Course Title: Language, Mind & Society
Course Number: LING 420/520

Instructor Contact Information

Mokaya Bosire, PhD.
Email: mokaya@uoregon.edu  Tel. 541.346.3916
Office hours: Virtual, Mondays & Fridays Time: TBA-Varied to accommodate different time zones) & via e-mail

Textbooks


Ordering Textbooks

Course textbooks are ebooks and can be easily ordered online. See the ISBNs given above for various reading devices.

Course Description

Language is all around us and is core to many things that we do since communication with others is key to daily life in society. People have a variety of opinions about language while a great many have questions on language such as: *How did languages come about and how do they change over time? Why do children pick up languages more easily than adults? Where is language stored in the mind and in what ways? Why do people speak with accents and does speaking a certain way influence the way we view a speaker? Is human language any different from other forms of communication? How does machine language and assistants like Siri and Bixby work? Are languages equal in complexity or are some languages ‘hard’ and some ‘easy’?* No less frequent are questions about gendered language, slang and vernacular; mixed languages like Spanglish and the nature and value of multilingualism.

This course introduces students to the ways in which linguists approach, analyze and investigate these common language issues that have cross-disciplinary appeal. It will therefore survey aspects of everyday language use in society including: variation in language; the relationship between language and power; and, language and the mind – how language is acquired, stored, and produced and core elements of language, i.e. the structural elements of language. It is a practical look at language that will benefit
a cross-section of students from diverse disciplines (especially those who may not have a linguistics background) while expanding the breadth of students with prior knowledge of the linguistic method.

This course does not count towards the Linguistics major.

Expected Learning Outcomes
After taking this course, students will have a linguistic understanding of everyday language issues and how they arise. Specifically, they would be able to:

- Describe the sounds and sentence word-order of a language
- Describe why and how languages vary
- Understand & describe basic processes of first and second language acquisition
- Understand & explain the effects of social factors on a language
- Recognize & describe the relationship between language and cognition
- Describe how they can apply linguistic knowledge in their research/careers

Estimated Student Workload
All students will read assigned readings/watch assigned videos, listen to Powerpoint presentations, engage in a moderated weekly discussion of topics and submit written responses to assignment prompts based on the weekly readings. These are differentiated in complexity and length by 400/500 class level. 520 students should expect to engage in additional hours of reading and coursework, which will be optional for 420 (undergraduate students). See SEI tables below.

Workload expectations total 30-40 hours per week for this intensive 4-week class.

LING 420

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Total hours</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recorded lectures</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Listening to four 1-hour lectures per week (4 x 1 hr x 4 weeks). These 1-hour lectures are divided into 10 to 20-minute audio clips of narrated PowerPoints that introduce the units/topics for the week and discuss them in some detail. Lectures will point to interactive/follow-up tasks/activities that students will do after each audio clip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning tasks online and from readings</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>For example, embedded quizzes in the readings, synchronous chats on a topic etc. (4 x 2 hours/week on Canvas x 4 weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion board</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3 hr x 4 weeks (Moderated by instructor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded lectures</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Listening to four 1-hour lectures per week (4 x 1 hr x 4 weeks). These 1-hour lectures are divided into 10 to 20-minute audio clips of narrated PowerPoints that introduce the units/topics for the week and discusses in them in some detail. Lectures will point to interactive/follow-up tasks/activities that students will do after each audio clip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning tasks online and from readings</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>For example, short video lectures, embedded quizzes in the readings, synchronous chat on a topic etc. (4 x 2 hours/week on Canvas x 4 weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion board</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3 hr x 4 weeks (Moderated by instructor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned readings</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>~160 page/week = 160 x 4 = 480 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly writing Assignments</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4 weekly assignments (4 x 5hrs each) see sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Watch movies &amp; discussion (3 x 2hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Essay</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40-hour project, including resource gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Requirements & Grading:**

This course will be taught entirely online: students will listen to 4 recorded lectures a week; read assigned readings (and/or watch short video clips) to engage in a discussion board moderated by the instructor and, answer weekly assignments based on the unit readings and lecture/presentations. There will be embedded exercises and activities in your readings and lectures that will be done individually or in small groups as a break-out session to help understanding of the topics and help me give feedback in a timely manner.

Grading will be based on the following criteria:
Weekly assignments (4 x 5%) = 20%: these are assigned each Sunday weekly and are due online the following Sunday. They consist of mandatory questions (different for 420 & 520) related to the readings, and a choice of other common questions for all.

Discussion board (4 x 7.5%) = 30%: Alongside weekly written assignments will be a moderated Discussion board on questions stemming from or extending our readings and issues raised. Discussion boards will be done in varied/differentiated groups depending on topic. Therefore, students will be grouped together based on level (420 vs. 520) or interest (self-selection) or based on random selection for common topics.

Learning tasks, including quizzes & activities (20 x 1%) = 20% Completion of formative interactive activities that augment discussions.

Final paper = 30%: Instead of a sit-down Final exam, students will write a final, resource-based paper on a topic mutually agreed with the instructor relevant to their own level (420/520), disciplines, or their research interests in general. Guidelines on that activity will be circulated by the end of the first week of the course.

CANVAS:
This course will be entirely online and this the platform that will host the course so it is imperative that you access Canvas right away and regularly. All course content will be in the Modules (readings, images, PowerPoints, videos, audio and videos) will all be stored in the appropriate module for the Unit/week. Canvas is easy to figure out (I have tried to keep the course uncluttered and as minimalist as possible) but If you should need help with navigating it, please let me know. Here is the Canvas Student Guide (https://guides.instructure.com/m/4212). This site has a comprehensive list of FAQs (frequently asked questions) about Canvas. The Canvas App is also available for download on the App store and the Play Store.

Reading schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>TOPIC/UNIT</th>
<th>SUB-TOPICS/READINGS</th>
<th>HOMEWORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/24 – 6/59</td>
<td>Introduction to Language &amp; Linguistics (Language, Education &amp; Cultural Change)</td>
<td>• Syllabus &amp; Course Description (outcomes, work requirements, resources); required texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Introductory Readings:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Doc 2: Introduction (show &amp; Pdf)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• How to use the core textbook (B &amp; P, p.24-45)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What’s language? - L Files, 3-35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Language Variation - Students and Teachers Reflect on Accents and Dialects by Susan J. Behrens and Rebecca L. Sperling (B&amp;P, p.50 – 83);</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Variation at all structures of language – L F 416-424</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Areal/Regional Factors of Variation - L Files, p428-436</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wednesday

- Social factors that correlate with variation, LF 437-446
- TED talk: Sarah Jones Ted talk imitating other people

Initial Discussion post due

Thursday

- Language & identity – L Files 444-454
- (420 Optional) Speech Communities - Language as a Mediator of Messages and Perceptions by Miriam Eisenstein Ebsworth (B&P, 84-109)

Friday

- (Are dialects fading? in Do you Speak American? PBS series on language in the US 4 pages

7/1 - 7/5

Monday: Language Structure

- Introductory reading: Doc 3 – Structure of Language;
- Dictionaries (B&P, p. 153-190);
- 420 Optional: Design Features of Language, L Files 20-27

Sounds, Words & Meaning (phonology, morphology, syntax)

Tuesday

- Intro to Phonetics, Lang Files P42-47; sounds of English, 48-63; sounds of other languages, 64-68
- (420 Optional): acoustic phonetics & signed language phonetics, 74-94
- (optional for all); tone & stress, 69-73

Wednesday

- What is phonology? Lang Files, (p. 108-125)
- phonological processes/rules, Lang Files 125-129
- 420 Optional: Teaching with phonology (B&P, 119-140)

Thursday

- Morphological analysis, Language Files, p.153-182
- Semantics: translation headaches (B&P, p. 198-227); (optional for all) L Files, 249-256

Friday

- Intro to Syntax, L Files, P201-227
- Intro to Pragmatics, L F 273 – 278
- 410 optional: Gricean Conversational Maxims (PDF – 12pages)

7/8- 7/18

Monday: Language & society

Language, Power & Identity (sociolinguistics)

- Intro to Language & Society – Doc 5
- Variation revisited: Dialects of American English/Do you Speak American? PBS series on language in the US
- A nation divided by One language (3pages)
- Language & Power, L Files 476-479

Tuesday

- Privileged ways of speaking: Will a Southern Drawl Close Doors for My Son?
- Standard American? (4 pages)
- Language, Power, and Sexual Assault Women’s Voices on Rape and Social Change Judith A. Parker and Deborah Mahlstedt (B&P, 298-318);

Wednesday

- Gender, Language, and Power Surname or Sirname? - Diana Boxer (B & P, 248-276)
- Politeness, L F 480-483
- (420 Optional) Critical Discourse Analysis (pdf, 4 pages)

Thursday

- Forensic linguistics (B&P, p. 381-423)
- 420 Optional: Forensic Linguistics in NYPD Blue (TV Series) - pdf, 29 pages

Friday

- Movie 1: American Tongues (Movie) – use Kanopy to stream with UO ID
Monday: **Language & Mind**

- **Introduction – Language acquisition & Communication Science**
  - Doc 6
- Language acquisition in children (B&P, 434-464);
  - *Theories of Acquisition, L F* 327-354
  - **420 Optional**: ASL (B&P, p.475-493)
  - *Bilingual acquisition, L F* p.344-348

Tuesday

- Communications disorders, (B&P,545-571);
  - *Communication Disorders LF* p.367-372
  - Treatment of Communication Disorders, (B&P, 571-579)
- Neurolinguistics and Psycholinguistics: Contributions to Understanding Healthy Aging and Dementia Yael Neumann, Linda Carozza, and Anastasia Georgiou Autism (B&P, 620-644)
  - **420 optional**: ASD: Language of Children with Autism The Two Worlds Underlying Verbal Communication Marion Blank and Mary Beth Cull (B&P, 649-669)
- Application: what can Linguistics knowledge do? Language Files, p. 692 - 675
  - (Optional for all): Animal communication (B&P, p. 513-540); Lang Files, p.573 - 612: [Apes /TED talk on Bonobo chimpanzees](http://www.ted.com/talks/mary_dickinson_bonobo_chimpanzee_language.html)

Wednesday

- Communications disorders, (B&P,545-571);
  - *Communication Disorders LF* p.367-372
  - Treatment of Communication Disorders, (B&P, 571-579)
- Initial Discussion post due

Thursday

- Neurolinguistics and Psycholinguistics: Contributions to Understanding Healthy Aging and Dementia Yael Neumann, Linda Carozza, and Anastasia Georgiou Autism (B&P, 620-644)
  - **420 optional**: ASD: Language of Children with Autism The Two Worlds Underlying Verbal Communication Marion Blank and Mary Beth Cull (B&P, 649-669)

Friday

- Application: what can Linguistics knowledge do? Language Files, p. 692 - 675
  - (Optional for all): Animal communication (B&P, p. 513-540); Lang Files, p.573 - 612: [Apes /TED talk on Bonobo chimpanzees](http://www.ted.com/talks/mary_dickinson_bonobo_chimpanzee_language.html)

**COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

- **INTEGRITY/ETIQUETTE:** I expect that students will exercise professional-grade etiquette like participating - especially in group activities - as fully and as on time as possible and avoiding profanity and/or derogatory language (exercising civility at all times).

**ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION:**

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 OR uoae@uoregon.edu.

**ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY**

As online students of the University of Oregon (UO), you must follow the UO Student Conduct Code ([http://dos.uoregon.edu/conduct](http://dos.uoregon.edu/conduct)). Original work is assumed throughout except as cited and **Plagiarism is of course prohibited and may result in an F for the course** – See UO policy on plagiarism here ([http://dos.uoregon.edu/academic-misconduct](http://dos.uoregon.edu/academic-misconduct)).

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism means to use the writing or creation of others and claim that it is your own. In the United States, the laws are very strict about plagiarism. You cannot copy anything (a complete article, a paragraph, a website page, etc.) without "citing" the source. That means that if you use the words of others, you must document where the words come from. You must also use quotation marks (" ") at the beginning and end of the words you have used.
Final Paper guidelines (Due: date & time)

The final essay caps what you have learnt in this course by asking you to apply the skills and information you gleaned to your own interests - both career & research. You will choose an issue we have alluded to and delve deeper into it. Sample brain-storming questions:

- How can you apply linguistics in your own life, work, school?
- If you plan to learn or teach a second language, how do you apply knowledge about language acquisition, phonetics, phonology, dictionary, pragmatics into your work?
- Interview a non-native speaker of English and note the accent differences. What does their speech show about the phonotactics (phonological rules) of their language? How can you help?
- If you plan to do investigative work, how will forensic linguistics help?
- In mass media, how will IPA help you stay ahead with pronunciation?
- Is there something, a topical issue in Linguistics that you want to research on more? For example: What are the deictic elements in your language (For instance, in English, you can point to something three feet away from, which is near the hearer, and ask: “what is that?” – using that, same deictic you would use if the hearer was near you but the object was far from you both. You couldn’t use the same pointing word to refer to things that are near a hearer and far from a hearer in Swahili!)
- What are the dialects in your language and how do they differ? what dialects are prestigious – how did that come about?
- About language & Power, what elements of the political discourse in your community/country show the differential use of language by different demographics? (You could choose a debate between two representative persons and analyze it)
- How is language used to continue sexism and gender inequality?

These are just a few things you could think of working on as an essay and many more of your own. Choose a topic and let me know by next Tuesday latest. In the meantime, you can bounce off ideas with me to see what is feasible and relevant.

Rubric:

- Length: LING 420: 5 pages minimum; LING 520: 8 pages min., 10 pages max. 3pt
- Clear statement of the topic / research question well explained 5pt
- Relevance to our course (structure / sociology of language/acquisition/psychology) 3pts
- Relevant literature quotes / awareness of what others have said about the issue 3pts
- Discussion: Clear statement of findings (evidence/ analysis/conclusion) 7pts

V. Grading Policy: Although the syllabus lists this section as a 'rubric,' it is technically not a rubric. A grading rubric is preferred. For more information, visit: https://blogs.uoregon.edu/cascd/syllabus/
• References cited/ proper citations (IPA-APA formats) 3pts