics?

TOPIC 4 *Variation in Language–II: Historical Variation its "Traditional" Study, and Beyond*

Class 1 Introduction to Language Relationship and Language Change

📁 **Joseph**, *Historical Linguistics*

📁 **Ballmer**, *What do Dialects Tell Us about Linguistic History?*

📖 **Hock & Joseph**, *Language History, Language Change, and Language Relationship* [Chapter 1, "Introduction," pp. 3-21; Chapter 4, "Sound Change", pp. 113-143].

Handouts/mailed docs: Historical Linguistics/Sound Change Study Guide

- ⇒ In the first sentence of his article, Joseph suggests that the fact that "languages change through time" is a "remarkably striking observation."
 - ↪ **Is this a remarkably striking observation? In what sense?**
- ⇒ "It is at least conceivable," Joseph continues, "that language could remain unchanged over time, as is the case with some other human institutions, e.g., various tabus or the rules to some games, and with some aspects of human communication systems, e.g., Morse Code or the value of a smile as a nonverbal signal..."
 - ↪ **Do you agree? Is it conceivable that language could remain unchanged over time?**
 - ↪ **Accepting that language is a "human institution" (and, for what it's worth, I, for one do accept it), is Joseph's line argumentation sensible?**
 - ↪ **In particular, that is, are "tabus," the "rules to some games," Morse Code, or "the value of a smile" appropriate analogues to language?**
- ⇒ Be able to characterize, and briefly discuss, the five key problems that, arguably, face any theory of language change: the "constraints" problem, the "transition" problem, the "embedding" problem, the "evaluation" problem, and the "actuation" problem.
- ⇒ According to Joseph, "all innovations that ultimately are generalized over the (relevant) speech community must be positively evaluated by speakers and actively (though not necessarily consciously) adopted by them."
 - ↪ Does this make sense to you? Does the very existence of sociolinguistic variation tell us anything important or interesting...
- ⇒ **So, how can we explain the fact that English dialects are more highly differentiated than Swiss German dialects are? Is there a principle governing this explanation?**
- ⇒ **Why don't all languages change at approximately the same rate? What kinds of factors are involved?**
- ⇒ Assume that it is demonstrated to your satisfaction that, for at least the past 15 years, African American Vernacular English and Standard American English have been consistently becoming more dissimilar—i.e., that American dialects are becoming more highly differentiated. How would you explain this? How would you go about *looking* for the answer? What kinds of things could, in principle, explain it?

Class 2 Toward a Sociohistorical Linguistics; Explaining Language Change

📖 **Hock & Joseph**, *Language History, Language Change, and Language Relationship* [Chapter 16, "Comparative Method: Establishing Language Relationship", pp. 455-484].

📁 **Joseph & Janda**, *Handbook of Historical Linguistics* [Chapter 1, Rankin, "Comparative Method," pp. 183-213].


Handouts/mailed docs: Comparative Method Study Guide


TOPIC 5 *The Linguistic Construction of (Social) Reality: Identities and Selves*

Class 1 The (Re-)Production of Personhood


 **Foley:** 260-285


 **Keane,** *Voice*

 **Agha,** *Register*


 **Mendoza-Denton,** *Style*

 **Kroskrity,** *Identity*

 **Bucholtz & Hall,** *Identity and Interaction*


- ⇒ **What does it mean to say that linguistic practice (partially) “constitutes” persons and/or selves**
- ⇒ Is the “person” vs. “self” distinction useful, coherent, or productive?
- ⇒ What is the status of Grice’s maxim(s)?
 - ↖ What can they do for linguistic and/or sociocultural analysis?
 - ↖ What role does the “Cooperative Principle,” and its “flouting,” etc., play in the production of sociocultural meaning/value?
- ⇒ What is the status of (speaker’s) *intentions* in semiosis?
-  **How would you categorize the semiotic sign-function of “T/V” systems?**
- ⇒ Be able to define “voice”
- ⇒ Be able to define “register”
 - ↖ How would you categorize the semiotic, sign-relational, status of “register”?
- ⇒ What is the “Emergence Principle”?
- ⇒ What is the “Positionality Principle”?
- ⇒ What is the “Indexicality Principle”?
 - ↖ Be able to define adequation and distinction, authentication and denaturalization, authorization and illegitimation
- ⇒ Do Bucholtz & Hall’s theoretical scheme seem useful or productive?
 - ↖ What, if anything, do they clarify for us?
 - ↖ What, if anything, can they help us do?

Class 2 Learning to be Gendered: Language, Sex, and Sexuality





 **Foley:** 286-306

 **Bucholtz,** *Gender*

 **Eckert & McConnell-Ginet,** *Think Practically and Look Locally*

 **Cameron,** *Gender, Language, and Discourse[: A Review Essay]*

 **Kulick,** *Gay and Lesbian Language*

- ⇒ What does it mean to think “practically” about gender?
 - ↖ What good does it do to conceive of “gender” as a dynamic process—as a verb?
- ⇒ Be able to compare and contrast the “Dominance” and “Difference” models in the language and gender literature
- ⇒ Be able to compare and contrast “gender deixis” and “gender markers”
-  **How would you categorize the semiotic sign-function of “gender deixis”**
-  **...and “gender markers”**
- ⇒ What does it mean to say that women are “linguistically conservative”?
 - ↖ Is female “linguistic conservatism” a sociocultural universal?
 - ↖ How would you explain female “linguistic conservatism” (whether or not it is universal)?
- ⇒ Is there such a thing as “women’s language”?
- ⇒ Is there such a thing as “gay” speech?
 - ↖ Why does Kulick call for scholars to abandon the search for gay and lesbian language?
 - ↖ What does he propose we do instead?
-  **What does Kulick mean by “desire”**
-  **What would it mean for scholars to turn their attention to matters of “desire”?**

TOPIC 6 *The Linguistic Construction of (Social) Reality: Groups and Borders*

Class 1 Language and Borders

📁 **Morgan**, *Community*

📁 **Urciuoli**, *Languages and Borders*

📁 **Gal & Irvine**, [*The*] *Boundaries of Languages and Disciplines*[: *How Ideologies Construct Difference*]

- ⇒ How has the question “What constitutes a ‘language’” been problematized in recent scholarship
- ⇒ What is code-switching? How does it work? What does/can it mean?
- ✎ **How would you categorize code-switching in terms of its semiotic sign-function(s)?**
- ⇒ What are the most important ways in which things-linguistic/semiotic are involved in the construction and re-production of borders?
- ⇒ What do Gal & Irvine mean when they claim that *disciplinary* boundaries are constructed by just those processes that construct *linguistic* boundaries?
 - ↪ What are these processes?
 - ↪ How do they work?
 - ↪ Does Gal & Irvine’s theoretical proposals seem valid? Useful? Generally applicable?
- ⇒ **What is the status of Gal & Irvine’s “iconicity” / “iconization” in terms of Peirce’s architectonic?**
 - ↪ **How would you categorize Gal & Irvine’s “iconicity” / “iconization” in terms of its semiotic sign-function?**
 - ↪ How would you categorize Gal & Irvine’s “erasure” in terms of semiotic sign-function?

Class 2 Socialization: Language and the Formation of Community

📖 **Foley**: 345-358

📁 **Manelis Klein**, *Narrative*

📁 **Heath**, *What No Bedtime Story Means*[: *Narrative Skills at Home and in School*]

📁 **Heath**, *The Children of Trackton’s Children*[: *Spoken and Written Language in Social Change*]

📁 **Ochs**, *Socialization*

📁 **Ochs**, [*Linguistic Resources for*] *Socializing* [*Humanity*]

📁 **Field**, *Triadic Directives in Navajo Language Socialization*

📁 **Gone**, [*“We Were Through as Keepers of It,” The “Missing Pipe” Narrative*] and *Gros Ventre*
Cultural Identity

📁 **Turino**, *Signs of Imagination, Identity, and Experience: A Peircean Semiotic Theory of Music*

In-Class Viewing: Star Trek: “Darmok.”

In-Class Thought Experiment-I: On the Tamarians’ sociosemiotic system

In-Class Thought Experiment-II: An exclusively symbolic semiotic system?

- ⇒ Be able to explain what is meant by language, or linguistic, *socialization*.
 - ↪ Which sign-functions are most centrally involved in this process?
- ⇒ How is the Navajo concept of *k’é* transmitted from generation to generation?
 - ↪ What semiotic sign-function is exemplified through this process?
- ⇒ What aspects/elements of linguistic practice are atypically resistant to the “normal” processes of language change, according to Field?
 - ↪ What are the semiotic properties of these aspects of linguistic practice?
- ⇒ Be able to define, and explain the relevance of, the three principles Ochs discusses:
 - ↪ the “indexicality principle”
 - ↪ the “universal culture” principle
 - ↪ the “local culture” principle
- ✎ **How does Ochs contribute to our understanding of indexicality, and its place in social life?**

TOPIC 7 *Theory in Linguistic/Semiotic Anthropology–I: Language Ideology*

Class 1 The Concept of Linguistic Ideology and its Application – I: Theory

- 📁 **Woolard & Schieffelin**, *Language Ideologies*
- 📁 **Errington**, *Ideology*
- 📁 **Silverstein**, [*Language and the*] *Culture of Gender*

- ⇒ What is language/linguistic ideology?
 - ⌘ Which, of the many definitions given, strikes you as the most useful/productive?
- ⇒ How is linguistic ideology related to language change?
- ⇒ What kind of perspective, or theory, does the concept of language/linguistic ideology (implicitly) critique?
- ⇒ What is the “total linguistic fact”?
- ⇒ Be able to explain, in detail, what Silverstein means by the realm of *pragmatics*
 - ⌘ What is pragmatics in terms of semiotic sign-function?
- ⇒ Silverstein claims that pragmatic aspects of linguistic practice are predictably misrecognized:
 - ⌘ In terms of what?
 - ⌘ with what kinds of consequences?
 - ⌘ try to produce examples of your own that either support or contradict Silverstein’s claim
- ⇒ What is “metapragmatic discourse”?
 - ⌘ How is metapragmatic discourse related to ideology
 - ⌘ What is the semiotic, sign-functional, status of metapragmatic discourse?
- ⇒ What does Silverstein mean by *reference and predication*?
 - ⌘ What is reference and predication in terms of semiotic sign-function?
- ⇒ Silverstein claims that many feminist-inspired approaches to language are fundamentally flawed:
 - ⌘ In what sense? What is the problem, in Silverstein’s view?
- ✍ **What are the semiotic, sign-functional, properties of (Silversteinian) ideology?**

Class 2 The Concept of Linguistic Ideology and its Application – II: Application

- 📁 **Haviland**, [*Ideologies of Language: Some Reflections*] on *Language and [U.S.] Law*
- 📁 **Hill**, *Language, Race, and White Public Space*
- 📁 **Bucholtz**, *The Whiteness of Nerds: Superstandard English and Racial Markedness*
- 📁 **Cutler**, “*Keepin’ It Real*”: *White Hip-Hoppers’ Discourse of Language, Race, and Authenticity*

- ⇒ What is “referential transparency,” and what kinds of effects can it have in courtroom practice?
- ⇒ What is “indirect indexicality” in Hill’s sense? What is its semiotic, sign-functional, status?
- ⇒ What is “white public space”? What is its function?
- ⇒ What ideologies of language seem to be involved in the production of white public space?
- ⇒ Explain Bucholtz’s application of the theoretical concepts developed in Gal & Irvine’s to varieties of American English on the one hand, and racial ideologies on the other
- ⇒ What is “Superstandard English” (formally, functionally, ideologically)?
- ⇒ What is “hyperwhiteness” (formally, functionally, ideologically)?
- ⇒ **What is “Hip Hop Speech Style” (formally, functionally, ideologically)?**
 - ⌘ **What are the semiotic, sign-functional, characteristics of HHSS?**
- ⇒ Evaluate/critique Cutler’s application of the core concepts of linguistic and semiotic anthropology

TOPIC 8 *Theory in Linguistic/Semiotic Anthropology–II: Power and Politics*

Class 1 Formal Linguistic Means of Indicating (and [Re-]Producing) Social Hierarchies

- 📁 **Philips**, *Power*

📁 **Chandler**, *Semiotics for Beginners: Modes of Address*

📖 **Foley**: 307-344

📁 **Silverstein**, *Talking Politics*

- ⇒ **What is “social deixis”**
- ⇒ **How would you categorize the semiotic sign-function of social deictics?**
- ⇒ Be able to explain Brown and Gilman’s analysis of T/V forms
- ⇒ Are you familiar with any language(s) that have T/V systems?
 - ☞ If so: does Brown & Gilman’s analysis adequately account for it?
 - ☞ If not: how does it differ (formally, functionally, ideologically) from the systems Brown and Gilman analyze?
- ⇒ What are honorifics? How do they relate to social deictics?
- ⇒ Be able to describe the system of Javanese speech levels
 - ☞ How would you categorize the semiotic sign-function of Javanese speech levels?
- ⇒ What are “sociolinguistic markers”?
 - ☞ How would you categorize the semiotic sign-function of sociolinguistic markers? {careful!}
- 🖋️ Silverstein’s writes: “The substance of it all, I would contend, is style.” Explain, in as much semiotic, ideological, and political detail as possible, what he means by this
- ⇒ What is the *point* of the analysis Silverstein presents in *Death and Life at Gettysburg*, esp. pp. 41-62.
 - ☞ What claim is Silverstein making in the presentation of this analysis?
 - ☞ Does the analysis seem useful or productive to you?
- 🖋️ What, in Silverstein’s view, is the actual “message” of George W. Bush’s error-prone, relaxed, and “folksy,” one-of-the-guys style?
 - 🖋️ Do you agree with Silverstein’s analysis of George W. Bush’s style?

Class 2 Language and Inequality: Linguistic Subordination and Discrimination

📁 **Hopson**, *The Problem of the Language Line: Cultural and Social Reproduction of Hegemonic Linguistic Structures [for Learners of African Descent in the USA]*

📁 **Woolard**, *Sentences in the Language Prison[: The Rhetorical Structuring of an American Language Policy Debate]*

📁 **Barrett**, *Language Ideology and Racial Inequality [: Competing Functions of Spanish in an Anglo-owned Mexican Restaurant]*

- ⇒ What is the “language line”?
- ⇒ Hopson writes: “The problem of the language line...represents to the twenty-first century what the problem of the color line represented to the twentieth century.” Do you agree?
- ⇒ How is language involved in the process of constructing “racialized identities” (both in our schools, and in the larger society)?
- ⇒ What are the linguistic aspects of racism?
- ⇒ What is the “cultural and linguistic duality” faced by African-American children in school?
 - ☞ Is this same duality faced by other minority groups?
 - ☞ If you have direct experience with this “duality” (and you feel comfortable discussing it, please do so)
- ⇒ In what ways do ideologies of language affect the interactional dynamics—and reinforce racial segregation and inequality—in Barrett’s study?
 - ☞ Evaluate/critique Barrett’s arguments
- ⇒ **What ideologies of language underwrite liberal opposition to English-only legislation?**
- ⇒ **What are the most powerful, and important, functions of linguistic ideology in social life?**

TOPIC 9 *Linguistic Relativity (the “Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis”)*

Class 1 Classic Formulations of the “Principle” of Linguistic Relativity, in Context

📖 **Foley**: 192-208

📁 **Duranti**, *Relativity*

📁 **Whorf(a)**, *Language and Logic*

📁 **Whorf(b)**, *The Relation of Habitual [Thought to Language]*

📁 **Whorf(c)**, *Grammatical Categories*

- ✎ **What are the major arguments presented by Whorf in *Languages and Logic*?**
- ✎ **What do you think is his goal in publishing this article?**
- ⇒ What is “SAE”? What *kinds* of things to SAE languages share?
- ✎ **What is a “fashion of speaking”**
- ✎ **What role do fashions of speaking play in Whorf’s theoretical perspective?**
- ⇒ What are “grammatical categories”?
- ✎ What role do grammatical categories play in Whorf’s theoretical perspective
- ⇒ What is the distinction between “overt” and “covert” linguistic categories?
- ✎ What role does this distinction play in Whorf’s theoretical perspective?
- ⇒ **What is “linguistic relativity” for Whorf**
- ⇒ Give an account of the theoretical and intellectual history of “linguistic relativity”

Class 2 Contemporary Approaches to Linguistic Relativity (“Neo-Whorfianism”)

📖 **Foley:** 208-214

📁 **Lucy, *Linguistic Relativity***

📁 **Rumsey, *Wording, Meaning, and Linguistic Ideology***

📁 **Silverstein, *The Limits of Awareness***

📁 **Gumperz & Levinson, *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity***

📁 **Everett, *Cultural Constraints on Grammar and Cognition***

📁 **Lupyan & Dale, *Language Structure Is Partly Determined by Social Structure***

- ⇒ Is Whorf’s principle of linguistic relativity a “testable hypothesis”?
 - ✎ Note: scholars do not agree on this question: take a position and support it
- ⇒ Be able to describe the results of Lucy’s experiments
 - ✎ How do these results confirm the “hypothesis” of linguistic relativity
- ⇒ What are Rumsey’s major claims? How are they “(Neo-)Whorfian”?
- ⇒ Be able to give an overview of Silverstein’s core arguments in *Limits of Awareness*
 - ✎ What are the most theoretically important claims he makes in this paper?
- ⇒ In what sense are the proposals in Silverstein’s *Limits of Awareness* “(Neo-)Whorfian”?
- ⇒ Is there, according to the overview in Gumperz & Levinson, a generally-accepted understanding in contemporary linguistic and semiotic anthropology of what “linguistic relativity” means?
- ✎ What, in your view, is the most productive, and theoretically sound, understanding of linguistic relativity
- ? **Is Everett for real?**
- ✎ **In what sense, if any, is Everett’s argument a “Whorfian” one? A “Neo-Whorfian” one?**
 - ✎ **What are the most interesting—and potentially productive—aspects of Everett’s argument?**
 - ✎ **What are the least believable aspects?**
 - ✎ **What are the most/least theoretically sound aspects?**