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Sociolinguistics 01:615:381

Fall 2013

Instructor: Dr. Crystal Akers (cakers@scarletmail.rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: 10-11 AM Thursday using Google chat; also by appointment

Prerequisites: Ling 201

Course Website: access via ecollege.rutgers.edu

Course Meeting Time:

This course meets entirely online, but assignments are generally due on Tuesdays and Fridays, as shown in the Weekly Schedule.

Note: I will respond to emails within 24 hours during the work week and by the next business day on weekends and holidays.

Course Description

Sociolinguistics investigates the interactions between language and society. Generative linguistics studies the nature of grammatical systems. This course brings the two together, introducing students with prior training in linguistic theory to a broad array of sociolinguistic issues, including the relationship between linguistic variation and social factors like identity, class and power, the development of pidgins and creoles, code choices in bi-dialectal and bilingual communities, and language change. Students will also draw connections with research methods and approaches to data analysis used in other areas of linguistics, and examine attitudes toward language and culture and their social and political consequences. The course emphasizes the insights into the use of language in society provided by a generative linguistics approach to natural language.

Learning Goals

- Become familiar with the terminology and major research in sociolinguistics
- Build a deeper knowledge of the research in one particular area of interest in sociolinguistics
- Be able to assess attitudes toward language use in everyday interactions

Required Text:

Meyerhoff, Miriam. 2011. *Introducing Sociolinguistics*. 2nd edition. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0415550062

Textbook companion website: <http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/meyerhoff/>

Other readings will be available on the course website.

Assessments and Grading Policies

Reading quizzes (15%)

There are 10 weekly reading quizzes containing at least six questions each. You will have 20 minutes to complete each quiz. Questions are worth 1/4 point apiece. Your grade for reading quizzes will equal the sum of the points earned on all quizzes in the semester, up to a maximum of 15 points (60 correct questions). Because there will be more than 60 questions throughout the semester, you have some built-in leeway in case you miss an assignment or struggle with the material one week.

For example, if you answer 52 questions correctly, then you will have earned 13 points (=52/4) in the reading quiz category of your final semester grade. If you answer 70 questions correctly, you will have earned the maximum 15 points in this category (and demonstrated excellent attention to the reading!).

Your scores on reading quizzes will help demonstrate that you've completed the assigned reading and comprehended the material. The focus of reading quizzes will be factual information, such as the correct use of terminology and the identification of major researchers and their findings. Use your quiz scores to identify topics that you might need to review more carefully before the midterm and to gauge whether you're giving yourself enough time to complete the reading. As a class, scores on reading quizzes will keep me apprised of our overall progress and let me know which topics might need more explanation, but please also let me know, either through anonymous evaluation or direct contact, if you are struggling with the workload or the material.

Class participation through discussions and problems (25%)

There are two very short tasks to complete in the first week of class to show your preparedness for the classwork, but primarily your weekly class participation will be evaluated by your contributions in small groups. Within your group, you will participate in threaded discussions and complete two homework assignments. I will provide a grading rubric for evaluating your individual discussion responses.

Your contributions to your group will demonstrate your higher-level engagement with the material, including your ability to apply your knowledge of sociolinguistics to identify linguistic variables and assess attitudes toward language in everyday contexts. Use the threaded discussion questions to identify topics that you might want to explore more carefully for your end-of-term presentation. In the homework assignments, you will demonstrate your ability to apply methods discussed in the readings, such as by interpreting data from graphs and charts.

Midterm (25%)

The midterm will be available from Monday October 21 at 12:00 AM until Tuesday October 22 at 11:59 PM. You will have two hours to complete the midterm once you begin it.

Group presentation (15%)

Your small group will be assigned a paper that relates to or extends topics discussed in the first five weeks of class. You will read and discuss the paper as a group, then make and upload a presentation for the rest of the class to view. As an individual, you will also evaluate the presentations of two other groups and, finally, write a self-assessment based on the evaluations you receive from other groups. Your grade will be based on your individual contributions to your group and on your group's work as a whole, including the presentation, evaluations of your peer groups, and your self-assessment. You will receive rubrics for each graded component.

In this assignment, you will delve more deeply into one sociolinguistic topic with your own group, and you will also expand your breadth of knowledge with exposure to topics covered by other groups. Additionally, this assignment will prepare you for the expectations of your final, individual presentation, in which you will select your own topic to research and present.

Individual presentation (20%)

You are required to research and make a presentation on a sociolinguistic topic of your choice. Peer evaluations are an integral part of this assignment, and each presentation will receive at least two peer evaluations. Your presentation grade will depend on my assessment of the quality of your presentation, the *quality* of the evaluations you write for your peers, and your assessment of your own work as judged by a self-evaluation and the peer evaluations you receive for your presentation. All presentation guidelines are posted on the course website.

This presentation is your opportunity to investigate a sociolinguistic topic of personal interest in more depth and to learn more about the topics that interest your classmates. Your presentation will demonstrate your ability to identify key issues in the topic, to find and evaluate the pertinent literature, and to illuminate your audience about this topic. The evaluations you write for your peers will demonstrate your attention to their presentations and your ability to offer constructive feedback. Finally, your self-assessment, including any revisions or amendments to your presentation, will demonstrate your consideration of the peer evaluations you receive on your own presentation and allow you to reflect on your work.

Attendance and Late Work Policy

Because all work will be completed asynchronously for this course, there is no formal attendance policy; however, regular class engagement will be assessed through the weekly reading quizzes and threaded discussions. For reading quizzes a buffer has been built in to allow for one or two exigencies that result in missed work: there are more points possible in this category than needed.

Much of the work in this class relies on frequent, active engagement with your classmates. As a result, except for documented cases of illness or religious observance, no credit will be given to late work when the assignment affects other students' ability to complete their work. This policy applies to threaded discussions, which will be closed for submissions after the posted due date to allow for group members to focus on the next questions, and to components of the group and individual presentations. See your grading rubrics for these assignments for specific penalties applied to late work.

Accommodations for Special Needs

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Is an online course right for you?

An online course requires different skill sets for success than a traditionally-delivered course. You must be more responsible for managing your own success in an online course, such as by ensuring you have the time and resources to complete the work, completing the assigned work, and contacting me early for help with challenging material. This course is designed to have the same workload as a traditional, face-to-face class – approximately nine hours of work per week – but instead of simply showing up for lectures, you will demonstrate your work effort primarily through your success on the weekly reading quizzes and participation in group discussions. Finally, this class will require you to interact frequently and in writing with your classmates. It is important that we all be mindful of how our written words can be interpreted by others and that we be respectful and courteous in our interactions.

Students who are most successful in online courses tend to be independent, organized, disciplined, and flexible. Please consider carefully whether your learning style and work traits are conducive to success in an online environment, and contact me if you have any questions or concerns. The University of Missouri offers [this self-assessment](#) for evaluating your potential for success in an online course, as well as these useful [Tips for Academic Success in Online Study](#).

Academic Integrity Policy

You are expected to be familiar with and abide by Rutgers University's Academic Integrity Policy (http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf).

You may discuss questions from the threaded discussions or ideas about your presentations outside of class, but responses and work posted online should give appropriate credit to anyone involved in these external conversations.

You **may not** collaborate with other students to answer questions in reading quizzes or the midterm; collaborating on these assignments is a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. Students caught cheating or committing plagiarism will be penalized, as per Rutgers policy.

Course Evaluations

Your experience of this course is important and provides me with important information about how to improve the course. Your feedback will be welcomed in an anonymous, midterm course evaluation.

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topics and Readings	Assignments
1 Semester begins Tues 9/3/2013	Introduction/ What is sociolinguistics? Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ch 1: Introduction• Screencast: Navigating the course materials• Phonetics & Phonology Review slides	Due by Sunday 11:59 PM <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course introduction reading quiz (mandatory, but no late penalty)• Pre-test on sociolinguistics• Personal introduction post to the discussion board• Phonetics & Phonology Review Quiz
2 9/7/2013 <i>All unit materials become available on Saturdays</i>	Variation <i>Topics:</i> Regional and social dialectology, phonetic variation in Martha's Vineyard <i>Reading:</i> Ch 2. "Variation and language"	Due by Tuesday 11:59 PM: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ch 2 reading quiz• Initial discussion post Due by Friday 11:59 PM: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow-up discussion posts

Week	Topics and Readings	Assignments
<p>3 9/14/2013</p>	<p>Variation, cont.</p> <p><i>Topics:</i> Speech communities, audience design, phonetic variation in NYC, the verb BE and third-person agreement in AAVE</p> <p><i>Reading:</i> Ch 3 "Variation and style"</p>	<p><i>Discussion groups are open to confer about the problem set</i></p> <p>Due by Tuesday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 3 reading quiz <p>Due by Friday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 2,3 Problem Set
<p>4 9/21/2013</p>	<p>Attitudes toward language use</p> <p><i>Topics:</i> Semantic shift, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, accommodation theory and Hawaiian orthography, language attitudes and the perception of variation</p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 4, "Language attitudes" • Presentation Guidelines 	<p>Due by Tuesday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 4 reading quiz • Initial discussion post <p>Due by Friday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up discussion posts • <i>Today you'll also receive your group's reading assignment for Week 6</i>
<p>5 9/28/2013</p>	<p>Multilingualism and codes</p> <p><i>Topics:</i> Language policy and planning, language vitality and preservation, diglossia and code-switching</p> <p><i>Reading:</i> Ch 6, "Multilingualism and language choice"</p>	<p>Due by Tuesday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 6 reading quiz • Initial discussion post <p>Due by Friday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up discussion posts

Week	Topics and Readings	Assignments
<p style="text-align: center;">6 10/5/2013</p>	<p>Group readings and discussions</p> <p><i>Reading</i> Groups will be assigned different readings related to the topics of Wks 2-5. Your group will have received its reading assignment in Week 4.</p>	<p><i>The following assignments and deadlines are recommendations only. None of these assignments is graded directly, but completing them will help your group better coordinate your efforts as you work on the presentation.</i></p> <p>Recommended for Monday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit individual responses to the guided reading questions <p>Recommended for Wednesday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come to a group agreement on responses to guided reading questions • Discuss plan for completing presentation (who will do what, by when?) <p>Recommended for Friday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come to a group agreement for completing presentation (what format -- PPT, video, other? who will do what, by when?)
<p style="text-align: center;">7 10/12/2013</p>	<p>Group presentations and evaluations</p> <p><i>Reading</i> Groups will be assigned two other group presentations to evaluate</p>	<p><i>A discussion group is open for questions about the midterm</i></p> <p>Due by Wednesday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentation for peer evaluation <p>Due by Friday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer evaluations of two other presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Must be completed and submitted by each group member individually
<p style="text-align: center;">8 10/19/2013</p>	<p>Midterm</p>	<p>Due by Tuesday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm <p>Due by Friday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Final Presentation • Group Self-Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Must be completed and submitted by each group member individually

Week	Topics and Readings	Assignments
<p>9 10/26/2013</p>	<p>Language change</p> <p><i>Topics:</i> Change over time (fricative devoicing in Dutch) and variation between generations (<i>was</i> and <i>were</i> in Yorkshire English, verbs of quotation in Puerto Rican Spanish, (r) in Montreal French)</p> <p><i>Reading</i> Ch 7, "Real time and apparent time"</p>	<p><i>Discussion groups are open to confer about the problem set</i></p> <p>Due by Tuesday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 7 reading quiz <p>Recommended by Friday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Begin preparing for your individual presentation by determining what topic you'd like to learn more about.</i>
<p>10 11/2/2013</p>	<p>Class and variation</p> <p><i>Topics:</i> Social class and the (ing) variable in English; influence of class on language change: phonological and syntactic variations in English</p> <p><i>Reading:</i> Ch 8, "Social class"</p>	<p><i>Discussion groups are open to confer about the problem set</i></p> <p>Due by Tuesday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 8 reading quiz • Topic of Individual Presentation <p>Due by Friday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 7,8 Problem Set
<p>11 11/9/2013</p>	<p>Speech communities, Politeness</p> <p><i>Topics:</i> Variant usage and membership in social networks (syntactic variables in Reading, England and Los Angeles, phonetic variables in Belfast, Northern Ireland), speech acts and politeness strategies</p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 9, "Social networks and communities of practice" • Ch 5, "Politeness " 	<p>Due by Tuesday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 5,9 reading quiz • Initial discussion post <p>Due by Friday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up discussion posts • Source Info for Individual Presentation
<p>12 11/16/2013</p>	<p>Language contact</p> <p><i>Topics:</i> Pidgins and creoles (Tok Pisin focus marking, Bislama subject agreement), the effects of attitude and class on language contact</p> <p><i>Reading:</i> Ch 11, "Language contact"</p>	<p>Due by Tuesday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 11 reading quiz • Initial discussion post <p>Due by Friday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up discussion posts

Week	Topics and Readings	Assignments
<p>13 11/23/2013</p>	<p>Gender</p> <p><i>Topics:</i> Gender and language change (English phonological and syntactic variation), context, identity, and speech acts (gender of particles in Japanese, use of tag questions in English, phonetic variation in English)</p> <p><i>Reading:</i> Ch 10, "Gender"</p>	<p><i>Enjoy Thanksgiving!</i> <i>All due dates are extended.</i></p> <p>Due by Tuesday 12/3/2013 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 10 reading quiz • Initial discussion post • Title of Individual Presentation <p>Due by Friday 12/6/2013 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up discussion posts • Sign-up to evaluate two peer presentations
<p>14 12/7/2013</p>	<p>Individual Presentations</p>	<p>Due by Monday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course post-test • Individual Presentation – Draft for Peer Evaluations <p>Due by Wednesday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Peer Evaluations
<p>15 12/14/2013</p>	<p>Wrap-up</p>	<p>Due by Monday 11:59 PM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Presentation – Final Draft • Individual Self-Assessment