

Program in Linguistics
Slavic & Eastern Languages & Literatures / English / Sociology

Spring 2010

Language in Society

SL362.01 / EN122.01 / SC362.01
Tuesday & Thursday 1:30–2:45
Lyons Hall 202

Margaret Thomas
Lyons Hall 210i; Ext. 2-3697
M 2:15–2:45; W 1–2:30; F 12–1:00
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Bryan Fleming
McGuinn 221
M 12–1:00; Tu 9–10:00; W 3–4:00
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1. Course description

SL362 / EN122 / SC362 is an introduction to sociolinguistics, that is, to the study of language in its social context. We will examine a number of classic issues in sociolinguistics including varieties of language associated with social class, ethnicity, and locale; bilingualism; pidgin and creole languages; proposals about the relationship of language, thought, and culture; and the structure and role of discourse in different cultures. The course concludes by investigating several sociolinguistic issues of contemporary interest: language and gender; the ‘U.S. English’ controversy; language and public policy.

Student responsibilities include attentive reading and preparation for class discussion, three written assignments, a small independent project in which students gather and analyze original sociolinguistic data, and midterm and final exams. Previous course work in linguistics is not required. Enrolled undergraduates receive Cultural Diversity credit.

This year for the first time a 1-credit, Pass/Fail ‘Pedagogical Laboratory’ (EN106.04) supported by a grant from LSOE’s Teachers for a New Era initiative is available to anyone enrolled in SL362 /SC362 /EN122. Enrollment in the Ped Lab is especially recommended for students in LSOE or others anticipating careers as teachers. The Ped Lab meets once a week for 1 hour, at a time to be arranged, to discuss and extend issues treated in this class.

2. Course materials

One textbook is required, and is available at the B.C. Bookstore under SL362: Ronald Wardhaugh’s *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 6th edition (2009, Blackwell). Additional materials will be available through Blackboard or on Reserve at O’Neill Library.

3. Grading

Three written assignments	See attached schedule for dates	30%
Research project	Due Thurs., 6 May, by 4:00 PM	30%
Midterm exam	Thurs., 25 Feb. in class	20%
Final exam	Mon., 17 May, 12:30–2:30 PM	20%

Final course grades are those described in the *Boston College Bulletin 2009–10*, p. 40. In general: A ≥ 97%; B = 86 to 89%; C = 75 to 78%; D = 64 to 67%; F ≤ 59%. ‘Plus’ and ‘minus’ grades fall somewhere in between.

4. Student Responsibilities

- Regular attendance and careful preparation for class are essential
- Please do not ask that the dates or times for the midterm (or final) exam be shifted
- Please submit written assignments on time

Late work is penalized as follows: Assignments turned in late will be reduced by one-half point for each day they are delayed. For example, an assignment which would have received a grade of 6.5 (out of 7 points) that

was due on Tuesday but handed in on Thursday will receive a grade of 5.5; handed in on Friday, 5.0 etc. No credit can be given for assignments turned in more than four days late.

Note that the deadline for submission of the research project is fixed at the beginning of the semester, and is to be considered immovable.

- Students should be thoroughly familiar with College-wide policies regarding academic integrity. Consult the *Boston College Bulletin 2009–2010*, pp. 33–5, and seek clarification of any unfamiliar policy or procedure.

5. Tentative course schedule and outline of assignments

Date	Topic	Assign. due / test scheduled (Complete readings BEFORE class)
Tu 1/19	Introduction to course	
Th 1/21	Kinds of linguistic variation; Assign. #1	Skim Chapter 1; Read 2
Tu 1/26	Pidgin & creole languages	Chapter 3
Th 1/28	Bilingualism	Chapter 4; ASSIGN. #1 DUE
Tu 2/2	Code-switching/mixing; Assign. #2	<i>Do you spk. Amer.?</i> clip
Th 2/4	Speech communities	Chapter 5
Tu 2/9	Regional variation in US; Assign #3	Chapter 6; ASSIGN. #2 DUE
Th 2/11	Case studies in language & social status: NYC; Martha's Vineyard; ancient Rome	Chapters 7
Tu 2/16	Language variation & language change	Chapter 8
Th 2/18	Register; slang; euphemism/dysphemism	Pp. 238–41; ASSIGN. #3 DUE
Tu 2/23	Australian mother-in-law languages; Review	
Th 2/25	Mid-term exam	
Tu 3/9	Research project	Chapter 9
Th 3/11	Language & thought: Sapir-Whorf hypothesis	
Tu 3/16	Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, con't.	Chapter 10; LIT REVIEW DUE
Th 3/18	Ethnography of speaking: speech & silence	Chapter 11
Tu 3/23	Ethnography con't.: power, politeness, solidarity	PROJ. PROPOSAL DUE
Th 3/25	Research project, con't.; structure of discourse	Chapter 12
Tu 3/30	Case study: Classroom discourse	MEET WITH INSTRUCTOR(S)
Tu 4/6	Discourse, con't.: conversation & cooperation	
Th 4/8	Language & gender	Chapter 13; METHOD SECT DUE
Tu 4/13	Language & gender, con't.	
Th 4/15	Language & gender, con't.	
Tu 4/20	Language planning	Chapter 15
Th 4/22	Case studies in language planning: Ireland; East Asia; North Africa	
Tu 4/27	'U.S. English': pro and con	Chapter 14
Th 4/29	African American English	
Tu 5/4	U.S. educational policy & language	
Th 5/6	Summary & review of the course	Ch. 16; PROJECT DUE 4:00 PM
Mon 5/17	Final exam (12:30–2:30 PM)	