University of Massachusetts Amherst

Department of Anthropology

Anthropology 597LA (69697)

Theory and Method in Linguistic Anthropology

Instructor: Dr. Jonathan Rosa
Office: 204 Machmer Hall
Office Hours: Thursdays, 3:30pm-5:00pm and by appointment

Course Meetings
Tuesdays, 9:05am-12:05pm, Machmer E-25

Course Description
This course introduces graduate students in the Department of Anthropology to central concepts and approaches in the subfield of linguistic anthropology. In particular, we will focus on issues of scale in the analysis of communication to link interactional and institutional orders. This involves a critical reexamination of the mediated nature of “identity” as it pertains to linguistic forms, material objects, persons, and collectivities. In our efforts to apprehend the cultural meaningfulness and systematic nature of language as a form of social action, we will develop a model for making sense of what has been called the “total linguistic fact”: structure, context, ideology, and domain. The goal is for students across the subfields of anthropology to gain a theoretical and methodological toolkit for understanding the fundamental role of semiotic processes in structuring sociocultural life, as well as the range of analytical insights to be gained from investigating language ideologies and linguistic practices.

Required Texts
I have uploaded all of the regular required readings for this course to Spark in PDF format. You may choose to purchase the book that you choose to analyze for your book review (seek Week 8 in the course schedule).

You can consult the following readers for broad overviews of linguistic anthropology and anthropological linguistics:

Ahearn, Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology; Duranti, Linguistic Anthropology; Duranti, Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader; Duranti; Companion to Linguistic Anthropology; Foley, Anthropological Linguistics

Guidelines and Requirements
This is an intensive seminar course. The majority of your work each week will consist of reading in preparation for our seminar meetings. Each student will be assigned a week in which to facilitate discussion of the readings. For the week in which you sign up to facilitate discussion, you are expected to develop a set of discussion questions and a creative way in which to guide
the discussion. You will prepare a handout with your reflections on the reading and your discussion questions. This handout should be approximately 1-2 single-spaced pages. Feel free to bring in any audiovisual media to supplement your handout. There is no possible way that you could get to all of this issues covered in the reading, so focus on whatever ideas interest you most.

There are two primary writing assignments for this course. The first is a book review/presentation. You will select a book-length linguistic ethnography, compose a book review adhering to the guidelines in the Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, and present your analysis of the book in class during Week 8. The second writing assignment will consist of a set of short essays in response to pre-circulated questions. I will distribute the questions by Tuesday, April 10. You will have until Tuesday, May 8 to submit your essays.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (January 24): Introduction and Overview

Week 2 (January 31): Language as Culture in Semiotic Perspective

Required
Theoretical Models:

Case Studies:

Further Reading
Agha, Language and Social Relations; Sapir, Unconscious Patterning of Behavior in Society; Whorf, Relation of Language to Habitual Thought and Behavior; Silverstein, The Limits of Awareness
Week 3 (January February 7): Indexicality, Semiotics, and the Nature of the Linguistic Sign

Required

Theoretical Models:


Case Studies:

Further Reading
Jakobson, Linguistics and Poetics; Jakobson, Shifters; Peirce, Logic as Semiotic; Mertz and Parmentier; Ochs, Indexing Gender; Kiesling, Rethinking Indirection and the Indexical Cycle; Silverstein, “Direct” and “Indirect” Communicative Acts in Semiotic Perspective; Mertz and Parmentier, Semiotic Mediation; Silverstein, Language and the Culture of Gender

Week 4 (February 14): Denotational Texts and Interactional Texts; Mapping Roles and Modes of Performativity

Required

Theoretical Models:
Case Studies:

Further Reading
Silverstein, Shifters; Wortham, Mapping Participant Deictics; Goffman, Frames of Talk; Austin, How to Do Things with Words; Searle, Speech Acts; Bauman and Briggs, Poetics and Performance; Rosaldo, The Things We Do with Words; Silverstein, Improvisational Performance of Culture; Benveniste, Problems in General Linguistics; Malinowski, Language of Magic and Gardening; Hill, The Grammar of Consciousness and the Consciousness of Grammar

Week 5 (February 21): Ritualization of Discursive Chains; Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity; Decontextualization and Recontextualization

Required
Theoretical Models:

Case Studies:

Further Reading
Silverstein and Urban, Natural Histories of Discourse; Wortham, Narratives in Action
Week 6 (February 28): Language Ideologies

Required
Theoretical Models:

Case Studies:

Further Reading
Woolard, Language Ideologies as a Field of Study; Schieffelin, et al Language Ideologies; Woolard and Schieffelin, Language Ideologies; Gal, Language Ideologies Compared: Metaphors of Public/Private; Boas, On Alternating Sounds

Week 7 (March 6): Identity and Differentiation

Required
Theoretical Models:

Case Studies:

**Further Reading**
Cameron and Kulick, Language and Desire; Bucholtz, White Kids; Gumperz, Language and Identity; Shankar, Desiland; Sherzer, Speech Play and Verbal Art; Alim, Rock the Mic Right; Feld, Fox, Samuels, Vocal Anthropology; Kiesling, Intercultural Communication

**Week 8 (March 13): Presentations**

Choose one of the following linguistic ethnographies (or suggest another) and prepare a 15-minute presentation that applies insights from the ethnography to your own research interests.

Mertz, The Language of Law School
Wortham, Learning Identity
Collins and Blot, Literacy and Literacies
Bucholtz, White Kids
Inoue, Vicarious Language
Fox, Real Country
Eisenlohr, Little India
Shankar, Desiland
Fader, Mitzvah Girls
Mendoza-Denton, Homegirls
Urla, Basque Revival
Cavanaugh, Living Memory
Errington, Linguistics in a Colonial World
Bailey, Language, Race, and the Negotiation of Identity
Morgan, Language, Discourse, and Power
Alim, Roc the Mic Right
Errington, Linguistics in a Colonial World
Fox, Real Country
Invitations to Love: Literacy, Love Letters, & Social Change in Nepal
Besnier, Gossip and the Everyday Production of Politics

**Week 9 (March 20): No Class (Spring recess)**
Week 10 (March 27): Language Socialization

**Required**

*Theoretical Models:*

*Case Studies:*

*Further Reading:*
Fader, Mitzvah Girls; Shankar, Desiland; Zentella, Building on Strength; Baquedano-Lopez, Doctrina Narratives; Ochos, Schieffelin, and Duranti, Handbook of Language Socialization; Heath, Ways with Words; Baquedano-Lopez and Garrett, Language Socialization

Week 11 (April 3): Language and Political Economy; Standardization, Stigmatization, Institutional Reglementation

**Required**

*Theoretical Models:*

*Case Studies:*

Further Reading:
Bloomfield, Literate and Illiterate Speech; Philips, Warms Springs; Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power; Inoue, Vicarious Language; Gal, Language and Political Economy; Urciuoli, Exposing Prejudice; Urciuoli, Whose Spanish; Baugh, Linguistic Profiling; Cavanaugh, Accent Matters; Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising; Hill, The Everyday Language of White Racism; González, I Am My Language

**Week 12 (April 10): Multilingualism, Codeswitching, Voicing**

**Required**

*Theoretical Models:*

*Case Studies:*

Further Reading:
Blom and Gumperz, Codeswitching; Benjamin Bailey, Language, Race, and Negotiation of Identity; Woolard, Double Talk; Rampton, Language in Late Modernity; Otheguy, Spanglish; Lipski, Spanglish; Jaspers, Linguistic Sabotage; Makihara, Syncretism

**Week 13 (April 17): No Class (Monday Class Schedule)**
Week 14 (April 24): Language Community, Speech Community, and Ethnolinguistic Identities

Required

Theoretical Models:

Case Studies:

Further Reading:
Silverstein, Contemporary Transformations of Local Language Communities; Urla, Cultural Politics in an Age of Statistics; Herder, Philosophy of Man; Morgan, Language, Discourse and Power; Labov, Sociolinguistic Patterns; Eckert, Linguistic Variation as Social Practice

Week 15 (May 1): Language Shift and Revitalization

Required

Theoretical Models:

Case Studies:

Further Reading:
Harrison, When Languages Die; Errington, Linguistics in a Colonial World; Gal, Language Shift