

ANTH 4700: LANGUAGE, THOUGHT & CULTURE

Fall Semester 2009

TR 11:30-12:50

Centrum 231



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Office Hours: TR 10:30-11:30 (or by appointment)

Course Description:

This course surveys anthropological approaches to the study of language, emphasizing the relationship between language and worldview, and the social uses of speech. Instruction is given in the basics of descriptive linguistics. The biological basis of language and patterns of historical development are also examined.

Course Objectives:

This course is designed as an overview to the anthropological study of language. The first part of the course considers the components and structure of language. The second part of the course examines the relationship between language, thought, and reality. The third part of the course considers the origins and historical development of language, and how our complex communication system differs from those found among other animals. The final portion of the course focuses on language in its socio-cultural context, including the role of language in social interaction and power relations in contemporary American society, and in terms of cross-cultural communication. We will consider in detail issues including verbal vs. non-verbal communication, language and gender, language and ethnic identity, language and social class, language in institutional settings such as schools, and language of advertising and mass media.

This course is arguably one of the most comprehensive courses available that explores language from a truly interdisciplinary perspective. Our goal is to explore how differences in language go far beyond simple differences in vocabulary and grammar cross-culturally. Language carries

meaning and communication is certainly a hallmark of how humans get through their day. As we will see, language shapes our way of thinking about and interpreting the world. Along the way, I will emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of linguistics, while underscoring anthropology's contribution to this field in inquiry.

Specifically, as the course unfolds you will:

1. The course will provide students with the opportunity to gain factual knowledge about diverse aspects of language including new terms, concepts, and methods.
2. The course will allow students the opportunity to learn fundamental principles and theories of language and its use.
3. The course will also provide student the opportunity to apply some of the knowledge learned in class in short written projects throughout the semester.

Required Texts:

Zdenek Salzman (2007) Language, Culture, and Society, 4th Edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Keith Basso (1979) Portraits of "The Whiteman:" Linguistic Play and Cultural Symbols Among the Western Apache. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Deborah Tannen (1991) That's Not What I Meant: How Conversational Style Makes or Breaks Relationships. New York: Ballantine Books.

Course Content:

<u>Week of</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Aug 25	Introduction to the Course Language Anthropology-Style	Salzman Ch 1
Sept 1	Components of Language and Descriptive & Structural Linguistics	Salzman Ch 4; Video: Language
Sept 8	Descriptive & Structural Linguistics and Generative Grammar	Salzman Ch 5
Sept 15	Language, Thought & Culture <i>Exercise #1 due Thurs, Sept 17th</i>	Salzman Ch 3; Basso Ch 1 & 2
Sept 22	Language, Thought & Culture	Salzman Ch 9; Basso Ch 3-5

*******EXAM 1: Thurs, Sept 24th*******

Sept 29	Language, Thought & Culture	Salzmann Ch 11 & 12, pp. 246-250; Video: American Tongues
Oct 6	Animal vs. Human Language	Salzmann Ch 2
Oct 13	Evolution of Language and Historical Linguistics <i>Exercise #2 due Thurs, Oct 15th</i>	Salzmann Ch 6, 7, & 8, pp. 167; 181; 191-195; Video: In Search of the First Language
Oct 20	Learning Language	Revisit Salzmann, pp. 37-44

*******EXAM #2: Thurs, Oct 22nd*******

Oct 27	Language, Power & Inequality	Tannen Parts 1 & 2
Nov 3	LPI: Is There Male and Female Speech? Parts 3 & 4	Salzman Ch 10, pp. 217-228; Tannen
Nov 10	LPI: Social Stratification — Language and Literacy in the Classroom	Salzmann Ch 13, especially 319-328
Nov 17	LPI: Is There Just One English? Black Vernacular English and the English Only Movement	Salzmann Ch 10, pp. 229-242
Nov 24	Media, Advertising & Persuasion	Video: Consuming Images

*******No classes, November 25-27, Thanksgiving Holiday*******

Dec 1	Debriefing and Decompressing <i>Exercise #3 due Thurs, Dec 3rd</i>
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*******Classes end Dec 4th & Dec 7th is a Study Day*******

Dec 8 (Tues) **FINAL EXAM (1:00-2:30)**

"PLEASE NOTE: COURSE CONTENT MAY VARY FROM THE OUTLINE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THIS PARTICULAR GROUP."

Course Requirements and Grading:

Exams: Three exams are required. Each exam is worth 100 points apiece (300 points total), together totaling about 90% of your final grade. On each exam 100-90 = A, 89-80 = B, 79-70 = C, 69-60 = D, 59 and below = F. Exams will draw on lecture material, readings, videos and any other resources used in the class. The final exam is not cumulative, but certainly builds upon the knowledge that we've accumulated throughout the semester. Exams will have a combination of short answer, multiple choice, and essay questions.

Exercises: You will also be required to do three short exercises. These exercises are applications of the material we will be covering in class. Each of these exercises is worth 10 points apiece, together totaling 30 points (roughly 10% of your grade). Please make an extra copy of each exercise to keep filed away.

Exercise 1: Klingon Language Analysis

Exercise 2: Ethnography of Speaking

Exercise 3: Power and Persuasion in Advertising

Calculating Final Grades:

330-297 points (90-100%) = A

296-264 points (80-89%) = B

263-231 points (70-79%) = C

230-198 points (60-69%) = D

197 or below = F

If you would like to find out your final grade before grades are posted by the Registrar's Office, leave a self-addressed, stamped envelope with me (or dropped off at my office) on or before the day of the final exam. In keeping with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) that protects student privacy, I do not post grades or provide grades over the phone, by fax, or through e-mail.

Attendance, Making-Up Work, and Late Exercises: While I do not have an explicitly graded attendance policy, I do absolutely expect you to be here for every class. Your presence and participation is a critical dimension of the class. Additionally, since the exams will draw heavily from lectures, discussions and other activities in the classroom, failure to attend class may well spell failure on the exams. It is also important to note that absences due to the celebration of religious holidays or participation in official SUU business is considered an excused absence and you can make up any and all work missed for those days. If you perceive such an absence looming on the horizon, please be sure to get in touch with me beforehand so that we can work out any details about keeping you current with course material or arranging a way for you to make-up any work you may miss.

THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP EXAMS AND EXERCISES SHOULD BE TURNED IN ON TIME AS SPECIFIED IN THE SYLLABUS (unless truly extraordinary circumstances can be

demonstrated and documented by you, and easily verified by me prior to the exam date). Any consideration other than the "no make-up exam" policy is completely at the instructor's discretion. Late exercises will be accepted, but one point will be deducted for each day your work is late (e.g., if you would have received the full 10 points for your work and it is two-days late, you would receive 8 points).

Classroom Behavior: All members of the class are expected to behave with courtesy and respect toward others. Should behavioral disruptions interfere with the business of the classroom and the ability of class members to learn, they may be reported to the Office of Student Services as outlined in SUU Policy 11.2, Section III (Student Code of Conduct):
<http://suu.edu/pub/policies/pdf/PP112Student.pdf>

We also live in a highly electronically mediated and interconnected world where we seem to be “on call” 24/7. Consequently, I’m guessing that most if not all of you regularly pack a cell phone as standard operating equipment for helping you navigate through your daily lives. These seem to have become a new form of musical instrument and have a very disruptive potential in certain settings. *PLEASE TURN THEM OFF WHEN YOU ARE IN CLASS.* As a sidebar... some of you may find it necessary at some point in the semester to keep a cell phone on during class because of a sick child or other immediately pressing matter. If so, please let me know before class starts that you’ll need to keep a phone active.

Academic Dishonesty: Students are expected to be above reproach in scholastic activities. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties. According to the Board of Regents of the University of Texas, “scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an exam for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.” Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. If you have any questions about this (especially what constitutes plagiarism), please stop by my office and I'd be most happy to discuss it.

Student Support Services: SUU students with documented disabilities have access to an array of support service, and will need to contact the Southern Utah University Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), in Room 206F of the Sharwan Smith Center or phone (435) 865–8022. SSD determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of services.