
LANGUAGE AND ETHNICITY IN THE US: AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING COURSE

BL ST 191: COURSE SYLLABUS
FALL 2020 ◆ MWF 9 – 9:50 AM
321 LILDOG HALL

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Nandi Sims (she/they)
sims.408@osu.edu

Office: 112 Bigdog Labs
Office Hours: Wed. 10 AM- 11:30AM

INTRODUCTION

This service-learning course examines the relationship between language and the social constructs of race and ethnicity, with particular emphasis on the Black experience and race relations in the US. It is concerned with the ways in which language serves as a basis for inter-ethnic conflict, discrimination and lack of social opportunity. The main focus of the course will be the varieties of English used by members of minority ethnic and racial groups in the US, the general relationship between their languages, and their place in American society. Not only is the US a melting pot culturally, but also linguistically. During this course, we will explore how racial and ethnic identity are expressed through the use of particular dialects and languages. We will also discuss how language is related to issues of equality, social opportunity, and discrimination in the U.S. Finally, there is a service-learning component to this course in which students volunteer in communities similar to those studied in the class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course pairs particular readings with discussions of key theoretical concepts in order to achieve the following learning objectives.

Students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of experiences in the U.S;
- discuss, compare, and synthesize materials and concepts in order to express their ideas;
- develop and express critical perspectives on concepts such as ethnicity, language, and culture; and
- apply classroom learning to help organizations better meet the needs of members of the minority groups studied in class.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Fought, Carmen. 2006. *Language and Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Additional articles and chapters will be available on Gauchospace.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

ASSIGNMENTS

- 40% **HOMEWORK:** There will be 7 homework assignments, spread evenly throughout the quarter. They will consist mainly of 2-3 short answer questions, service reflections, and final paper assignments. You may consult your notes and readings, but you may not consult any of your classmates. See the schedule for the dates of the homework assignments. They will be available 5 days before the assignment is due.
- 20% **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:** Regular participation in class activities and discussion, as well as regular attendance, are required for class. In a class like this, each person's insights are extremely valuable, so it is important that everyone actively participates. If you have an illness or other serious reason for missing class, please let me know as soon as you can.
- DISCUSSION:** Students must read each chapter/article before class on the date listed on the syllabus. Discussion of these readings is the main focus of this course, so coming to class prepared is extremely important. The class will be much more informative and enjoyable if everyone arrives having read and ready to discuss the topics of the day. This also includes responses to discussion questions on Gauchospace. You are required two weekly posts, at a minimum. More information will be given on the discussion posts separately.
- 25% **SERVICE:** Students are required to complete six visits with their community organization. More information will be provided throughout the quarter.
- 15% **COURSE PAPER:** There will be a 5- to 7-page final paper on any topic related to language, race, ethnicity, and your service experience. The final draft is worth 15% of the grade, though this project is broken into a set of smaller assignments to ensure you are making timely progress on your project: Homework 4: Paper topic; Homework 6: Progress report; Homework 6: Detailed outline/rough draft. More information will be provided throughout the quarter

GRADING SCALE

93-100	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	0-59	F

IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Graded individual and team in-class projects and presentations will be assigned regularly to gauge participation. These will either be submitted via Gauchospace or as a written hard copy at the end of class. If you are involved in a team activity, it is your responsibility to ensure your name is included on the submitted document, and that the document is actually submitted.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments are subject to one letter grade per day (24 hours) starting one minute after the time it is due. After the 5th day late the assignment will no longer be accepted. All requests for extensions must be discussed with me before the time it is due. The only assignment that may not be turned in late is the final paper. Keep this in mind while you are preparing your final paper!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Please arrive on time and prepared for class by reading beforehand.

The use of electronic devices during class for non-class activities is not acceptable and may result in loss of participation points. Exceptions are electronics used for notetaking and referring to assigned readings.

Some of the topics discussed in this class can be personally or politically sensitive. You may at times disagree with others during class, but please respect their right to their opinions and beliefs as you would also like to have yours respected. If you feel very strongly about a particular point or issue, please let this stimulate productive discussion and do not resort to interrupting people, dominating the discussion, raising your voice, insulting others, etc.; this may lead to a lowered participation grade.

This class makes heavy use of media, which may include controversial content (e.g. examples of racism in cartoons, people using ethnic slurs, etc.) we will discuss these examples maturely from an objective point of view, in order to analyze their social context and linguistic content.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The core of a university's integrity is its scholastic honesty. Academic dishonesty vitiates the university's educational role and defrauds all who comprise its community. It is expected that students understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and are willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts. Any act of academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism or other forms of cheating, is unacceptable and will be met with disciplinary action.

For additional information see the Office of Student Conduct page on Academic Integrity:

<http://studentconduct.sa.ucsb.edu/academic-integrity>

Or see the Student Conduct Code:

<http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/regulations/student-conduct-code/student-conduct-code>

STUDENT RESOURCES

DISABLED STUDENTS PROGRAM: ACCOMMODATIONS FOR EXAMS

Students with disabilities may request academic accommodations for exams online through the UCSB **Disabled Students Program**. Not all disabilities are visible. Check the requirements at <http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu/>. Please make your requests for exam accommodations through the online system as early in the quarter as possible to ensure proper arrangement.

MANAGING STRESS / SUPPORTING DISTRESSED STUDENTS

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationships, depression, cultural differences, can interfere with the ability of students to succeed and thrive. For helpful resources, please contact UCSB **Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)** at 805-893-4411 or visit <http://counseling.sa.ucsb.edu/>.

If you encounter a student in distress, please contact 805-893-3030 immediately and/or consult the **Responding to Distressed Student Protocol** at <http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/distressedstudentsguide> or phone 893-3030.

BUILDING ACADEMIC SKILLS

For general academic support, students are encouraged to visit **Campus Learning Assistance Services (CLAS)** early and often. CLAS offers instructional groups, drop-in tutoring, writing and ESL services, skills workshops and one-on-one consultations. CLAS is located on the third floor of the Student Resource Building, or visit <http://clas.sa.ucsb.edu>

RESPONSIBLE SCHOLARSHIP

Honesty and integrity in all academic work is essential for a valuable educational experience. **The Office of Judicial Affairs** has policies, tips, and resources for proper citation use, recognizing actions considered to be cheating or other forms of academic theft, and students' responsibilities, available on their website at: <http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu>. Students are responsible for educating themselves on the policies and to abide by them.

RESPONDING TO HATE INCIDENTS

Hateful actions based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship status, age, or disability are not acceptable. In the event that a hate crime or incident does occur, please report it. Reports may be made anonymously. <http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu/hate.aspx>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Fri. 1 Oct	Introduction and courtroom mock activity
Mon. 5 Oct	Introduction, syllabus, and service discussion Read: Fought Ch. 1: "What is ethnicity?" Due: Homework 1: Sociolinguistic Attitudes Assessment
Wed. 7 Oct	Discussion
Fri. 9 Oct	Introduction to sociolinguistics
Mon. 12 Oct	Standard language, mainstream dialects Read: Fought Ch. 2: "Language and the construction of ethnic identity"
Wed. 14 Oct	Discussion
Fri. 16 Oct	Ethnic slurs, The N-Word documentary Read: Roediger 2005: "Popular language, social practice, and the messiness of race"
Mon. 19 Oct	African American Language Read: Fought Ch. 3: "African American groups" Due: Homework 2: Service write-up 1
Wed. 21 Oct	Discussion
Fri. 23 Oct	African American Language continued
Mon. 26 Oct	African American written/oral literature Read: Rickford & Rickford 2000: "Writers" Rickford & Rickford 2000: "Singers, Toasters, and Rappers"
Wed. 28 Oct	Discussion
Fri. 30 Oct	Latinx Varieties Read: Fought Ch. 4: "Latino groups" Excerpt from Mendoza-Denton 2008: "Homegirls"
Mon. 2 Nov	Afro-Latinx Varieties Read: Bailey 2005: "Black and Latino: Dominican Americans negotiate racial worlds" Due: Homework 3: Service reflection
Wed. 4 Nov	Discussion
Fri. 6 Nov	Cajun, ethnic southern varieties Read: Fought Ch. 7: "Dialect contact"
Mon. 9 Nov	Italian, Jewish varieties; Whiteness Read: Fought Ch. 6: "Whiteness" Due: Homework 4: Final paper topic ideas
Wed. 11 Nov	NO CLASS: VETERAN'S DAY
Fri. 13 Nov	Native American varieties Read: Newmark, Walker, and Stanford 2016: "The rez accent knows no borders': Native American ethnic identity expressed through English prosody"
Mon. 16 Nov	Asian American varieties Read: Hinton 2009: "Trading Tongues" Due: Homework 5: Final paper progress report
Wed. 18 Nov	Discussion

Fri. 20 Nov	Media representation Read: Lippi-Green 2012: "Language ideology and the language subordination model"
Mon. 23 Nov	Mock language; Ethnic humor Read: Hill 1999: "Language, race, and white public space" Due: Homework 6: Service reflection
Wed. 25 Nov	Discussion
Fri. 27 Nov	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK
Mon. 30 Nov	Crossing, appropriation Read: Fought Ch. 10: "Crossing" (sections 10.0-10.4 only) Discussion
Wed. 2 Dec	Appropriation continued; Linguistic discrimination Read: Baugh 2003: "Linguistic profiling" Discussion
Fri. 4 Dec	Language and legal issues Read: Slobe 2016: "Creepy-ass cracker in post-racial America" Discussion
Mon. 7 Dec	Language and education: Pragmatic differences Read: Fought Ch. 9: "Language prejudice" Due: Homework 7: Final Paper detailed outline/bibliography
Wed. 9 Dec	Language and education: Official policies Read: Rickford 1999: "Using the vernacular to teach the standard" Discussion
Fri. 11 Dec	LAST DAY OF CLASS Final discussion and class wrap-up Due: Homework 8: Sociolinguistic Attitudes Assessment
Wed. 16 Dec	Due: Final Paper due by 5 pm