

ANTH 4500-001 – Language and Culture Spring 2021 – Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. William M. Cotter

Pronouns: He/Him

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Class Meetings: Mondays, 5:30pm to 8:20pm

Zoom: <https://unt.zoom.us/j/89871736505?pwd=alF0UFdGY1VFcUpNS3lmN1g5Tys4dz09>

Passcode: lincanth

Office Hours: Via Zoom: <https://unt.zoom.us/j/9516496720>, by appointment after 5pm, schedule an appointment with me at: <https://calendly.com/williamcotter/office-hours>

*a note about communication: I try my best to respond within 24hrs if you reach out to me Monday-Friday. However, I typically don't check emails after 8pm. In addition to teaching at UNT, I also have a full-time position in the federal government that I work from 7am-5pm. I schedule all of my work, office hours, grading, etc. related to our course accordingly. If it takes me a minute to respond, please keep in mind that I will get back to you as quickly as I can.

Course Overview

Welcome to Language and Culture! In this class, we're going to examine what linguistic anthropologist Laura Ahearn calls the "socially charged" life of language. We're going to learn about language as it is, out there in the world. We'll look at just how messy it can be, as well as how wildly beautiful it is. You're going to learn about its relationship to issues such as race, class, gender, activism, and justice. Over the course of the semester, we will cover some of the central issues in the field of linguistic anthropology, the types of questions that linguistic anthropologists ask, and how they go about doing their work. You'll also have the opportunity to do some of that work yourself through the assignments that you will complete.

Course Objectives

- Learn and be able to apply some of the methodologies used by linguistic anthropologists
- Understand and critically discuss key concepts from linguistic anthropology
- Take those concepts and apply them to language as you encounter it in the world
- Be able to discuss the relationship between language and other forms of social organization

Readings/Content

All of the readings, media, and content for this class will be posted on Canvas. You don't have to buy anything for this class. In addition to any required readings for a given week, I will also provide additional optional readings for anyone interested in diving deeper into some of the concepts that we discuss. If you enjoy a particular week/topic, I am also happy to suggest some additional sources/readings if you reach out to me.

Teaching Philosophy

In teaching linguistic anthropology, I try my best to center voices and experiences that have often been overlooked or sidelined within the discipline. Much of linguistic anthropology's history has been written by white men. Similarly, a lot of the scholarship has focused on dominant languages

or groups (e.g., English-speaking communities, groups who hold power), or exoticized already marginalized speakers and communities. I want you to leave this class understanding central concepts and methods from the field. But, wherever possible I want you to engage with the work of scholars of color, queer scholars, indigenous scholars, scholars who are not white men, and scholarship on languages that are not English. I view one of my responsibilities as your instructor to be to provide you the opportunity to engage with a diverse body of scholarship. Your responsibility is to be willing to engage with this scholarship, attempt to understand and apply it, and be willing to critically discuss it. I will also do the same.

Course Expectations

This course only meets once a week, so we have a lot to do each time we meet! In order to facilitate that, you are expected to: 1) come to each meeting having read whatever was assigned for that week, 2) ask questions, whether about the readings, about how we apply concepts from the course to the real world, or simply about things that were unclear or that you would like more information on, 3) participate actively in our meetings, whether that's through small group conversations, posing questions to the large class group, or by bringing in outside materials that relate to the topics of our meetings.

Late Work

All of the work that you have to complete in this course has its own deadline. I expect your work to be submitted by those deadlines. If something happens that is going to prevent you from submitting work on time please reach out to me so that I can try to help, and so that we can work together to make sure you succeed in this class.

Extra Credit

I am open to offering extra credit throughout the course. The form that extra credit takes is open to discussion. If you have an idea of something that you would like to do for extra credit that relates to our course content, please reach out to me. You have to discuss it with me in advance, and we have to agree on the scope of what you will do for extra credit in order for it to count.

Copyright

All material in this course is owned by Dr. William Cotter and the University of North Texas. You are not authorized to publish any material from this course on other websites, including study websites like CourseHero.

Plagiarism and Cheating

The Department of Anthropology does not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or helping others to cheat. Students suspected of any of these will be provided the opportunity for a hearing; a guilty finding will merit an automatic "F" in the course. In addition, I reserve the right to pursue further disciplinary action within the UNT legal system, which may result in dismissal from the university. Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting the work of others (whether published or not) as your own. It may be inadvertent or intentional. Any facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrasing of any information that is not common knowledge, should be cited. For more information on paper writing, including how to avoid plagiarism, and how to use citations, see <https://anthropology.unt.edu/resources/writing-guide>. If you are unsure of whether or not you should cite something in your work, cite it, and also schedule a time to talk to me so I can help!

For information on the University's policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty, see the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, <https://vpaa.unt.edu/ss/integrity>. In addition, students may not "copy and paste" material from the course into their exams. All essay questions must be written in the student's own words.

Acceptable Online Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be referred to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/dean-of-students>.

Student Responsibility

Your primary responsibility as a student is to master the material presented in class and in the readings and do well in the course. This is an easily achieved objective. Log onto Blackboard and do the reading! At times concepts or issues raised in class might be unclear. Students come from a variety of backgrounds and have various strengths and weaknesses. If you have any questions or feel unsure about any class material, see me after class or during office hours as soon as you realize a problem. We will work together to find a solution. DON'T wait until the end of the semester. Please realize that my goal as an instructor is not just to grade, evaluate, and test, but to help you gain a valuable life perspective to carry outside the class, into whatever you do.

Academic Accommodations

UNT 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 a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students 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. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Course Components/Assignments

Attendance – 10% – 100pts

Participation – 5% – 50pts

Reading Responses – 25% – 250pts

Midterm Exam – 20% – 200pts

Final Project – 20% – 200pts

Final Exam – 20% – 200pts

Attendance

I expect you to come to each course meeting and I will take attendance accordingly at the start of our meetings each week. If you have a reason why you are going to miss our meeting, please reach out to me. If something comes up that prevents you from coming to our meetings, I want to help however I can. However, if you are not there when we start, then you will be marked absent.

Participation

Course participation can come in a number of forms. I know that not everyone learns the same way, and not everyone is comfortable talking a lot. There are a number of ways you can participate in this course. You can ask questions or make substantive comments during our meetings. You can put things into the chat. You can share links, resources, or outside resources that relate to course themes with the class, whether those are articles, discourse that you encounter, or anything else that you think would be relevant to our course discussions. You can also participate in smaller group conversations when you are in break-out rooms. You can form a study group with your peers. We can establish a class discord server (or you all can establish some other collaborative means of communication and you can participate there). You can email me questions that you have about our readings or content. You can also come talk to me in office hours and we can discuss the class and I can answer any questions that you might have.

For the graded component of your participation, in addition to my evaluation of your participation in the course, on the final exam I will also ask you to self-assess your level of participation. This part of the grade is intended to help you identify what strategies help you learn, and plan ways you can grow and improve in the future.

Reading Responses

Each week, beginning with Week 3 and going until Week 13, you are expected to write and submit a brief response paper for any of the required readings from that week. Some weeks we have multiple readings, so you will have a choice of which one you write about. Occasionally we will only have one reading for a given week. You will not be submitting response papers for the first two weeks. Also, please note there is no response paper due in Week 7, because of the Midterm Examination. In total you will submit ten (10) response papers. Your papers are worth **25pts each**, and they are **due by the start of class for that week**. For example, your first response paper (Week 3) is due by 5:30pm CST on January 25th, 2021.

When I read your response papers, I need to see that you both read and attempted to critically reflect on what you were reading. You should be able to both summarize and analyze the reading. These papers should be **2-3 paragraphs** long. You need to summarize, using **your own words**, the author's main thesis, their arguments, and the types of data that they use/analyze in

their work. Additionally, you need to make at least **one analytical observation**, where you critically reflect on or critique the argument, use the reading to make sense of something going on in the world, or connect the reading to other topics or readings from our course. Finally, you need to pose **one question** that you have developed based on the reading. This question shouldn't be "this reading was great", it should be something more along the lines of "In her work, Jane Hill discusses many voices in the narrative of Don Gabriel, a single speaker. How does this presence of multiple voices work if there are many unique speakers in a conversation, and are we each able to still inhabit multiple voices in the same way that Don Gabriel did in Hill's work?"

Midterm and Final Exam(s)

You will have both a midterm and a final exam. These will be available under the "Quizzes" section on Canvas. In both of these exams, you should be prepared to answer essay questions that will showcase your ability to discuss, analyze, reflect on, and critically engage with the content, readings, and discussions from our course. These exams will be open-note/open-book, however they should be completed individually and **NOT** in groups. You will take them through Canvas, and on exam day they will be open for the entirety of that day (12:00am to 11:59pm). The exams will close at 11:59pm so you will need to plan accordingly and start each exam with sufficient time to complete it by the time it closes.

Final Project

I want you to have the opportunity to examine language as it is actually used and to apply some of the methods that we discuss in the course. To that end, your final project, which will be **due on April 26th, 2021 by 11:59pm**, can take one of two forms:

- Transcription/analysis of a speech event that you recorded, e.g., narrative with a relative
- Transcription/analysis of a piece of discourse, e.g., a political speech or a viral TikTok personality

A more **detailed guide for this assignment is available under the Assignment Details page** on Canvas. However, regardless of which option you choose, the end product should be a **7-10pg double-spaced paper** where you analyze your respective speech/discourse by drawing on themes, topics, and materials from our course.

Course Schedule (content subject to change)

Week 1 – An Anthropology of Language

January 11: (in class) – Hurtson, Zora Neal (2018), Chapter 1, from *Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo"*

Week 2 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No Class!

January 18: Hurtson, Zora Neal (2018), Chapters 6, 7, and 8, from *Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo"*

Week 3 – Language, Culture, and the Ways We Think

January 25: Kimmerer, Robin Wall (2013), Learning the grammar of animacy, from *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*
Webster, Anthony (2018), Introduction to *The Sounds of Navajo Poetry: A Humanities of Speaking*

Week 3 Response Paper Due

Week 4 – Performance(s)

February 1: Carr, Gerald and Barbra Meek (2013), The Poetics of Language Revitalization: Text, Performance, and Change
Mitchell, Blackhorse and Anthony Webster (2011), "We Don't Know What We Become": Navajo Ethnopoetics and an Expressive Feature in a Poem by Rex Lee Jim

Week 4 Response Paper Due

Topic Proposal Due

Week 5 – Where Does Language Point Us?

February 8: Reyes, Angela (2011), 'Racist!': Metapragmatic regimentation of racist discourse by Asian American Youth
Inoue, Myako (2004), What Does Language Remember?: Indexical Inversion and the Naturalized History of Japanese Women

Week 5 Response Paper Due

Week 6 – Making and Negotiating Identities Through Language

February 15: Rhodes, Catherine R, Katherine Clonan-Roy, and Stanton E. Wortham (2020), Making language 'academic': language ideologies, enregisterment, and ontogenesis
Bermúdez, Natalia (2020), Ideophone Humor: The Enregisterment of a Stereotype and Its Inversion

Week 6 Response Paper Due

Initial Data Description Due

Week 7 – **MIDTERM**

February 22: **Midterm due by 11:59pm, no assigned readings!**

Week 8 – Language Across Spaces & Times

March 1: Rosen, Allesandra (2019), Balance, Yoga, Neoliberalism
Flores, Nelson, Mark C. Lewis, and Jennifer Phuong (2018), Raciolinguistic chronotopes and the education of Latinx students: Resistance and anxiety in a bilingual school

Week 8 Response Paper Due

Initial Transcript Due

Week 9 – Experiencing Many Voices

March 8: Hill, Jane (1996), *The Voices of Don Gabriel*

Week 9 Response Paper Due

Week 10 – The Power of Language

March 15: Anzaldúa, Gloria (1987), *How to Tame a Wild Tongue*, from *Borderlands/La Frontera*

hooks, bell (1994), *Language: Teaching New Worlds/New Words*, from *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*

Hou, Lyn (2020), *Who Signs? Language Ideologies about Deaf and Hearing Child Signers in One Family in Mexico*

Week 10 Response Paper Due

Week 11 – “Consuming” Language

March 22: Konnelley, Lex (2020), *Brutoglossia: Democracy, authenticity, and the enregisterment of connoisseurship in ‘craft beer talk’*

Cotter, William M. and Mary-Caitlyn Valentinsson (2018), *Bivalent class indexing in the sociolinguistics of specialty coffee talk*

Week 11 Response Paper Due

Preliminary Analysis Due

Week 12 – Gendered Identities and Experiences

March 29: Starr, Rebecca (2015), *Sweet voice: The role of voice quality in a Japanese feminine style*

Davis, Jenny (2019), *Refusing (Mis)recognition: Navigating Multiple Marginalization in the U.S. Two Spirit Movement*

Week 12 Response Paper Due

Week 13 – Unsettling Race

April 5: Rosa, Jonathan and Nelson Flores (2017), *Unsettling race and language: Toward a raciolinguistic perspective*

Roth-Gordon, Jennifer, Jessica Harris, and Stephanie Zamora (2020), *Producing white comfort through “corporate cool”: Linguistic appropriation, social media, and @BrandsSayingBae*

Week 13 Response Paper Due

First Complete Draft Due

Week 14 – Language as a Space of Justice and Growth

April 12: Bucholtz, Mary, Dolores Inés Casillas, and Jin Sook Lee (2019), California Latinx Youth as Agents of Sociolinguistic Justice, from *Language and Social Justice in Practice*

Flood, David, Anita Chary, Peter Rohloff, and Brent Henderson (2019), Language as Health: Healing in Indigenous Communities in Guatemala through the Revitalization of Mayan Languages, from *Language and Social Justice in Practice*

Week 15 – Course Wrap Up

April 19: Review Session, no assigned reading

Week 16 – **FINAL EXAM**

April 26: **Final Exam and Final Assignment due by 11:59pm**