Spring 1-15-2005

ENG 3901-001

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Purpose of the Course
The study of language is multi-faceted. While this class will cover a wide range of topics, our primary focus will be on the social, cultural, and individual contexts of language. We will begin the course with some basic questions concerning language: what constitutes language, and what is the connection between thought and language? We will continue with a brief history of English, then move on to focus on important questions concerning language change, writing, and dialects. Other topics include gender, ebonics, slang and jargon, and bilingualism. In the second half you will concentrate on a project that deals with an aspect of language or linguistics that is especially interesting to you. You will work in groups to gather material, and will have ample time to meet with me to discuss the progress of your project.

Books and Materials
Language: Readings in Language and Culture (Sixth Edition) by Clark, Eschholz, and Rosa
Handouts to be distributed in class or obtained through library reserve
A college-ruled spiral notebook for notes, homework, and in-class writing.

Requirements
1. Write two short papers. (Paper #1: 3-5 pages. Paper #2: 4-6 pages.)
2. Write one longer research paper, 7-10 pages. Present your findings in a brief oral presentation to the class.
3. Keep a journal in which to take notes, answer questions related to the readings, and jot down observations and insights about language use that you may be able to use in your papers.
3. Read the assigned material by the assigned date and participate in class discussions and occasional in-class writing exercises.

Attendance
Many of the ideas used in your papers will be generated in class discussions or in-class writing, which is why it is very important that you come to each class session. I realize, however, that emergencies do occur. Excused absences are those outlined in the student catalogue: “illness, emergency, or university activity.” (You must include a note from a health service provider, coach, or school administrator.) Unexcused absences are pretty much all others—oversleeping, hangovers, finishing papers for other classes, out-of-town trips “because I’m homesick.” More than four unexcused absences will lower your participation grade to an E. More than five unexcused absences will lower your course grade by one grade.
Grade Breakdown
First paper 15%
Second paper 15%
Journal 20%
Research Essay, including proposal and rough draft 40%
Classroom participation 10%
(including attendance)

Evaluation
You must hand in all assignments in order to complete the course. There will be particular criteria tailored to each assignment; we will discuss these in class. All final versions of written work must adhere to the conventions of Standard Written English, follow the format for papers outlined below, and have been carefully proofread.

Format for Papers
Type your assignments on standard-size paper. Double-space. NO extra spaces between paragraphs, please, and NO oversized fonts. In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, type your name, your instructor's name, course, and date. In the upper right-hand corner of the following pages, type your last name/page number. Staple or paper clip pages together.

Plagiarism
Here is the English Department policy on plagiarism:
Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—“The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

CLASS SCHEDULE

#1 T 01/11 Introduction to course
TH 01/13 Daniels, “Nine Ideas about Language” (43)
Crystal, “Language and Thought” (629)

#2 T 01/18 Movie about Language
TH 01/20 Jacobs and Rosenbaum, “What Do Native Speakers Know?” (183)

#3 T 01/25 Roberts, “A Brief History of English” (420)
TH 01/27 “The Heart of the Matter: Lava Lamps and Language” (handout)
Aitchison, “Language Change: Progress or Decay?” (431)

#4 T 02/01 Shuy, “Dialects: How they Differ” (292)
TH 02/03 Smitherman, “It Bees Dat Way Sometime” (329)
#5  T  02/08  Algeo, “What Makes Good English Good” (723)
Larson, “Its Academic, or Is It?” (734)
TH 02/10 “Leave Your Language Alone” (handout)
PAPER #1 DUE

#6  T  02/15 “With These Words, I Can Sell You Anything” (handout)
“Cliches, Anyone?” (handout)
TH 02/17 “Speech Play” (handout)

#7  T  02/22 Pfeiffer, “Girl Talk—Boy Talk” (357)
Tannen, “I’ll Explain It to You” (365)
TH 02/24 Kantrowitz, “Men, Women, Computers” (397)
“Women Talk Too Much” (handout)

#8  T  03/01 DISCUSSION of final paper methodology: Case studies and ethnographies
Read Caldas, “Rearing Children in a Monolingual Culture” (522)
TH 03/03 Heath, “Teaching How to Talk in Roadville” (609)

#9  T  03/08 Alvarez, “It’s the Talk of Nueva York” (483)
TH 03/10 Bilingualism handouts
PAPER #2 DUE

SPRING BREAK

#10 T  03/22 Hughes, “Languages and Writing” (705)
TH 03/24 Movie
One-page Research Paper Proposal Due

#11 T  03/29 Documentation/Interviewing techniques workshop
TH 03/31 Handouts on Computer Language

#12 T  04/05 Conferences/Research in Library
TH 04/07 Conferences/Research in Library

#13 T  04/12 Readings chosen by class
TH 04/14 Readings chosen by class

#14 T  04/19 Miller, “Nonverbal Communication” (96)
TH 04/21 Kemp and Smith, “Signals, Signs, and Words” (658)

#15 T  04/25 Presentations/Workshops
TH 04/28 Presentations/Workshops

FINAL PAPER DUE Tuesday, May 2 (Week #16)

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.