



Language, Symbols, and Society

ANTH 5631 (Spring 2020)

Instructor: Dr. Venera R. KHALIKOVA
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Lecture: Tuesday, 12:30– 14:15
Lecture Location: NAH 114

Office Hours: Mon 14:00-16:30
NAH 322

Tutorial:
Tue 14:30 - 15:15 NAH 401

Course Description

This course examines the nature of language and symbolic systems within human social worlds. It explores the nature and structure of language, the underlying meanings and rules of conversation, the shaping of language by gender and social class, formal language and foul language and what they mean, and how the structure of enculturated consciousness is shaped by language. It also examines a range of symbols in society, the language not just of words but of everyday goods and everyday life, popular culture and mass media, political discourse and propaganda, and computers and cyberspace, to understand how cultural symbols are socially constructed, performed, and contested. Language, symbols, and their cultural construction and social usage form a central topic of anthropological inquiry; this course will explore and explicate this topic.

Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- describe the scope of linguistic anthropology
- name and explain key scholars, theories, and concepts in anthropological studies of language
- identify and explain distinctive characteristics of language and how language differs from animal communication
- define and give examples of language ideology, linguistic relativity
- define and analyze symbols and their use in daily life
- identify and analyze language in its complex sociocultural and political contexts, including gendered and classed dimensions of language

Assessment Criteria

Mid-term exam (30%)

This is an in-class or online exam with 50 multiple-choice, true-or-false, fill-in-the-blank and short answer questions, based on the material from Week 1–Week 7. March 17. NO MAKE-UP EXAM

Discussion leading (30%)

You will need to lead a class discussion during one tutorial: present a summary of the assigned readings, generate discussion questions, and provide relevant examples.

Final Essay (40%)

This is a mini-research-based essay that analyzes cultural aspects of language phenomena. The essay will consist of an ungraded essay outline – due April 7, in class, and the graded final essay due May 12, 23:59 via VeriGuide and Blackboard.

Bonus: The final grade will be marked up (B to B+; B+ to A- etc.) if you contribute to class discussions and tutorials, demonstrating the knowledge of assigned readings.

Grading Scale

Grade	Course Achievements
A	<i>Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes:</i> your written work and class participation demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the introduced concepts, factually accurate information, and convincing argumentation. All work is original, of required length and format, and submitted on time.
A -	<i>Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes:</i> most of your written work and class participation demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the introduced concepts, factually accurate information, and convincing argumentation, even if occasionally contain minor errors. All work is original, of required length and format and submitted on time.
B+	<i>Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others:</i> your work and class participation show an overall good understanding of class material but may vary in clarity, contain a lot of minor factual errors, or slightly deviate from required length and format. All work is original and submitted on time.
B	
B -	
C +	<i>Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses:</i> your work and class participation show an overall acceptable level of understanding of class material but it somewhat lacks clarity, contains major factual errors, and/or often deviate from required length and format. You written assignments are original but occasionally submitted late.
C	
C -	
D +	<i>Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes:</i> your work and class participation show a low level of engagement and persistent distraction by the use of mobile phones or other technology. Your written assignments are original, but they show minimal understanding of class material, lack of clarity, major factual errors, considerably deviate from required length and format, and/or are submitted late.
D	
F	<i>Unsatisfactory performance on most learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.</i> Most of your assignments are submitted late or not submitted at all, they are extremely short, factually incorrect, and/or contain instances of plagiarism.

Learning Material

As this is a MA-level class, it is expected that you keep up with the readings and come to class/tutorials prepared to discuss them. All readings will be available on Blackboard, but you may want to purchase a hard copy of the main textbook:

- *The Routledge Handbook of Linguistic Anthropology* by Nancy Bonvillain. Taylor & Francis Group, 2015

Supplementary helpful resources:

- *Globalization of Language and Culture in Asia: The Impact of Globalization Processes on Language*. Edited by Viniti Vaish, 2010
- *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader* by Alessandro Duranti. Second edition. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2009
- *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology* by Alessandro Duranti. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004

Weekly schedule

*Subject to change. Stay tuned on Blackboard

1. January 7: Linguistic Anthropology and the Nature of Language

- Chapter 1: “Introduction” by Bruce Mannheim. In *Routledge Handbook*, pp. 1 – 9
- (optional) Robert H. LAVENDA and Emily A. SCHULTZ, “Language,” in *Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013), pp. 33 – 50

2. January 14: Language and Cognition

- Chapter 2: “Semantic Categorization and Cognition” by Gerrit Dimmendaal. In *Routledge Handbook*, pp. 13 – 26
- Benjamin L Whorf (1922) “The Relations of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language.” In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 176–193
- Or watch on YouTube: Lera Boroditsky, How the Languages We Speak Shape the Ways We Think <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGuuHwbuQOg>

3. January 21: Nonverbal Communication

- Chapter 3: “Gesture” by Jurgen Streeck. In *Routledge Handbook*. pp. 27 – 43
- Zdenek SALZMANN, “Nonverbal Communication and Writing.” In *Language, Culture, and Society* (Boulder CO: Westview, 2004), pp. 246 – 268
- Video: “Do Animals Have Language?” (2015, 4:54) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FY5kL_zXU

January 28. No class. Lunar New Year

4. February 18. Communication Technology and the Internet

- Chapter 6: “Being in the Cloud: Analysis of Discourse in Online Communities” by Tracy LeBlanc-Worries. In *Routledge Handbook*, pp. 80 – 91
- “Flows of Technology: Mandarin in Cyberspace” by Shouhui Zhao. In *Globalization of Language and Culture in Asia*, pp. 139 – 160
- David Crystal - The Effect of New Technologies on English
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVqcoB798Is>

5. February 25. Language Ideology

- Chapter 7: “Language Ideologies: Emergence, Elaboration, and Application” by Paul Kroskrity. In *Routledge Handbook*, pp. 95 – 108
- “Language Ideologies and Linguistic Differentiation” by Judith Irvine and Susan Gal. In *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*, edited by Alessandro Duranti, 2009, pp. 402 – 434

6. March 3: Media Ideology

- “Breaking Up is Hard to Do: Media-Switching and Media Ideologies” by Ileana Gershon (2010). In *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 20(2), pp. 389 – 405
- “Media Ideologies: An Introduction” by Ileana Gershon (2010). In *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 20(2), pp. 283 – 293

7. March 10: Language, Speech Community, and Socialization

- Chapter 9: “Language Socialization” by Amy Paugh. In *Routledge Handbook*, pp. 125 – 139
- “The Speech Community” by John J. Gumpertz. In *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*, edited by Alessandro Duranti, 2009, pp. 66 – 73

8. March 17. Midterm exam

9. March 24: Language and Gender

- Chapter 13: “Language, Gender, and Identity” by Pia Pichler. In *Routledge Handbook*, pp. 191 – 205
- Deborah TANNEN, “Put Down That Paper and Talk to Me!': Rapport-talk and Report-talk,” in *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (New York: Ballantine, 1990), pp. 74 – 95
- Video: Natalia KHOSLA, “Body Language and Gender From a Dancer's Perspective” (2015, 13:05) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBg5QvcZQP8>

March 31 (Reading Week, no class)

- Chapter 15: “Language and Racialization” by Elaine W. Chun and Adrienne Lo. In *Routledge Handbook*, pp. 220 – 223

10. April 7. Politeness and Foul Language

- “Universal and Culture-Specific Properties of Greetings” by Alessandro Duranti. In *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*, edited by Alessandro Duranti, 2009, pp. 188 – 213
- Chris HUTTON, “Bad Boys and Bad Language: Chou Hau and the Sociolinguistics of Swearwords in Hong Kong Cantonese,” in G. Evans and M. Tam, eds., *Hong Kong: The Anthropology of a Chinese Metropolis* (1997), pp. 299 – 331

11. April 14: Symbols and Signs

- Chapter 17: “Sign Languages and Communicative Practices” by Richard Senghas. In *Routledge Handbook*, pp. 247 – 261
- Arthur Asa BERGER, *Signs in Contemporary Culture*, (Salem, WI: Sheffield, 1984), Selections.
- Mari WOMACK, “Understanding Symbols,” in *Symbols and Meaning: A Concise Introduction* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2005), pp. 1 – 14

12. April 21: Language, Politics, and Nationalist Discourse

- Chapter 21: “Language and Nationalism” by Eve Haque. In *Routledge Handbook*, pp. 317 – 328
- Jason JONES and Jean Stilwell PECCEI, “Language and Politics,” in L. Thomas, et al. eds, *Language, Society and Power: An Introduction* (second edition, London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 35 – 53
- Li Wei, 2016. New Chinglish and the Post-Multilingualism Challenge: Translanguaging ELF in China. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* 5 (1): 1-25
Or see on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxeNMKBpvIQ>

13. April 28: Communication, Globalization, and the Future

- Chapter 22: “Language in the Age of Globalization” by Marco Jacquemet. In *Routledge Handbook*, pp. 329 – 347
- “Hip Hop Nation Language” by Samy Alim. In *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*, edited by Alessandro Duranti, 2009, pp. 272 – 289
- “Introduction: Globalization of Language and Culture in Asia” by Viniti Vaish. In *Globalization of Language and Culture in Asia*, pp. 1 – 13

Take-Home Final Exam Due May 12

Course Policies and Support

Contacting me

Use your CUHK email (not your personal email), when communicating about class matters. For most situations, you should write to the Teaching Assistant first—the class TA is very knowledgeable and ready to help you. But feel free to email me as well, if there is something that the TA does not know, or if you want to contact me directly. In line with the convention of academic communication, you can address me as “Dr. Khalikova.” I will do my best to answer your email within 24 hours, with an understandable exception of Saturdays and Sundays.

Educational technology

This class relies on the use of Blackboard. All class communications, announcements, assignment guidelines, and homework submissions will be done through it. Note that it uses the email address assigned to you by the University, so it is your responsibility to have an electronic mail forwarded to your main email address.

Special accommodation

If you need special accommodations or classroom modifications, you need to notify both me and the University’s Wellness and Counselling Center (<https://www2.osa.cuhk.edu.hk/disability/en-GB>) no later than the third week of class.

Technology and Cell Phones

Although I recognize the value of technology in aiding the learning process, I also understand that it can be a major hindrance to learning, when used inappropriately. Therefore, the use of laptops and mobile phones is not permitted in class (unless it is necessary for class activities). Mobile phones must be kept in your bags, turned off, or on silent mode (NOT on vibrate) as to avoid distracting your peers. E-readers and tablets are allowed only during tutorials when we discuss assigned articles and you need the texts in front of you.

Remember, browsing Facebook or any other website during the class distracts not only you but also persons sitting next to you, and such conduct is disrespectful to me and your classmates. Therefore, disruptions caused by phone calls, texting, emailing, or the use of any other communication technologies during a class will result **in the reduction of your final grade**. If you are expecting an important call, you should talk to me before the class.

Academic Integrity

The University has recently updated its policy on Academic Integrity and the penalties for plagiarism and cheating: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_%282013-14%29/p06.htm

Read it carefully: every student is expected to comply with the policy; otherwise, if you are suspected of violating these obligations you will be subject to the outlined sanctions. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask me or your TA about this!

Classroom Recording

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, **you may not record** lectures, discussion and/or activities during the class or tutorials without my permission obtained in advance, and only solely for your own private use.

Late Work and Absence

Late or incomplete assignments will be marked down: one point (1%) will be subtracted **for each late day**. Class attendance is not required, but if you miss a class, it is your responsibility to copy class notes and go over the powerpoint presentations, otherwise, it will most likely result in poor understanding of class material and, ultimately, in a low grade. You are welcome to come to my office during office hours to go over the missed lectures!

Discussion Rules

We will discuss many interesting, important and potentially controversial topics. I expect you to be **polite and respectful** of your classmates' opinions, limit your statements to academic (not emotional) arguments, and not use offensive language or judgmental statements.

Grade Review

If you want to discuss and contest your grade, you can send me an email to set up an appointment during my office hours when we will go over your exam/written work and decide on a grade together. During this process, I can both mark your original grade up, if you demonstrate evidence that you know the material well, or mark it down.

Independent Learning Center

If you need help with communication and learning skills, the University has a great resource for you. You can schedule a consultation or attend workshops on various strategies for improving learning outcomes
<https://www.ilc.cuhk.edu.hk/EN/mission.aspx>