

LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND EXPERIENCE  
Anthropology 683  
Graduate Seminar

Professor: Philip Scher  
319 Condon Hall  
Tuesday: 5-7:50 pm  
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**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This course examines the role of language and culture in the organization of human experience. Beginning with definitions of language and signs and debates about linguistic relativity, the course explores the way language use shapes cognition and practice in social contexts. In addition we will explore the basic theoretical principles that underlie the anthropological study of human language. This will include identifying distinctive characteristics of human language, clarifying the central role of reference in regimenting linguistic structure, the application of different types of anthropological models, the creation of social and cultural forms and the socio-cultural shaping of language and usage. There will be a significant amount of reading for the course and much of it will introduce potentially unfamiliar jargon. To help with this I recommend acquiring Key Terms in Language and Culture, by Alessandro Duranti (Blackwell Publishers). However this text is not required.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Blum, Susan D. *Making Sense of Language*. Oxford University Press.

All other readings for the course will be on Blackboard.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

*Class participation* (including attendance and discussion): **10%**

Students are expected to attend all lectures and participate in class discussions.

*In-Class Presentation: 20%* In-Class presentations will be given by all members of the class and will consist of presenting a day's readings, producing a written handout and composing 3 questions for broad discussion. The questions must address major concepts or problems in the texts. You will be evaluated on all three components, each bearing equal weight. If there is a small enrollment students may be asked to do this assignment twice.

*Mid-Term Exam: 35%*

*Final Exam: 35%*

**PART ONE: Introduction to Language and Semiotics**

**Week 1: Introductory Lecture: What is Linguistic Anthropology?**

**Salzman, Zdenek:**

- 1998 Introducing Linguistic Anthropology. *In Language, Culture, & Society: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Pp. 1-17. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. **(Online)**

**Week 2: Semiotic Foundations/ The Nature of Signs**

**Weinrich, Uriel:**

- 1968 "Semantics and Semiotics." *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Vol. 14: 164-9. **(Online)**

**Mertz, Elizabeth:**

- 1985 "Beyond Symbolic Anthropology." *Semiotic Mediation: Sociocultural and Psychological Perspectives*. Orlando: Academic Press. **(Online)**

**Peirce, Charles Sanders:**

- Nd "Division of Signs." *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*: Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (eds.) Cambridge: Harvard University Press. **(Online)**

**Parmentier, Richard:**

- 1987 "Peirce Divested for Non-intimates." *Semiotic Inquiry*. Vol. 7: 19-39. **(Online)**

**Saussure, Ferdinand de**

- 1965 *Nature of the Linguistic Sign Course in General Linguistics.. in Blum*

**Benveniste, Emile:**

- 1971 "The Nature of the Linguistic Sign." *In Problems in General Linguistics*. Miami Linguistics Series No. 8. University of Miami Press. **(Online)**

**Week 3: Linguistic Relativism/ The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis**

**Tues:**

**Boas, Franz**

- 1911 *Introduction to the Handbook of American Indian Languages*. **(Online)**

**Sapir, Edward:**

- 1921 "Language Defined" *In Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech*. Pp. 82-119. NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers. **(Online)**

- 1921 *Form in Language: Grammatical Concepts*. *In Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech*. Pp. 82-119. NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers. **(Online)**

**Hojjer, Harry**

- 1956 *The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis*. *In* Ben G. Blount (ed.) *Language Culture and Society*.

**Whorf, Benjamin, Lee.**

- 1956 *The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language*. *In* Blum p.43

**Lakoff, George & Mark Johnson**

- Metaphors We Live By*: in Blum p. 55

**Benveniste, Emile.**

1971 "Categories of Thought and Language." *In Problems in General Linguistics*. Miami Linguistics Series No. 8. University of Miami Press. (**Online**)

**Week 4: Sapir/Whorf, Worldview and Subjectivity.**  
**Testing Sapir and Whorf: The Color Issue**

**Frake, Charles O.:**

1995 "The Ethnographic Study of Cognitive Systems." *In* Ben G. Blount (ed.)  
Language Culture and Society.

**Berlin, Brent and Paul Kay**  
Color Terms (**Online**)

**Conklin, Harold**

1955 Hanunoo Color Categories. *In* *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*. Pp. 339-344. **Online**

**Sahlins, Marshall**

1976 (2000) "Colors and Cultures." *In* *Culture in Practice: Selected Essays*. New York: Zone Book: 139-162. **Online**

**Lakoff, George.**

1987 "Radial Categories." *In* *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp: 91-114. **Online**

**Week 5: Exploring Subjectivity**

**Benveniste, Emile.**

1971 "The Nature of Pronouns." *In Problems in General Linguistics*. Miami Linguistics Series No. 8. University of Miami Press. (In Book on Reserve)

1971 "Subjectivity in Language." *In Problems in General Linguistics*. Miami Linguistics Series No. 8. University of Miami Press. **Online**

**Mead, George H.**

1936 "The Problem of Society: How We Become Selves." *In* Ben G. Blount (ed.)  
Language Culture and Society.

**Ochs, Elinor and Lisa Capps**

1996 "Narrating the Self." *In* *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 25:19-43. **Online**

**Borges, Jorge Luis:**

Nd "Borges and I." (One page) **Online**

**MID TERM EXAM**

**Week 6: Doing Things With Words/ Verbal Interactions/Negotiation of Context in Discourse**

**Austin, J.L**

1955 "How To Do Things With Words." How To Do Things With Words. New York: Oxford University Press. **On Reserve**

**Salzman, Zdenek**

- 1998 Non Verbal Communication and Writing. *In* Language, Culture, & Society: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Pp. 246-269. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. **Online**

**Goffman, Erving:**

- 1981 Footing. *In* Forms of Talk. *Reprinted from* Semiotica. 25:3-29. **Online**

**Tannen, Deborah and Cynthia Waiet**

- 1993 Interactive Frames and Knowledge Schemas in Interaction: Examples from a Medical Examination/Interview. *In* Framing in Discourse. Deborah Tannen (ed.) Pp. 57-76. NY: Oxford University Press. (**Online**)

**Labov, William**

- 1973 "The Social Stratification of "R" in New York City Department Stores." *In* Blum p. 333.

**Week 7: Sociolinguistics/ Ethnography of Speaking**

**Hymes, Dell:**

- 1974 "Toward Ethnographies of Communication." *In* Foundations in Sociolinguistics. Philadelphia. University of Pennsylvania Press. **On Reserve**

**Bauman, Richard and Joel Sherzer:**

- 1975 "The Ethnography of Speaking." Annual Review of Anthropology. **Online**

**Irvine, Judith T.:**

- 1975 "Strategies of Status Manipulation in the Wolof Greeting." *In* Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **On Reserve**

**Keenan, Elinor.**

- 1974 Norm-Makers, Norm-Breakers: Uses of Speech by Men and Women in a Malagasy Community. *In* The Matrix of Language. Brenneis and Macaulay (eds.). **On Reserve**

**Bauman, Richard**

- 2001 "Verbal Art as Performance." *In* Alessandro Duranti (ed.) Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader. Oxford: Blackwell. (**Book on Reserve**)

**Schieffelin, Richard**

- 1985 Performance and the Cultural Construction of Reality. *In* American Ethnologist, 12(4) pp. 707-724. (**Online**)

**Week 8: Language Socialization**

**Ochs, Elinor and Bambi B. Schieffelin**

- 1984 Language Acquisition and Socialization: Three Developmental Stories and Their Implications. *In* Blum p. 71

**Heath, Shirley Brice**

1982 What No Bedtime Story Means. *In* The Matrix of Language. Brenneis and Macaulay (eds.). **in Blum p. 96**

**Baquedano-Lopez, Patricia**

Pragmatic s of Reading Prayers. In Blum. P. 115

**Basso, Keith**

1979 Joking Imitations of Anglo-Americans. *In* Portraits of 'The Whiteman.' Pp. 35-76. (Chapters 3 & 4). NY: Cambridge University Press. **Online**

**Week 9: Gender, Power and Discourse**

**Gal, Susan:**

2001 "Language, Gender and Power." *In* Alessandro Duranti (ed.) Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader. Oxford: Blackwell. **On Reserve**

**Maltz, Daniel N. and Ruth A. Borker**

1996 "Cultural Approach to Male-Female Miscommunication. *In* The Matrix of Language. Brenneis and Macaulay (eds.).**(Also in Article Form) On Reserve**

**Eckert, Penelope**

1996 The Whole Woman: Sex and Gender Differences in Variation. *In* The Matrix of Language. Brenneis and Macaulay (eds.). **On Reserve**

**Silverstein, Michael**

1985 Language and the Culture of Gender: At the Intersection of Structure, Usage and Ideology. *In* Ben G. Blount (ed.) Language Culture and Society.

**Tannen, Deborah.**

1993 "The Relativity of Linguistic Strategies: Rethinking Power and Solidarity in Gender and Dominance." *In* Deborah Tannen, Gender and Conversational Interaction. Oxford: Oxford University Press. **On Reserve**

**Sherzer, Joel**

1987 "A Diversity of Voices: Men's and Women's Speech in Ethnographic Perspective." *In* Language, Gender and Sex in Comparative Perspective. S.Phillips et al. (eds.) **On Reserve**

**Week 10: Language, Ideology and Power/Standard Languages**

**Silverstein Michael:**

1998 "Standardization and Metaphors of Linguistic Hegemony." *In* The Matrix of Language. Brenneis and Macaulay (eds.) **On Reserve**

**Bourdieu, Pierre:**

1991 "The Economy of Linguistic Exchanges," *In* Bourdieu, Pierre, Language and Symbolic Power. Cambridge: Harvard Press. **On Reserve**

**Briggs, Charles L. & Richard Bauman:**

1992 "Genre, Intertextuality, and Social Power." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*.  
2(2): 131-172. **Online**

**Hill, Jane H.**

1998 The Grammar of Consciousness and the Consciousness of Grammar. **Online**

**Woolard, Kathryn A.**

1985 "Language Variation and Cultural Hegemony." *American Ethnologist*. Vol.  
12:738-748. **Online**

**Williamson, Judith.**

1985 "Woman is and Island." **Online**

**Keane, Webb**

2003 "Public Speaking: On Indonesian As the Language of the Nation." *Public  
Culture* 15(3): 503-530. **Online**

**Final Exam TBA**