

Anthropology 4500: Language and Culture

2 – 3:20 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays

Instructor: Rhonda Collins

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Office Hours: 9:30-11 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, and by appointment

Instructional Assistants:

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Office Hours: 4:30-5:30 pm Mondays and Wednesdays, and by appointment

Course Information

This course focuses on an introduction to linguistic anthropology, designed to acquaint students with some of the ways in which languages and cultures are connected to each other, in that communication patterns are culturally structured. Three broad areas will be explored: 1) how we acquire language and how it evolves over time; 2) how language is used by cultures and its variations in different settings; and 3) the impacts of globalization, technology and cross-cultural encounters on contemporary communication.

A major project carried out throughout the semester will allow students to develop skills in ethnography and linguistic anthropology as well as moving students toward becoming an interculturalist.

Course Goals

The primary goals of this course are for students to:

1. Understand the linguistic anthropology research process
2. Explain the strong and important link between language and culture
3. Know the processes and evolution of communication
4. Become a better interculturalist

Required Readings

1. Salzmann, Zdenek, James Stanlaw and Nobuko Adachi. *Language, Culture, and Society: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2011.
2. Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.
3. Basso, Keith, *Portraits of the Whiteman: Linguistic Play and Cultural Symbols among the Western Apache*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Grading

Your grade for the course is comprised of three exams, three assignments and several bonus point opportunities.

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|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Exam 1, Oct. 2 | 20 points |
| Exam 2, Nov. 6 | 20 points |
| Exam 3, Dec. 11 | 20 points |
| Project | 40 points |
| Total possible: | 100 points (plus bonus points) |

Your final grade is based on the total points you receive during the semester.

A = 90 or more points

B = 80-89 points

C = 70-79 points

D = 60-69 points

F = fewer than 60 points

Readings

You are expected to have completed each reading assignment prior to the class week in which it is assigned. If there are parts of the readings that you don't understand, please come to class with your questions.

Attendance

Class attendance is strongly encouraged and punctuality is required. Information from class lectures and discussions will be on your exams. Unannounced pop quizzes will be given at the beginning of several classes throughout the semester for bonus points. Those who have kept up with their reading assignments and have attended previous classes will know the answers to the quizzes.

Assignments

You will have one major project divided into a number of smaller assignments. You will prepare for and conduct an ethnographic interview with a UNT international student. Details on the requirements for the three assignments will be provided later in Blackboard.

Group Work

You will be divided into small groups for the duration of the class. These peer groups are to help you be more successful in the class by being engaged with and learn from your classmates.

Office of Disability Accommodation

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. **Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student.** For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at [940.565.4323](tel:940.565.4323).

Plagiarism

The Department of Anthropology does not tolerate plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty. Students suspected of academic dishonesty will be given a hearing in which they are informed of the charges. Clear evidence in support of the charge will merit failure in the course. For more information on the university's policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty, see the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities at <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/>. Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting the work of others (whether published or not) as your own. It may be inadvertent or intentional. You should always provide references for any facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrasing of information that are not common knowledge.

For more information on writing papers, including how to avoid plagiarism and how to use citations, see the department of anthropology's Writing Guide at <http://www.unt.edu/anthropology/writing.htm>.

Tentative Schedule

The professor reserves the right to change the topics, readings or assignments as needed during the semester to enhance the learning environment or discuss current issues.

| Week | Topic/Assessments | Reading |
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| Language: Acquisition and Evolution | | |
| Aug. 26-28 | Introduction to Class and Linguistic Anthropology | Text, Ch. 1 |
| Sept. 2-4 | What is Language? How do we acquire it? | Text, Ch. 6-7 |
| Sept. 9-11 | The Study of Language - Sound and Structure - Patterns in Evolution and Dissemination Assignment 1 | Text, Ch. 8-9 Diamond, <i>Losing Languages</i> |
| Sept. 16-18 | - Variations within Language - Field work/Ethnography Assignment 2 | Text, Ch. 2 Basso, Ch. 1-2 |
| Sept. 23-25 | Roles and Functions of Language Assignment 3 | Text, Ch. 10 Basso, Ch. 3-4 |
| Sept. 30- Oct. 2 | Exam 1 – Thursday, Oct. 2 | Basso, Ch. 5 |
| Language and Culture | | |
| Oct. 7-9 | Meaning, Symbols and Representation | Text, Ch. 11, Ch. 5 |
| Oct. 14-16 | The Language and Culture Connection Assignment 4 | Text, Ch. 12 Thomson, <i>Worlds Shaped by Words</i> |
| Oct. 21-23 | When Language Changes Based on: - Status and Respect for “Face” Assignment 5 | Text, Ch. 13 (pg. 257-261) Fadiman, Preface, Ch. 1-3 |

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| Oct. 28-30 | When Language Changes Based on: - Gender - Ethnicity and Region | Text, Ch. 13 (pg. 261-289) Tannen, <i>Fighting for our Lives</i> Fadiman, Ch. 4-6 |
| Nov. 4-6 | Exam 2 – Thursday, Nov. 6 | Fadiman, Ch. 7-9 |
| Impacts on Contemporary Communication | | |
| Nov. 11-13 | Globalization and Technology Assignment 6 | Text, Ch. 14 Kottak, <i>Television and Cultural Behavior</i> Fadiman, Ch. 10-11 |
| Nov. 18-20 | Cross-Cultural Communication Assignment 7 | Fadiman, Ch. 12-14 Young, <i>Cross-Cultural Skills</i> |
| Nov. 25 | Becoming an Interculturalist Assignment 8 | Fadiman, Ch. 15-17 |
| Dec. 2-4 | Final Interpretations Assignment 9 | Fadiman, Ch. 18-19 |
| Thursday, Dec. 11 | Final Exam – 1:30 p.m. | |