Spring 1-15-2015

ENG 3901-001: Language and Linguistics

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Purpose of the Course
Our primary focus in this class will be on the historical, social, cultural, and individual aspects of language. We will explore topics concerning gender and language, dialects, bilingualism, and language change.

Catalog Description of the Course
A study of the different kinds of language and linguistic approaches: phonological, syntactic, and semantic analysis; historical, geographic, and social variation.
Prerequisite: ENG 1002G Credits: 3

Objectives of the Course
By the end of the course, students will be able to:
Understand the different kinds of approaches to language and linguistics
Understand how language may (or may not) influence the way we think
Develop an appreciation for the variety of languages in the world and how they change
Comprehend the differences between creoles, dialects, and languages
Comprehend the cultural importance of slang
Realize how cultural factors determine language use
Realize how gender is constructed through language

Books and Materials
Sociolinguistics by John Edwards
Gender and Language by Litosseliti
The 5-Minute Linguist by Rickerson/Hilton
A notebook

Requirements
1. Read the assigned material by the assigned date.
2. Contribute to class discussion regarding the assigned material and other linguistic issues brought up in class.
3. Keep a language/reading journal. (More about this later.) Bring the journal to class.
4. Complete 3 Show and Tells. These are 5-10 minute informal presentations on any linguistic topic of interest to you that you find on the internet (including social media), on television, in textbooks or journals, or that you’ve observed in your own life and that of your peers.
5. Write a 3 to 4 page personal reflection on your own or someone else’s use of language.
6. Write a research paper on an aspect of language or linguistics you find interesting. Share your findings with the class in a ten to fifteen minute presentation.
7. Take a midterm/final exam on the material covered.
Grade Breakdown
Short paper on language use 15%
Research paper/presentation 40% (30% paper/10% presentation)
Notebook entries/Show and Tells 20%
Midterm 10%
Final 5%
Attendance 10%

Attendance
I allow for excused absences if they are properly documented. These include approved university activities and illness. Unexcused absences are pretty much all others—oversleeping, finishing papers for other classes, out-of-town trips “because I’m homesick.” More than one unexcused absence will lower your attendance grade by one grade. More than two unexcused absences will lower your attendance grade by two grades. And so on.

Participation
I like an active, vocal class. If your grade at the end of the semester is borderline, and if you are a great participator, whether by responding to the readings or sharing your notebook, I will remember that.

Late Papers/Make-up Exams
Late papers may be penalized.
No making up the midterm or final.

University Policies
(1) Academic integrity - Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php) Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

(2) Students with disabilities - If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583.

(3) The Student Success Center - Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

Using the Writing Center
I encourage you to use the EIU Writing Center located at 3110 Coleman Hall. This free resource provides one-to-one conferences with writing consultants who can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support, documenting, and revising your papers.
When a reading is marked, it means you must come to class prepared to discuss it that day. Occasionally I will ask that you read an internet article. I’ve given you the URL under the appropriate day.

1st week
Introductions
Naming practices

Chapter 1, Coming to terms (Sociolinguistics)

2nd week
What was the original language (26 Linguist)
What language did Adam and Eve speak (34 Linguist)
Chapter 8—Name, Sex, and Religion (only pp 97-105 Sociolinguistics)

Chapter 5, Languages great and small (Sociolinguistics)
What’s exciting about Icelandic? (253 Linguist)

3rd week
Where did English come from (227 Linguist)
Chapter 2, Variation and change (Sociolinguistics)

Short TEDx talk

4th week
Where does grammar come from (60 Linguist)
Do all languages have the same grammar (64 Linguist)
What happens if you are raised without language (110 Linguist)
http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-universal-grammar.htm

Sentence combining

5th week
Chapter 3, Perceptions of language (Sociolinguistics)
What’s the right way to put words together (85 Linguist)

Short Paper Due
Why do American Southerners talk that way (132 Linguist)
Are dialects dying (196 Linguist)
What’s the difference between dialects and languages (21 Linguist)
Isn’t Pidgin English just bad English (47 Linguist)

6th week
Chapter 4, Protecting Language (Sociolinguistics)
Is British English the best English (89 Linguist)

What is Gullah (191 Linguist)
What is Cajun and where did it come from (182 Linguist)
Spanglish: http://www.npr.org/2012/08/10/158570815/puedes-believe-it-spanglish-gets-in-el-dictionary
and

7th week
African American vernacular English (sometimes known as Ebonics)
http://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/what-ebonics-african-american-english
and
http://www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/AAVE/hooked/

Review of weeks 1 - 7
Introduction to research project

8th week
midterm

Slang: come up with a list of your favorite/least favorite examples
http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303610504577418660113838998

9th week
How many different kinds of writing systems are there? (51 Linguist)
Where did writing come from? (56 Linguist)
handout

Do deaf people everywhere use the same sign language (114 Linguist)

10th week
Pages 9 to 70 (Gender and Language)

Pages 73 to 148 (Gender and Language)

11th week
Do animals use language (72 Linguist)
film

Computer languages
Does anybody here speak Klingon? (287 Linguist)
What ever happened to Esperanto? (64 Linguist)
handout

12th week
Chapter 7, Multilingualism (Sociolinguistics)

TBA (I will be out of town)
13th week
Chapter 6, Loyalty, maintenance, shift, loss, and revival (Sociolinguistics)

Is there a language crisis in the United States (172 Linguist)
What’s the future of Spanish in the United States (177 Linguist)

14th week
Presentation of research projects

Presentation of research projects

15th week
Presentation of research projects

Presentation of research projects

Final Exam  Monday, May 4th  10:15 to 12:15

Final research projects are due Tuesday, May 5th. Feel free to turn them in earlier.

NOTE: I may make minor changes to this syllabus in order to suit the needs of the class. Changes will always be announced in advance.