

Department of Anthropology

ANTHROPOLOGY 2245F-200 - Anthropological Approaches to Language

COURSE OUTLINE

Winter 2023

Version date: August 5, 2022

Classes:

Lectures: Thursdays 2:30-4:30 pm

Classroom: SH-2355

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Mode of delivery: This is a blended course using a “flipped classroom” approach. This means you will access lecture content online before our meeting. Class time will be workshop style where we put the week’s concepts to work and practice anthropological methods and analysis.

Instructor:

Lindsay Bell (she/her)

Email: Lindsay.bell@uwo.ca

Requisites:

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisites: None.

Course Description:

Most people accept the proposition that language and culture are connected. Yet, how this connection forged is far more complicated. This course is an introduction to linguistic anthropology. Our purpose is to think about the nature of the connection between language and culture. This includes an investigation of how meanings are made, how language is learned, and how language shapes social identities and communities. We will be looking at language ‘up close’ (meaning understanding linguistic structure and sequencing in interaction) and ‘from above’ (changing ideas about language and its uses). We begin with a close study of some core concepts in linguistic anthropology. The remainder of the course is arranged thematically. Each week, we examine a major topic of linguistic anthropological concern, including language socialization, gender, race, media and globalization.

This is a “hands-on” research course, meaning each student will develop a small semester long project. Linguistic anthropology is concerned with the ‘work’ language does in the world. We study language as a social practice and action. This course is designed for you to experience linguistic anthropological research rather than just learning about it. The course builds towards a single paper based on original research that you will do over the course of the term. We will collect and analyze data together through a series of workshops.

The research has two options:

- 1) In depth analysis of Reality television! While it is easy to dismiss reality TV as “fluff”, it does provide us with ample interaction to observe and analyze. Don’t be fooled. While it is easy to zone out and watch these programs, thinking anthropologically about them will require a great deal of skill!
- 2) A community of practice: Want to observe talk and interaction in the real world? This avenue allows you to select a ‘community of practice’ to conduct fieldwork in. A community of practice is any group who gathers together for a common goal (a video game league, a sorority, Soph’s in residence, baristas at Starbucks, archeology interns). You can be a member of the community or not. That is up to you! We will have more examples in class to help you identify the right option.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course’s OWL site before the first day of class.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe linguistic structures, patterns and practices using appropriate scholarly terminology
- Demonstrate how linguistic practices are linked to social meaning and categories such as race, gender, ethnicity and class.
- Identify language ideologies at work in examples of discourse.
- Critically reflect on their own linguistic practices.
- Apply course concepts to real world observations of language in action.

Course Materials:

Required Textbook: *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*, 2nd Edition by Laura Ahearn, 2016.

This book will be available at the Western Bookstore. You can order it online here: <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/product/cebcodeid26906>

Registered students will be able to access additional course readings through the course site in OWL before the first day of class.

Evaluation:

Assignments are meant to keep you engaged throughout the course and keep you on track so that you are not left scrambling at the end of term. A good portion of your grades comes from weekly assessments. To allow for scheduling flexibility, you will be able to miss one of each weekly assessment without penalty. If you complete all eleven weeks worth of assessments, your lowest grades will be dropped.

Here is a breakdown for the grading and a brief explanation of each assessment is below.

Introduction & Essay Topic Selection 3%

Unit Tests (4x10%) 40%

Lesson Comprehension Questions 12% (4 each week)

Paying Attention To Talk: Methods in Linguistic Anthropology Assignment 15%
Language as Social Action: Analytical Paper 30%

Introduction and Essay Topic Selection

In week 1, you will be asked to introduce yourself and answer three questions in Voice Thread. You will then need to respond to two others, one person who you already know, and another you do not but think you may have something in common with. If you don't know anyone, just choose two new people. In Week 2, once you have a sense of the research paper, you will fill out a short survey about your preferred topic, meeting style and availability. I will use the survey and the introductions to create "practice pods".

Unit Tests

The materials are divided into four, three-week units. At the end of each unit an online, generously timed test will be administered. It will be a mix of true or false, multiple choice and short answer. They will each take roughly 45 minutes. Once you begin the test, you need to complete it in a single sitting. The final test will be delivered in the exam period.

Paying Attention To Talk: Methods in Linguistic Anthropology Assignment

You will be responsible for turning in two sets of field notes and a 500-word reflection on your research of your selected "community of practice". A full description for the assignment and instructions are available on OWL.

Language as Social Action: Analytical Paper

A 2000-word essay detailing the findings of your research in conversation with course materials. More information on the assignment will be made available to students on the course OWL site. This project will be scaffolded through the practice pods so that you have ample opportunities to gain the requisite skills to be successful.

Please be aware that all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Course Statements and Policies:

Course Specific Conditions Required to Pass this Course

In order to pass this essay course, students must submit and receive a passing grade on the final paper.

Communication Best Practices:

Basic Questions: There will be a logistics thread in forum where you can post questions about due dates, course technologies or other matters that may interest the rest of the class. Chances are, if you are confused, so is someone else. Posting in the thread will get you an answer faster and help out your peers.

Weekly Student Hours: I will be available on Zoom or in person twice a week. Schedule TBD.

Email: should not be seen as an alternative to meeting with me during virtual/IRL student hours; it should be used primarily for administrative purposes, e.g. informing me of prolonged illness, etc. Please take advantage of student hours. It is the best way for me to attend to your queries.

All e-mail correspondence with me must be sent with the course number mentioned in the subject line. Your full name should also be included in the body of the text. I will not respond to anonymous messages or those missing a salutation (Dear/ Hello/ Good afternoon + Dr. Bell). If there is an urgent matter, I will do my best to respond to e-mails within 72 hours. If your query is such that I can more efficiently answer it in person, I will ask you to make an appointment to see me.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence. Please visit Western Libraries to read about [What is Plagiarism?](#)

Use of Recordings

All of the remote question and answer sessions for this course will be recorded. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will be used for educational purposes

related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals under special circumstances. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings.

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.

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