The University of Texas at San Antonio  
Department of Bicultural Bilingual Studies

BBL 2003 Language, Culture, and Society

Note: This Syllabus is provided for informational purposes regarding the anticipated course content and schedule of this course. It is based upon the most recent information available on the date of its issuance and is as accurate and complete as possible. We reserve the right to make any changes deemed necessary and/or appropriate. We will make our best efforts to communicate any changes in the syllabus in a timely manner. Students are responsible for being aware of these changes.

Description and purpose

This course explores the relationship between language and society with a focus on how language functions and varies within global, societal, cultural and individual contexts. BBL 2003 introduces students to basic sociolinguistic concepts on the relationship between language and society. It also provides students with an opportunity to look at the multilingual nature of global-age societies through a deepened understanding of sociolinguistic phenomena. These include attitudes toward the language of minority and majority language groups, language maintenance and language shift, linguistic varieties and multilingual nations, language and gender, language varieties and dialects, speech functions in discourse (the social role of language), and the nature of monolingual, bilingual and multilingual realities.

Objective

The course presents an interdisciplinary study of language in its cultural and social contexts, with emphasis on linguistically heterogeneous communities. Topics include language and ethnicity, language and gender, language and social class, language acquisition, and oral and written language. This course also enables students to understand the relationship between language, society, culture (and globalization) and subsequently interpret and analyze various local and global multilingual phenomena of the 21st century.

Major topics

The course will address two major areas:

A. The relationship between language, society, culture and globalization
   - Studies made by sociolinguists on language use in a society
   - Multilingual speech communities and globalizaion
   - Language variation and dialects
• The social role of language

B. The phenomenon of bilingualism and bilingual education
• The phenomenon of learning L1 and L2
• Bilingualism per se
• Bilingualism in predominantly monolingual and multilingual societies

Required texts


• Ch 2: Language and nationalism (E.; WebCT)


• Chs 5, 7, 11 &12 (MS.; WebCT)

• Ch 2 (R1; WebCT)

• Ch 6 (R2; WebCT)
Evaluation & requirements

Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pair/Group presentation 1</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pair/Group presentation 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research/thought paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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Class participation
You are graded according to the quality of your class participation. You are expected to come to class on time and prepared to discuss the reading assignments. Unexcused absence or coming late will lower your grade by one half. That means if you were supposed to receive an A in Class Participation, you get an A- for 1 absence.

Reading assignments
You are expected to cover all readings before they are presented and discussed in class. I recommend you set aside a specific time each week to focus on the readings for this class.

Group presentations
The class will be divided into pairs or groups of ~3 to 4 students. Each pair/group will give two 15-minute (PowerPoint) slideshow presentations on the chapter assigned for the day. In your first presentation, you are required to cover the major points in those readings and you must provide examples or a discussion question in class to indicate your understanding of the readings involved. Failure to be present on your group’s presentation means not getting any point that other group members get. I will grade the presentation in terms of student (1) student activity, (2) important topics covered, (3) post discussion and (4) the presentation as such.

In your second presentation, you have to do the same things as in your first presentation, yet add the following: (1) take questions after you have presented and (2) prepare one topic-related discussion question for the class. The pair/group has to POST its report (with the number of pair/group and all pair/group member names on it) on WebCT before the class presentation.

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1 Additional written research homework will be assigned which is to be considered as an extra credit opportunity to be used in the process of determining your final grades.
Research/thought paper
You are asked to write a 4-5 page thought paper. You should read at least 5 articles or at least 3 books on language use in the society. Develop your own thinking or take on issues discussed in class and illustrate and support this with the ideas gathered from your readings. The paper should be double-spaced, margined by one inch, font 12, Times New Roman (5th APA style - consult http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/). Due: topics for paper (November, 5), draft (November, 17), final (December, 16). I will post sample papers on Web CT.

Concept/Discussion Question Workshops
In order to help undergraduate students of different majors to understand various relationships among language, society and culture, I have designed a set of technology-mediated interactive collaborative learning workshops. These review workshops serve as a confidence-building preparation tool for midterm or final exams and they will help generate more understanding and mutual feedback in relation to the course content. Your usual groups will be formed into three or four bigger groups and you will use WebCT and other course resources to discuss and interact with other students in your group. This way, exchange ideas and the resources in relation to course core concepts, and specifically regarding the general discussion questions asked for each course topic covered. Be active, document your thoughts and contribute to the overall group response, ask simple questions (because that is your starting point to understanding). Finally, summarize your personal and digital communication into a test reply and pick one or two students to do the write up of your sample test response for the whole group. Write the summary responses on concepts and discussion questions in a word document (there will sample tests posted before the workshops) and post it on WebCT. We will analyze your responses in the next class. Please bring your laptops with wireless Internet connection.

Electronic correspondence
Extra reading materials, syllabus and student presentations will be posted on WebCT after the first two weeks of the course and on. Please do not send any personal inquiries to my email account. We will deal with your questions partly during the class, partly at a time set for a meeting.

Scholastic dishonesty
You are expected to be above reproach in scholastic activities. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissed from the University. According to The Regents’ Rules and relations, part one, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2, Subdivision 3.22, “Scholastic dishonesty includes,
but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an exam for another person, and act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.” Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

Criminal background checks
Criminal background checks will be conducted on all students enrolled in many COEHD undergraduate courses. Since observation and interaction with minors is required for successful completion of degree programs in the College of Education and Human Development, students who do not have a clear criminal background check may not be allowed to continue in the programs of the College.

Civility in the classroom
Students are kindly expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. To assure all students have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior shall result, minimally, in a request to leave the classroom.