

Linguistics 80C: Language, Society, and Culture

Jaye Padgett
Spring 2015

Class: MWF 3:30 – 4:40, Baskin Auditorium 101
Prerequisites: None

About the class

As the title suggests, this course introduces students to a range of topics involving the sociology, culture, and politics of language. (See the more detailed discussion of topics below.) Due to class size, it must be a lecture-style course, but I do encourage discussion.

Contact information for Jaye

Office	253 Stevenson
Phone	459-3157
Office hours	Wed 10-11
Email	padgett@ucsc.edu

Teaching assistants & office hours

Margaret Kroll	makroll@ucsc.edu	Friday 1-2, Stevenson 265
Ben Mericli	bmericli@ucsc.edu	Thursday 12:15-1:15, Stevenson Cafe

Your contact person

If your name begins with the letters to the left, then your primary contact person is the one on the right.

A-LEI Margaret Kroll (makroll@ucsc.edu)
LEW-Z Ben Mericli (bmericli@ucsc.edu)

The idea is that this would be the default contact person for you for many routine things during the quarter. Your contact person will often be able to answer your questions, or they will pass them on to me. You are always welcome to talk to me, but as a kind of default approach to communication this would help.

Requirements

Reading responses	20%
2 papers	10% each
7 quizzes	10% each

This adds up to 110%, which is the effort we expect out of you for this class.
Just kidding. Your lowest quiz grade will not count. The rest will be out of 100%.

A sad fact: about 10% of students failed this course last year. Why? Most didn't keep up with the required work. If you put in the effort, you will do well in this class. Since there is no textbook and *not* everything that happens in class appears on slides, this includes coming to class. You are the master of your fate.

Readings

All will be made available on the eCommons course site. You'll get much less out of this course, have a hard time writing convincing papers, and a *very* hard time doing the reading responses and quizzes, if you don't do the reading.

Quizzes and reading responses

These happen online, outside of class, through eCommons. Here's how they work:

1. They are timed – you have exactly **one hour** to do them.
2. The hour is in real time – once you begin, you **have to finish** within an hour.
3. You can't return to a question once you've answered it.

The time limit means that it's really important for you to read the reading, or study for the quiz, **before** you start taking the quiz or RR. Leave yourself time!

Papers

You will be asked to write 2 papers, in each case choosing a topic from within one of the 7 *Subject Areas* covered by this course. (See below.) Papers will be between 5 and 8 pages at a word count of at least 200 words per page. It is up to you which Subject Areas you write in, except that the first paper must be written in Subject Area I, II, or III, and the second one in Subject Area IV, V, VI, or VII. Papers in a given Subject Area will be due shortly after we cover that area in class.

I suggest paper topics for each Subject Area. You are welcome to choose your own topic, but *only* if you get it approved by me at least a week before the paper is due.

Papers must be turned in in **hard copy**. Please don't email papers to us.

Late work

Papers should be turned in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. In the interest of fairness, I have to consider papers after this late, unless you have an excellent reason (I may ask for documentation). Here's what happens with late papers: one grade is taken off if it is not turned in at the beginning of class on the due date, and another grade is taken off for each additional day that goes by. So a paper due Monday but turned in Tuesday can get a 'B' at best; a paper Wednesday a 'C' at best. (Late papers legitimately excused won't have this rule applied to them.)

One of the reading responses will be 'forgiven'. Please 'spend' this rather than ask to do one late.

Attendance

Your engagement in the readings, and in class, are important to the success of the class. Therefore regular attendance, and engagement in class/readings, are a significant factor in your overall evaluation. 'Engagement' does *not* mean that you must talk in class, though I certainly hope you do sometimes. Though I will not take attendance, you demonstrate engagement in other ways, most importantly, in your written work. Believe me, it shows.

Plagiarism, cheating, working independently, citations

The university does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. People found to have done either will be reported to their college, with dismissal from the university a possible consequence. It can lead to failure of the class and even worse things. If you're unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, or what the consequences are, check out http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/.

This is a big class, and every time I teach it there are cases of cheating and plagiarism. The best thing that happens is that those students get zero credit for the quiz, paper, or RR in question. Less desirable outcomes include failing the class. In every case I will report the incident to the college. It's usually not very hard to identify plagiarized work, and we have routinely discovered cheating on quizzes and RRs too. Students get caught. Around 10 people were caught last year and reported to their colleges.

Here are my expectations.

You must do quizzes and RRs **alone**.

I consider the quizzes and RRs to be "open book" in the sense that you are welcome to consult your notes, the slides from class, and the readings. You may **not** consult beyond these course sources. You should not be consulting other sources, on the internet or elsewhere, to answer quiz questions. If you are diligent about the course material you will never need to.

We do not normally expect citations in quizzes, because we assume you are basing your answers on the course material or a source we are asking about.

In the past students have been found to plagiarize on the free response questions of quizzes. (They copied answers from other websites and pasted them into eCommons.) When we find this we note it by giving the URL of the plagiarized source in the comment box for that question. These students fail the quiz, losing 10% or their course grade, and are reported to their college. Students have also been found copying parts of each other's answers. Same outcome.

Disabilities

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please get an Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and submit it to me in person outside of class (e.g., office hours) within the first two weeks of the quarter. Contact DRC at 459-2089 (voice), 459-4806 (TTY), or <http://drc.ucsc.edu> for more information on the requirements and/or process.

Laboratory participation

If you're interested, you can earn a bit of extra credit by volunteering as a participant in one of the experiments run by linguistics researchers here. All of our experiments are approved by the University: they are safe and (at least sometimes) fun.

To participate in an experiment, please go to <<http://ucsc-ling.sona-systems.com/>>. If you haven't used this system before, you will need to request an account, which should be approved within 48 hours. When you request an account, choose Ling 80C as the class you are affiliated with. If you don't see it there early in the quarter, try again a bit later. You need to be affiliated with Ling 80C in the system, otherwise I won't know you took an experiment for this class.

Once you log in you can see the experiments that are available for credit. Find one with a timeslot that works for you and then sign up. Please arrive at least 5 minutes early for the experiment.

You can only earn extra credit for **2 credits** of experiment participation. (The Sona system tells you how many credits an experiment is worth.) For each credit you earn, your overall grade percentage will raise by 1 percentage point. For example, if you have an 89/100 at the end of the quarter, 1 experimental credit will turn this into a 90.

Course Subject Areas

I. Good language and bad language

The idea that there are correct ways to speak or write, and incorrect ways, runs deep, and it can have serious consequences for people. Where does this idea come from? What does it mean? What are its consequences? What is 'Standard English'? How else, if not by enforcing a language standard, do countries cope with dialectal variation?

II. Dialects

Dialects are a fact of life and always have been, as is linguistic variation and change. What are dialects and where do they come from? Dialects, linguistic variation, and patterns of speech, all have a lot to do with social class, ethnicity, gender, age, and in general, group affiliation. Why should this be?

III. Linguistic relativity, Newspeak, and political correctness

There is a popular idea that patterns of thought are determined in part by one's language. (For example, 'French is the language of reason'; 'Speakers of Hopi have no conception of time'; 'Eskimos have 100 words for snow'.) Is this true? In addition, many groups attempt to capitalize on this idea by controlling or manipulating the language they/we use, in order to control the way others think.

IV. Bilingualism, Multilingualism, Official English

Contrary to what many Americans imagine, bilingualism, or multilingualism, are the rule rather than the exception in much of the world. Is there any connection between bilingualism and cognitive development? How does bilingualism develop and get maintained? Why is bilingual

education controversial? We will discuss the 'Official English' movement as well: the movement to make English the only permissible language to use in government-sponsored functions.

V. Signed languages and deaf culture

There have always been signed (gestural) languages. There are many of them across the world, and they differ from each other, just as spoken languages do. Until recent times they have not been typically recognized as 'real' languages, though. Why not? What have the consequences been?

VI. Language death, language revival

It appears that wholesale language extinction is taking place today at a rate never before seen in human history. Why is this happening? Can it be reversed? Why do few people know about it? Does it matter?

VII. Language and gender

There are aspects of linguistic behavior that correlate roughly with sex or gender. Why is this? In fact, language seems to play a role in defining how men versus women are perceived, and how they are expected to behave.