

**Language, Culture, and Power**  
(ANTH 3005)  
Department of Anthropology, University of Minnesota  
**Fall 2006**

**David Valentine**

**Class Times: Tu/Th 9:45-11:00 am**

**Office: 364 HHH Center**

**Office Hours: Wednesday 10am-12pm & by appointment**

**Class Location: Anderson 250**

**Class Dates: 9/5/06-12/12/06**

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**Teaching Assistants:**

**Ritika Ganguly ([gangu008@umn.edu](mailto:gangu008@umn.edu)) Office hours: Weds. 3:30-5:30pm & by appointment  
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***Course Description:***

The "English Only" movement in the U.S. has been attempting for years to have English recognized as the nation's official language.... On a daily basis, people with non-standard accents are asked where they come from.... In New Guinea, languages which have thrived for centuries are dying out... People claim that they can "tell" if someone is gay or straight by the way they speak. While language is a universal feature of human culture, and a vital resource for humans' ability to describe and relate to the world around them, language is also deeply political in nature.

*Language, Culture, and Power* aims to consider language as a social and political practice from an anthropological perspective which pays close attention to language in its contexts of use. The complex relationship between language, culture, and power raises important questions: how does language shape our view of the world? What relations of power are produced in language use and beliefs about language? How is language used creatively to produce social worlds? What are the politics of using one variety of language over another? What are the politics of writing, and how do debates about spoken language carry over to the written word?

This course seeks to explore these and other questions from a variety of perspectives, including language and world view, the use of metaphors in everyday speech, language socialization, language shift, and language and identity. Students will be required to tape-record and transcribe a conversation to be used as the basis for sociolinguistic analysis through the semester. Above all, we will be concerned with the relationships of power that are deeply enmeshed in everyday language use, and consequently, the major themes of this class revolve around the politics of language and language ideologies.

***Course Requirements***

There will be no in-class exams for this course. This class fulfills a CLA writing intensive requirement, and so the writing projects for this class are extensive. Class work is due in class on the days noted in the syllabus below. Class work for the semester will consist of the following formal projects:

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1. Transcript you will produce from a taped conversation, and <i>one relevant section of your transcript which you find interesting for class discussion</i> | 6%         |
| 2. Two 5-6 page papers, due in class on days noted in syllabus below.  | 25% x 2    |
| 3. One final paper 7-8 pages due in class on 12/12/06  | 20%        |
| 4. Language journals (6)   | 12%        |
| 5. Transcription Work Groups participation and reports (4)   | <u>12%</u> |
|  | 100%       |

### Explanation of requirements

- Instructions on the transcription will be given in class 3. You will require an audio recording device for this task. Upon completing the project in full and in a timely manner *and providing the excerpt via email*, you will automatically get a full 6% toward your final grade.
- 2 & 3. The three papers for the class are analytic papers, and each will be a response to a question set in advance. Paper one must be submitted as a draft by the deadline in the syllabus. It will be returned to you with comments, revised, and submitted by the paper deadline. You are encouraged to submit drafts of the other two papers, but your drafts must be submitted at least five days before the due date. Drafts may be emailed, but the actual assignment must be handed in in class as a hard copy. The papers are graded on an A-F basis.
- Language journals are due on the dates listed in the syllabus. Language journals are two page (double spaced) journal-style pieces in which you draw on class readings to illuminate an item in the news media about language, a conversation you have heard or participated in, etc. The topic is broad – language – but you should draw together your observations with class readings. Each journal will be graded on a 0-2 point range which corresponds to actual percentage points toward your final grade.
- Transcription Work Groups: the class will be divided in 20 groups of four people. Note the following:
  - ▶ Each group will be responsible for finding a common time outside of class in order to meet and discuss their transcripts for each week a meeting is listed in the syllabus.
  - ▶ *Group members must distribute their transcript to all of their Group members as soon as possible.* Please ensure you have each of your Group members' phone numbers and email addresses.
  - ▶ Group members are responsible for closely reading each of the other three transcripts and come to the meeting prepared to discuss and analyze each other's transcripts.
  - ▶ Meetings should last at least one hour per session. I recommend dividing the time for discussion equally among members and appointing one member as time-keeper.
  - ▶ After each meeting, each student must fill out the "transcription working group evaluation form" which can be downloaded from the class's WebCT site. This is due in the Thursday class of that week.
  - ▶ Each report will be graded on a 0-3 point range which corresponds to actual percentage points toward your final grade. Grading will be based on your report and group members' assessment of your contributions.

### *Extensions*

I do not grant extensions other than for exceptional circumstances. If you believe you are embroiled in such a circumstance, I expect you to request an extension at least a day before the paper is due; DO NOT come to class without completed work unless I have granted you an extension. We will not accept emailed versions of your papers.

### *Policy on Lateness and Attendance*

Please pay particular attention to the following: you are, naturally, expected to attend all classes and all of your Transcription Work Group meetings. It is expected that if you have to miss a class for a valid reason (such as illness or family emergency), you will inform me prior to the class, or as soon thereafter as is possible. If you have an emergency that requires you to miss a Transcription Work Group meeting, you will inform your group members as soon as possible and attempt to reschedule your meeting for another time. Your absence from a Work Group meeting will be treated as an absence from class. I will take attendance in the first ten minutes of class. If you arrive late for class, you will not have the opportunity to sign the attendance sheet, and this will be noted as an absence. ***Please note the attendance policy: every two unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your grade by one grade point (e.g. from A- to B+).*** I will take a particularly dim view of absences in the Tuesday class before the Thanksgiving break.

### *Plagiarism and Grading*

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, will result in a failing grade, and will be reported to the Student Conduct Committee. The university policy on plagiarism is available at:

[http://writing.umn.edu/tww/plagiarism/definitions\\_sara.htm](http://writing.umn.edu/tww/plagiarism/definitions_sara.htm)

The university grading policies can be found at:

<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/policies/gradingpolicy.html>

### *Assigned Texts:*

The following books are required for the course and are available at the university bookstore.

Basso, Keith (1996). *Wisdom sits in places: landscape and language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press

Kulick, Don (1992). *Language shift and cultural reproduction: socialization, self, and syncretism in a Papua New Guinean village*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lindquist, Julie (2002). *A place to stand: politics and persuasion in a working-class bar*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Assigned books will be on reserve. The other course readings listed below will be available via E-reserve at the link at the head of this syllabus. I will provide you with the password.

*Course Outline*

*Part 1: Language as an Object of Anthropological Investigation*

**WEEK 1**

**1. Introduction to the course (9/5/06)**

**2. Language as an Object of Anthropological Investigation I (9/7/06)**

**Readings:**

Boas, Franz

1889 On alternating sounds. *American Anthropologist* 2 (3): 47-53.

Saussure, Ferdinand de

1985 [1916] The linguistic sign. *In Semiotics: an introductory anthology.* Robert E. Innis (ed.) pp28-46.  
Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

**WEEK 2**

**3. Nuts and Bolts: How Anthropologists Transcribe Talk ("They sure work like daws...") (9/12/06)**

**Readings:**

**\*\*Begin Transcription project this week\*\***

Jefferson, Gail

2004 A sketch of some orderly aspects of overlap in natural conversation. *In Conversation analysis: studies from the first generation.* Gene H. Lerner (ed.) pp. 43-59.

Atkinson, J.M. and J. Heritage (eds.)

1989 Transcript notation. *In Structures of social action: studies in conversation analysis.* pp. ix-xiii.  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Edwards, Jane A.

1989 Transcription in discourse. *In Oxford International Encyclopedia of Linguistics.* W. Bright (ed.).  
Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**4. Aspects of Communicative Competence (9/14/06)**

**\*\*Language Journal due\*\***

**Readings:**

Hymes, Dell

1972 On Communicative competence. *In Sociolinguistic aspects of language learning and teaching.* J.B. Pride and J. Holmes (eds). Pp. 269-93. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

*Part 2: Language and World View*

**WEEK 3**

**5. The "Whorfian Hypothesis" and "Habitual Thought" I (9/19/06)**

**Readings:**

Whorf, Benjamin Lee

1964 [1939] The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language. *In Language, thought, and reality: selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf.* J.B. Carroll (ed.) Pp. 134-59.

Orwell, George

1983 [1949] Appendix: the principles of Newspeak. *In* 1984. Pp. 257-268. New York: Penguin.

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- Lernoux, Penny  
1982 Utilization and Containment of Rumors. *In* City of the people: the struggle for human rights in Latin America – the Catholic Church in conflict with U.S. Policy. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Traugott, Elizabeth Closs and Mary Louise Pratt  
1980 The Whorfian hypothesis. *In* Linguistics for students of literature. pp. 106-110. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

**6. The "Whorfian Hypothesis" and "Habitual Thought" II (9/21/06) Film: *Darmok***

**Readings:** **\*\*Transcription Project Due in Class\*\***

- Reddy, Michael J.  
1979 The conduit metaphor: a case of frame conflict in our language about language. *In* Metaphor and thought. Andrew Ortony (ed.) pp.284-324. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Basso, Keith  
1996 Speaking with Names (chapter 3). *In* Wisdom sits in places: landscape and language among the Western Apache. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

**WEEK 4**

**7. Organizing our Worlds Through Language (9/26/06)**

**Readings:** Review Reddy, Basso, and Whorf

*Part 3: Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities*

**8. Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities I: Arguments in a Bar (9/28/06)**

**Readings:** **\*\*Language Journal due\*\*\***

- Lindquist, Julie  
2002 A place to stand: politics and persuasion in a working-class bar. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. (chapters 1-3)

**WEEK 5**

**9. Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities II: Arguments in a Bar (10/3/06)**

**Readings:** **\*\*Draft of Darmok Paper Due\*\***

- Lindquist, Julie **\*TWG\***  
2002 A place to stand: politics and persuasion in a working-class bar. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. (chapters 4-5)

**10. Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities III: Arguments in a Bar(10/5/06)**

**Readings:**

- Lindquist, Julie  
2002 A place to stand: politics and persuasion in a working-class bar. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. (chapters 6-7)

**WEEK 6****11. Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities IV: Jokes, Gossip, and Narrative (10/10/06)****Readings:**

Sacks, Harvey

1974 An analysis of the course of a joke's telling in conversation. *In* Explorations in the ethnography of speaking. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer (eds.) pp. 337-353. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goodwin, Marjorie Harness

1982 "Instigating": storytelling as social process. *American Ethnologist* 9(4):799-812.

**12. Speech Acts, Speech Events, Speech Communities V: Discourse Markers (10/12/06)****Readings:****\*\*Language Journal due\*\*****(read two of the following, depending on the discourse markers most evident in your transcript)**

Kleiner, Brian

1998 Whatever - Its use in 'pseudo-argument'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 30:589-613.

Kiesling, Scott F.

2004 Dude. *American Speech* 79(3):281-305.

Tagliamonte, Sali

2005 *So* who? *Like* how? *Just* what? Discourse markers in the conversations of Young Canadians. *Journal of Pragmatics* 37:1896-1915

Tree, Jean E. Fox and Josef C. Schrock

2002 Basic meanings of *you know* and *I mean*. *Journal of Pragmatics* 34:727-747

**WEEK 7*****Part 4: Language, Identity, and Power*****13. Language as a Site of Social Power I (10/17/06)****\*\* Darmok Paper Due in Class \*\*****Readings:****\*\*TWG\*\***

Goffman, Erving

1967 On facework. *In* Interaction ritual: essays on face-to-face behavior. Garden City: Anchor/Doubleday.

Morgenthaler, Lynelle

1990 A study of group process: Who's got what floor? *Journal of Pragmatics* 14(4):537-557.

**14. Language as a Site of Social Power II (10/19/06)****Readings:**

Lakoff, Robin

2000 Language: the power we love to hate. *In* The language war. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Collins, John and Ross Glover (eds.)

2002 Evil (Laura J. Rediehs), Freedom (Andrew D. van Alstyne) Terrorism (John Collins). *In* Collateral language: a user's guide to America's new war. New York: New York University Press.

**WEEK 8**

**15. Language and Gender: Is There a "Woman's Language?" (10/24/06)**

**Readings:**

Tannen, Deborah

1990 You just don't understand: women and men in conversation. New York: Morrow.(selections)

O'Barr, William M. and Bowman K. Atkins

1980 "Women's language" or "powerless language"? *in* Women and language in literature and society. Sally McConnell-Ginet et al (eds). pp 93-110. New York: Praeger.

**16. Language and Gender: Gender as Performative (10/26/06)**

**Readings:**

**\*\*Language Journal due\*\***

Cameron, Deborah

1997 Performing gender identity: young men's talk and the construction of heterosexual masculinity. *In* Language and masculinity. Sally Johnson and Ulrike Hanna Meinhof (eds). pp.47-64. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

**WEEK 9**

**17. Language, Race, and Identity I (10/31/06)**

**\*\*TWG\*\***

**Readings:**

Mitchell-Kernan, Claudia

1972 Signifying and Marking: Two Afro-American Speech Acts. *In* Directions in sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication. J.J. Gumperz and D. Hymes (eds.) New York: Basil Blackwell.

Bailey, Benjamin

2001 The Language of Multiple Identities among Dominican Americans. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 10(2):190-223.

**18. Language, Race, and Identity II (11/2/06)**

**Readings:**

Cutler, Cecilia

2003 "Keepin' It Real": White Hip-Hoppers' Discourses of Language, Race, and Authenticity. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 13(2):211-233.

Mary Bucholtz

2001 The Whiteness of Nerds: Superstandard English and Racial Markedness. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 11(1):84-100.

**WEEK 10**

**19. Language Ideology, Nation, and Group Identity: Western Apache (11/7/06)**

**Readings:**

**\*\*Paper 2 Due in Class\*\***

Basso, Keith

1996 Wisdom sits in places: landscape and language among the Western Apache. (preface, chapter 1).

**20. Language Ideology, Nation, and Group Identity: Western Apache (11/9/06)**

**Readings:**

Basso, Keith

1996 Wisdom sits in places: landscape and language among the Western Apache. (Chapters 2 and 4).

**WEEK 11**

**21. Language Ideology, Nation, and Group Identity: Cross-Cultural Examples(11/14/06)**

**Readings:**

Jackson, Jean

1974 Language identity of the Vaupés Indians. *in* Explorations in the ethnography of speaking. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer (eds). London ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gal, Susan

1984 Peasant men can't get wives: language change and sex roles in a bilingual community. *in* Language in Use: Readings in Sociolinguistics. J. Baugh and J. Sherzer, eds. pp.292-304. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

**22. Language Ideology, Nation, and Group Identity: Accents and Social Stereotypes (11/16/06)**

**Readings:**

Lippi-Green, Rosina

1994 Accent, standard language, language ideology, and the discriminatory pretext in the courts. *Language in Society* 23:163-198.

Crawford, James

1992 Guardians of English. *In* Hold Your Tongue: Bilingualism and the Politics of English Only. Addison-Wesley.

**\*\*Language Journal due\*\***

***Film: American Tongues***

**WEEK 12**

**23. Language Ideology, Nation, and Group Identity: Accents and Social Stereotypes (11/21/06)**

**Readings:**

Review Lippi-Green, Crawford, Cutler, Bucholtz, Bailey, Mitchell-Kernan

**\*\* Thanksgiving Break: 11/23/06\*\***

***Part 5: Socialization, Literacy, and Social Change***

**WEEK 13**

**24. Language Socialization (11/28/06)**

**Readings:**

Ochs, Elinor and Bambi Schieffelin

1984 Language Acquisition and socialization: three developmental stories and their implications. *In* Culture theory :essays on mind, self, and emotion. R. Schweder and R. LeVine (eds.) Pp. 276-320. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heath, Shirley Brice

1982 What no bedtime story means: narrative skills at home and school. *Language in Society* 11(1):49-76.

Philips, Susan U.

2001 Participant structures and communicative competence: Warm Springs children in community and classroom. *In* Linguistic anthropology: a reader. Alessandro Duranti (ed). pp. 302-317. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

**25. Language Socialization and Language Shift I (11/30/06)      \*\*Language Journal due\*\***

**Readings:**

Kulick, Don

1992    Language shift and cultural reproduction: socialization, self, and syncretism in a Papua New Guinean village. Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**WEEK 14**

**26. Language Socialization and Language Shift II (12/5/06)      \*\*TWG\*\***

**Readings:**

Kulick, Don

1992    Language shift and cultural reproduction: socialization, self, and syncretism in a Papua New Guinean village. Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**27. Language Socialization and Language Shift III (12/7/06)**

**Readings:**

Kulick, Don

1992    Language shift and cultural reproduction: socialization, self, and syncretism in a Papua New Guinean village. Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**WEEK 15**

**28. Course Review (12/12/06)      \*\*Final Paper Due in Class\*\***