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Anthropological Linguistics (LING21, ANTH020N) Syllabus

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Anthropological Linguistics (LING21, ANTH020N)

Professors David Harrison & Jamie Thomas
Tuesday / Thursday 9:55-11:10a, Pearson 115

Fall 2016

*"It's very valuable to cultivate the capacity to be puzzled.
Those are the places where science can move forward.
That's the way you make progress."
- Noam Chomsky*

*"There are no neutral names, categories, labels or terms."
- Teresa L. McCarty*

Course description

Communication and culture mutually define one another across communities worldwide. Human linguistic diversity, language contact and language change, and face-to-face communication continue to be key areas of inquiry for both linguistics and anthropology. Colonialism, globalization, mobility, and new technologies are changing the way we transmit and conceive of cultural knowledge, community, and our selves and the natural environment. In this course we draw attention to codeswitching, creoles, language endangerment, and constructed languages as reflections of our changing societies. We also address the ethics of fieldwork as a means of investigating these important social phenomena at the interfaces of language/ecology, language/identity, Global North/South.

Required readings and materials

Ahearn, Laura (2012). *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology* (available in College Bookstore)

- Additional assigned readings to be posted on Moodle. As you read and reflect, you may want to use the discussion forum feature on Moodle, though this is not required. *Readings will become available on Thursday, and need to be prepared for the following Tuesday.*

Assignments

Six short (500-word maximum) essays, hands-on assignments done in class, two quizzes, final exam.

Course grade

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Attendance and participation | 25% | Quizzes | 20% |
| Writing and in-class assignments | 30% | Final exam | 25% |

For students with disabilities

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Leslie Hempling in the Office of Student Disability Services (Parrish 113) or email lhempli1@swarthmore.edu to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs. As appropriate, she will issue students with documented disabilities a formal Accommodations Letter. Since accommodations require early planning and are not retroactive, please contact her as soon as possible.

For details about the accommodations process, [visit the Student Disability Service Website at http://www.swarthmore.edu/academic-advising-support/welcome-to-student-disability-service](http://www.swarthmore.edu/academic-advising-support/welcome-to-student-disability-service). You are also welcome to contact us (Professors David Harrison or Jamie Thomas) privately to discuss your academic needs. However, all disability-related accommodations must be arranged through the Office of Student Disability Services.

Tentative Course Calendar - Anthropological Linguistics (LING21, ANTH020N)

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|------------------------------|---|
| Week 1 Aug. 30, Sept. 1 | Introducing field research: Tanzania, Mexico, Siberia, Micronesia |
| Week 2 Sept. 6, 8 | Language diversity, endangerment, revitalization, language hotspots **First short essay due on Thursday |
| Week 3 Sept. 13, 15 | Ethnographic fieldwork, documenting and living culture |
| Week 4 Sept. 20, 22 | Language contact, dialects, codeswitching, creoles |
| Week 5 Sept. 27, 29 | Orality, performativity, ethnography of speaking |
| Week 6 Oct. 4, 6 | Examining social change in the lexicon via Corpus Linguistics Guest lecture: Patricia Irwin (Oct. 4) |
| <i>Fall break (no class)</i> | |
| Week 7 Oct. 18, 20 | Language and cognition: Linguistic relativity, taxonomies, metaphors, counting |
| Week 8 Oct. 25, 27 | The language of race and racism |
| Week 9 Nov. 1, 3 | Language, gender, and sexuality |
| Week 10 Nov. 8, 10 | Onomastics: Names and naming practices |
| Week 11 Nov. 15, 17 | Language and environment |
| Week 12 Nov. 22 | TBD short film screenings; <i>No class on the 24th (Thanksgiving)</i> |
| Week 13 Nov. 29, Dec. 1 | Language and power |
| Week 13.5 Dec. 6 | Last class meeting (makeup for missed Thursday of Thanksgiving) |
| Dec. 13 | Final exam |