LING 480/680: Sociolinguistics
Spring, 2010

General Information:

Professor: Dr. Nancy Schweda Nicholson

Office: 46 E. Delaware Ave. Phone: 831-2837 (Message Room 203 Jane: x6806)

E-mail: nsn@udel.edu

Office Hours: 9:00-12:00* Thursday and 12:00-2:00* Friday and by appointment

*Due to my conference travel schedule, these hours will change from time to time. Students will be notified on a weekly basis.


Programmatic Learning Goals for the B.S. In Cognitive Science
By the end of the Cognitive Science Major, students will...
1. Communicate scientific ideas and methods (i.e., discuss and solve scientific problems and/or provide data or arguments in support of a scientific hypothesis) clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing. (Gen Ed Goal 1)
2. Critically assess scientific research (primary source articles and/or lab reports), methods, and/or problem solving related to cognitive science, linguistics, and speech pathology. (Gen Ed Goal 2)
3. Synthesize multiple methodological or disciplinary research perspectives to analyze a scientific problem and make improvements that advance the issue, debate, or research (Gen Ed Goals 3 and 5).

Course Objectives and Content:

(1) to provide students with an opportunity to learn about a variety of topics in the field of sociolinguistics. The course is taught as a seminar, and specific content areas will be treated in detail. Broadly stated, these areas include: (a) the role of language in contemporary society; (b) language planning and policy development; and (c) language and culture. Within these broad subjects, some topics specifically of interest to speech pathology students will be selected. Guest speakers will provide additional perspectives on our course material.

(2) to apply the knowledge gained by preparing (a) a
Midterm Critique; and (b) an oral report on original research.

Evaluation:

Midterm Critique* = 30%
Preparation of Assignments and Participation in Class Discussions = 30%**
Oral Report = 40%***

*NOTE: The Midterm Critique (hard copy) will be due in class on March 17. “In class” means just what it says. NOT via e-mail or dropped off at my office later that day. If the Critique is not submitted on time as indicated, your grade will drop a full letter grade for every day it is late. If you turn in your paper after class on March 17, the same rule applies. Your grade will drop a full letter grade as well. No extensions will be granted.

Length Guideline: Undergrads: Between 4 and 6 pages, 14-point type, 1.5-spaced. No shorter than 4; no longer than 6.
Grads: Between 10 and 13 pages, same type and spacing. No shorter than 10; no longer than 13.

**NOTE: You, as students, are expected to attend class, complete the assignments, and take an ACTIVE ROLE in class discussions. ATTENDANCE ALONE IS INSUFFICIENT. If you are a shy person and plan to use this as an excuse to avoid participation, you should seriously consider enrolling in another course. Daily work is a critical component of the class, and it is weighted accordingly.

As indicated on page 1, this course is structured as a seminar. You will have readings to critically analyze each week. In addition, you will have a question sheet to guide your preparation for in-class discussion.

If you must miss class due to illness or emergency, you are required to contact another student to get the assignment for the next class period so you are prepared to be a full participant. Doing so is especially important, as our class meets only once per week.

To this end, a list of students’ e-mail addresses will be distributed at the beginning of the semester so that everyone has contacts for missed assignments.

If you would like me to consider an absence as excused, you must submit written documentation that demonstrates a valid reason for
the absence. The final decision regarding the acceptability of the documentation rests with me.

***NOTE: If you do not appear for your Oral Report on the date you have been assigned, you must provide detailed written documentation of a compelling reason for your absence if you wish to be considered for a make-up. The final decision regarding the acceptability of the documentation rests with me.

Overall, graduate student coursework will be evaluated more stringently than that of undergraduates.

PRELIMINARY CLASS SCHEDULE
Spring 2010

DATE

2/12 Introduction to Course
Wardhaugh: Read Chapters 1 and 2
Video and Discussion: "Do You Speak American?"

2/19 Dialects/Accents/Varieties (con’t)
Take online quizzes before coming to class: http://www.gotoquiz.com/what_american_accent_do_you_have
Johnstone: Experimental Research Design
Questions and Discussion

2/26 Language and Gender in Contemporary Society:
Wardhaugh: Chapter 13 plus additional readings, including:
- College Students’ Lingo of Love
- The Language of Compliments
- Chatty Cathy Isn’t Alone
- Gender Differences in Physician-Patient Communication

Guest Speaker: Dr. Julie Wilgen, Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Studies

Topic: “Gender, Language and Sex”

3/5 Contemporary Language Planning Issues in the US
(Wardhaugh: Chapter 15)
- Official English vs. English Plus
Review the following websites:
--US English Organization (www.us-english.org)
--ProEnglish (www.proenglish.org) +
--See the link to English Plus information at the bottom of the English Plus Founding Document (handout)

**Guest Speaker:** Mr. Timothy Schultz, Director of Government Relations, U.S. English Organization, Washington, D.C.

**Topic:** “English: Making Our Common Language Our Official Language”

**3/12** Language Planning in Education

- Death, Maintenance and Revival: The Punano Leo in Hawaii
- A Vision Becomes Reality: Spanish/English Immersion at Lewis Elementary School in Red Clay School District, DE
- The Revival of the Irish Language

**Guest Speaker:** Mr. Kevin Barry, History Graduate Student from Ireland and an Irish Speaker

**Topic:** “The Irish Gaelic Revival Movement in Pre- and Post-Independent Ireland”

**3/17**

**NOTE:** CLASS THIS WEEK MEETS ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, IN OUR REGULAR CLASSROOM. THIS CHANGE HAS BEEN MADE TO ACCOMMODATE OUR GUEST SPEAKER, PROF. BEGLEITER.

Varia: Language in Everyday Life (Article Hand-Outs)
- apologies
- real estate ads
- farewell letters
- “addressing” for success

The Language of the War on Terrorism

**Guest Speaker:** Ralph J. Begleiter, Rosenberg Professor of Communication and Distinguished Journalist in Residence
Topic: “Demonizing the Enemy: How We Use Words and Images to Define Others”

NOTE: Your Midterm Critiques are due IN CLASS today, March 17.

3/26 Sociolinguistic Issues in Speech Pathology: Readings and Discussion Questions

Guest Speaker: Dr. Brian Goldstein, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Temple University

Topic: “Language Development and Disorders in Bilingual Children”

4/2 SPRING BREAK!!

4/9 Language in Contemporary Society:
   - Speech Communities (Wardhaugh: Chapter 5 and Reading Hand-Outs)
   - Technology and Communication (Reading Hand-Outs)

Guest Speaker: Dr. Nick Fina, Project Leader of Making Language CHOICES Available to Delaware Families of Children with Hearing Loss and Dr. Mia Papas (mother of one profoundly deaf and one hearing child)

Title: “The Sociolinguistic Side of Cochlear Implants”

4/16 Language Planning in Education (con’t)
   The Role of American English in Danish Students’ Lives (NSN research)

Possible Guest Speaker: Dr. Gregory Fulkerson, Education Associate for World Languages and International Education, Delaware Department of Education

Oral Reports (3)

4/23 Oral Reports (5)

4/30 Oral Reports (5)
5/7  Oral Reports (5)

5/14  Oral Reports (2)
      Semester Wrap-up
Serials Titles Relevant to Sociolinguistics*

AILA Review
American Speech
Annual Review of Applied Linguistics
Anthropological Linguistics
Applied Linguistics
Applied Psycholinguistics
Babel
Canadian Journal of Linguistics
Current Issues in Language & Society
Current Issues in Language Planning
Discourse & Society
Discourse Processes
English for Specific Purposes
English Today
English World-Wide
Evolution of Communication
Folia Linguistica
Functions of Language
General Linguistics
Georgetown University Roundtable on Languages and Linguistics
Hispanic Linguistics
International Journal of American Linguistics
International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism
International Journal of Bilingualism
International Journal of Speech, Language and the Law
International Journal of the Sociology of Language
Interpreting
Journal of American Folklore
Journal of Language and Social Psychology
Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages
Journal of Pragmatics
Language
Language and Communication
Language and Education
Language and Speech
Language Awareness
Language, Culture and Curriculum
Language in Society
Language International
Language Policy
Language Problems and Language Planning
Law and Society Review
Lingua
Maledicta
Meta
Multilingua
NABE Journal (National Association for Bilingual Education)
New Language Planning Newsletter
Research on Language and Social Interaction
Sign Language Studies
Sociology
Women and Language
World Englishes

*Not all of these journals are available at Morris Library. Moreover, the library may not have current subscriptions for some.*
I. Potential Topics for Oral Report Research Projects

Language varieties
Language and the socialization process
Language attitudes
Accents and social class identification
Motivations for code-switching and code-mixing
Language use in the courts
Language and power in legal, medical and/or business settings
Linguistic norms in speech communities
Linguistic networks
Language change
Conversational structure
Current issues in speech pathology
Language planning
Language and gender
Politeness strategies
Language choice, language use, and the marking of ethnicity
Solidarity/distancing strategies
Language in advertising
Language and politics
Sociolinguistic aspects of humor
Languages in contact/conflict

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, as many additional topics are possible.

With respect to organizational scope, you may (1) approach your topic from a general perspective; (2) select a specific sub-topic within a larger domain; or (3) concentrate on one country or ethnic group.

II. Preparation and Research

Original research is required. (To clarify, “original” excludes a paper that is solely a discussion of research conducted by others.) Some students devise their own data-gathering instrument, such as a survey or questionnaire. You may also include personal interviews as a supplement. Gathering data via focused observations is also possible. (The Johnstone text provides excellent guidelines.)

In addition to presenting the results of your own research, you must examine the research of others and weave their work into your discussion and analysis (i.e., (a) comparing/contrasting your findings with those of others and/or (b) agreeing/disagreeing with what they have written). You must include a minimum of 3
references to/discussion of other researchers’ work on your topic.

Your textbooks and readings are valuable resources for (a) general topic information and (b) additional references you may wish to consult as you decide on your subject and conduct your research.

Because of the wide diversity of relevant topics, you must choose a subject that we will not discuss together. Specific topics within a broad area we have covered, however, may be appropriate. **In any case, make sure that it is not repetitive in terms of the information it presents.** As you will see below, each student must clear his/her topic with me before proceeding. I'll advise you of your idea’s suitability. Of course, select a subject that is of personal interest to you.

The subject matter is entirely your choice. It is extremely important that you spend time reviewing possibilities and select a topic that adds **significant relevant information** to the course content. Choose something that is rich in its analysis potential, has a high interest level, and will generate a lively discussion after your presentation.

It is **critical** that your report focus on the “language in society” angle of the material you select. Your presentation should not be a political, purely sociological or historical treatise.

**Remember to clear your topic with me before you begin.** (Complete the "Oral Report Proposal Form.") This **must** be done sometime **on or before March 26** (the start of Spring Break). The form may be submitted to me as an e-mail attachment.

III. ORAL REPORT GUIDELINES: Presentation Framework

(1) **In order to prepare the class for your topic, you may wish to bring an article to hand out as background reading for your report.** This should be done approximately one week in advance. A general background reading is **not** required, but recommended.

(2) **On the day of your report, you are required to bring a copy of the following materials for each class member and me:**

   (a) the outline you will follow;

   (b) your working bibliography;

   (c) a brief statement of your research problem;

   (d) your survey/questionnaire (if applicable)
(e) tables/charts of your results (if applicable)

(f) your discussion questions

(3) Your report should be organized in the following manner:

(a) introduction
(b) description of research problem + results
(c) analysis/critique
(d) conclusions
(e) discussion questions for class*

*NOTE: You are responsible for preparing questions based on your material for the discussion period.

(4) Presentation/Demeanor: Do not prepare a written paper. You may have index cards with notes, but you should not read your report. Strive to maintain a smooth, extemporaneous delivery style. Feel free to use transparencies, slides, charts, maps and/or any other audiovisual materials.

NOTE ON AUDIOVISUAL USE: If you wish to use audiovisual support (such as Power Point and/or the Internet), you must provide your own laptop. These are not available for check-out through the University. Furthermore, it is your responsibility to do a dry run of your presentation prior to the day that you will actually be speaking. This dry run must take place with the assistance of a Media Services (x3546) technician so that you can fix any problems that might arise prior to class. You may arrange to meet with him/her when our room is not in use. If, because of a scheduling conflict, it is not possible to carry out the dry run in our own classroom, you must do it in a room that has the same equipment. It is imperative that you be completely familiar with the audiovisual equipment in advance. Checking that everything will proceed smoothly is critically important because time will be very limited on the day of your presentation. In the past, we have especially encountered problems when students try to connect directly to the Internet to show a video clip, for example. Taking this MANDATORY step will ensure that your presentation will proceed smoothly from an IT perspective.

NOTE ON POWER POINT USE: Make sure to use Power Point in the way it was intended. DO NOT write out long, complete sentences. Use short bullet points with topics and elaborate on them as you speak. Writing everything you have to say on your slides is as bad as reading a written paper out loud. Adding pictures and other visual material to your slides as a supplement to the text is an excellent, audience-friendly idea.
Timing: Each report is allotted 25 minutes.

During part (e), you will pose the questions you have prepared for the class. We will also have an opportunity to ask you questions during this time.

You will be responsible for covering Points 3 (a) through (e) as listed above and also for keeping within the time limits. This will necessitate detailed planning and rehearsal on your part.

Evaluation: The components of the oral report evaluation are: (a) overall content; (b) organization and timing; (c) research problem and method of investigation; (d) analysis/critique; and (d) presentation/demeanor. (See the Oral Report Critique Sheet.)

Additional Presentation Information:

(a) From a content perspective, be very careful not to devote too much time to an introduction and/or a historical background of the topic. The majority of your report should be dedicated to the current status of the issue and/or to the original research you have conducted.

(b) If you have used a survey instrument, make sure to review it with the class before you begin going over the data analysis. In this connection, you must also explain how your tables are set up. (For example, “Table I provides the data from Question 1 of my survey. The lefthand column represents the age range of the participants and the horizontal grid shows the distribution of responses in the “Never”, “Rarely”, “Sometimes”, and “Always” categories.”)

Remember, you know your material VERY WELL, but this is the first time that I and the class will be seeing it. Don’t rush through your graphs and charts, as we need some time to view and digest the information.

With the above in mind, it is not necessary to present analysis of EVERY survey question. Time is limited, so select those questions that have yielded the most interesting data. For example, you may choose to focus on 5 questions of a total 10. The choice is entirely yours.

(c) Your report MUST present more than just a factual summary of your research data. Your personal analysis/critique of the results is the most important part of the presentation.

Remember that “critique” does not mean “negative”. A critique includes a balanced look at the project, and should focus on both positive and negative aspects. For example, what were the
strengths and weaknesses? Were you at all surprised by the results? If your data do not confirm your hypotheses, talk about why you believe this happened. Comments on an unpredicted outcome are very important. Was the experimental design appropriate for the problem you investigated? Why or why not? What might you do differently if you were to study the same variable/subject again? The goal is to demonstrate critical, analytical, original thinking.

As always, just let me know if you have any questions.