Anthropology 480/680: Anthropological Linguistics
Fall 2014

**Time:** Tuesday-Thursday 4:00-5:15pm

**Place:** AB 212

**Instructor:** Dr. Jenanne Ferguson ([jenannef@unr.edu](mailto:jenannef@unr.edu))

**Office hours:** AB 509, T/Th 2:30-4:00pm or by appointment

*Course Overview*

Anthropological linguistics, according to Alessandro Duranti, may be viewed as a subdiscipline of linguistic anthropology, focusing on the broad relationship between language and culture, as well as the linkages between language, culture, and cognition. This first part of course provides an overview of philosophical ideas with which linguistic anthropology and anthropological linguistics engage (e.g. structuralism, universalism, linguistic relativity) and how they fit within cognitive anthropology more generally; we will focus on color studies and classifiers. We then move into more in-depth studies of communicative practice, centered on ideology, activity and form (Hanks 1996) and how speech is a culturally constructed, plurifunctional act (topics include language ideologies and social power; gender and sexuality; race, class and ethnicity). Finally, anthropological approaches to orality and literacy as well as performance and performativity are addressed in order to better understand how language mediates social life in a variety of speech communities. Students will complete several short assignments analyzing language in their own daily lives and popular culture as well as a research paper based on existing resources or original research (if a graduate student).

**Course Outcomes**

Students will:

1. Attain a basic vocabulary of structural linguistics necessary for appreciating linguistic form and function
2. Gain an understanding of the theory of linguistic relativity through a study of language and cognition, and how language shapes cultural representations of both natural and social environments
3. Develop a broad knowledge of the diversity of the world’s languages
4. Be able to analyze how language both communicates information but also shapes communicative practices
5. Be able to discern how language is integral in the formation and expression of social identity and group membership, and the organization of cultural beliefs and ideologies.

**Course Objectives**

CORE OBJECTIVE 10: DIVERSITY AND EQUITY
Students will demonstrate an understanding of diversity through courses that focus on topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, physical ability, language, and/or social class with an emphasis on the analysis of equity. Students will apply and evaluate approaches or modes of inquiry used to analyze diversity and equity and the social barriers to these goals.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Students will:

1. articulate an awareness of some of the central historical and present diversity issues addressed in the course, including race, ethnicity, gender, social class, religion, sexual identity, ability, national origin, or other identities, in relation to linguistic practices
2. analyze and interpret information about linguistic and cultural differences, rules, and biases in their own society, and how these rules and biases affect equity between groups and play into efforts to value cultural difference and to create societal fairness.
3. identify the complex elements (linguistic and communicative) important to members of a diverse cultural group or groups in relation to its/their history, values, politics, economy, or beliefs and practices
4. use models and theories of linguistic and cultural difference to analyze complex questions about cultural difference and equity

**Readings and Texts**

There are two required textbooks for this course:


There will also be a selection of readings made available on WebCampus; these are listed in the schedule below.

The textbooks are available in the campus bookstore, and can also be purchased on Amazon (new and used). Amazon also offers the Duranti reader for textbook rental. Powell’s books (www.powells.com) also is a good place to check, as often used texts are quite cheap.

**Grading and Assessment**

There are 100 possible points for the semester. The breakdown is as follows:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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You will be evaluated according to the following:

**Attendance and Participation: 20%**

1. Attendance and participation – 15% (*10% for graduate students*)
2. Discussion questions – 5 % (*10% for graduate students*)

**Short Assignments: 30%**

1. Metaphors in Conversation – 10% (due Thursday, September 25th)  
   *This assignment will aid in illustrating the diverse ways in which language use reveals elements important to members of a specific cultural group.*
2. Basso and Star Trek – 10% (due Tuesday, October 14th)  
   *This assignment will help students analyze and interpret information about cultural differences, rules, and biases and how they affect cross-cultural (mis)understandings*
3. Transcription and Representation – 10% (due Tuesday, December 9th)  
   *This assignment will allow students to engage with the complexities in representing oral speech, and highlight the importance of respecting and attending to oral languages, and issues of literacy and equity*

**Midterm** (Tuesday, October 21st) – **15%** -- will consist of two essays (a choice of topics will be provided beforehand) and a number of shorter responses. A study/review guide for the short answer will be also given in advance.

**Research Paper – 20%** (due before 11:59pm on Tuesday, December 16th) You will need to have a proposal in to me by Thursday, November 20th. Details given shortly after the midterm. Start thinking about possible topics early!

*Research papers will require students to demonstrate knowledge of the worldviews and cultural markers of a non-U.S. cultural group or of minority or indigenous status within the United States. The will be engaging with the questions of diversity and equity by focusing on how language and race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and other identities are entwined in communicative practice.*

For graduate students, and interested undergraduates, I would ask you to also give a short 10 minute presentation on your paper on the last day of class – December 9th.

**Final Exam** (Thursday, December 11th) – **15%** – will consist of two essays (a choice of topics will be provided beforehand) and a number of shorter responses. A study/review guide for the short answer will be also given in advance.
Policies and Responsibilities

**Academic Help:** Your student fees cover usage of the Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring-center), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or http://www.unr.edu/writing-center). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. If you are having trouble with more specific concepts or are unsure what is expected of you in this course, remember you can always contact me to set up a time to discuss them!

**Academic Honesty:** Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. They will result in an automatic F for the course and the student will be reported to UNR’s student affairs office. The UNR catalog outlines university policy concerning academic ethics and integrity; I advise all students to read it. If you are unclear about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please see me. Be aware that accidental plagiarism due to careless citation practices will be taken seriously. It is your responsibility to make sure that you cite all sources appropriately; again, please see me or the TA if you are having trouble with citations. All students must carefully read the following:

http://www.unr.edu/student-conduct/policies/university-policies-and-guidelines/academic-standards/policy

Please see the Research section below for further citation guidelines.

**Attendance:** is taken each class. You are allowed up to two absences during the semester. Additional absences must be excused by me; more than two unexcused absences will result in your attendance and participation grade decreasing by 5 percentage points each absence.

Please see me in advance, and provide written notice, if you need an absence for religious obligations (holy day absence) that do not fall on state holidays or periods of calls recess, or for university approved extracurricular activity (intercollegiate athletics, band, drama, recruitment, etc.)

I expect respect for your fellow students – speaking up in class can be tough! – as well as for myself. Please be kind and attentive.

Cell phones must be turned off or silenced during class, and stowed away in your bag. Texting during class will negatively affect your participation grade. If there is an emergency, please leave the classroom to call/text.

You may use laptops/tablets to take notes. However, if they prove to be distracting, I reserve the right to prohibit laptop use.

**Disabilities:** I am happy to make any necessary accommodations for students with disabilities; please see me early in the semester to discuss your needs. Please also ensure you visit the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to make arrangements.
Getting in touch: Email is the best way to contact me; I will try to get back to you within 24 hours, but at some times (especially on weekends) it may take a bit longer. For issues that need more discussion rather than a quick answer, please feel free to drop by the office hours listed on the top of the syllabus, or set up an appointment if another time is preferable.

Late assignments: All assignments are due by the day and time specified in each specific assignment’s instructions. Late assignments will be marked down 10 percentage points for each day they are late. Extensions must be granted in advance – please get in touch! It is your responsibility to plan ahead and allow time to deal with any technical issues that may arise.

Recording: Any unauthorized video- or audio-taping of class is prohibited by law and by the Nevada Board of Regents. You may record ONLY with the written permission of the instructor. In some cases, students with disabilities have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Research: Ann Medaille is UNR's subject librarian for anthropology, and she can help you find good sources, use research databases, manage your research, and cite sources for your papers and presentations. Contact her with a research question or to set up an appointment (amedaille@unr.edu, 775-682-5600, MIKC 217). She will also give a short presentation on research in class this semester, before you get on the final papers.

There is also an anthropology library guide available here, which will definitely be useful for papers:
http://guides.library.unr.edu/anthropology (see also link on WebCampus)

Citation style for anthropology is based on the American Anthropology Association’s use of the Chicago Manual of Style (2003); comprehensive citation guidelines can be found here:
http://www.aaanet.org/publications/style_guide.pdf (see also link on WebCampus)

Schedule
Any changes to the schedule will be communicated in class and on WebCampus. Please also check the News on WebCampus. (Class cancellations, room changes, etc. will all be dealt with through WebCampus!)

*Readings marked with an asterisk specifically engage with issues of diversity (D) – introducing a wide variety of cultures (especially minority and indigenous groups) and contextualized language usage in expressing identities; and/or equity (E) – they focus on social and political inequality and how language is related to groups’ efforts and struggles to minimize inequity.

WEEK ONE – INTRODUCTION
Tuesday, August 26th

Please be sure to go over syllabus after class and choose which day(s) (beginning Sept. 11th) you would like to lead the discussion questions (send top 3 choices to me by email; first come, first served).

Make sure you get textbooks, and let me know if there are any questions...

Thursday, August 28th


(Readings are online this week in case you have not yet purchased the textbooks)

WEEK TWO – LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS
Tuesday, September 2nd


*Useful Phonology links are included in the readings folder.

Thursday, September 4th


WEEK THREE – STRUCTURALISM AND COGNITION
Tuesday, September 9th

FOLEY, Chapter 4: Structuralism. Pp. 92-105.

Thursday, September 11th

FOLEY. Chapter 5: Cognitive Anthropology. Pp. 106-130

FOLEY. Chapter 7: Color. Pp. 150-166.

WEEK FOUR – RELATIVITY AND METAPHOR
Tuesday, September 16th

FOLEY, Chapter 8: On Relativist Understanding. Pp. 169-178

FOLEY, Chapter 10: Linguistic Relativity and the Boasian Tradition.


Thursday, September 18th


WEEK FIVE – SPACE AND RELATIVITY
Tuesday, September 23rd


Thursday, September 25th – Metaphors assignment due!


WEEK SIX – CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION
Tuesday, September 30th


Thursday, October 2nd


WEEK SEVEN – FACE and NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION
Tuesday, October 7th

No readings: watching Darmok (Star Trek: The Next Generation) for Assignment #2.

Thursday, October 9th


WEEK EIGHT – NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION; GENDER
Tuesday, October 14th -- Basso and Star Trek assignment due!


Thursday, October 16th

FOLEY, Chapter 15: Language and Gender (pp. 286-306)


WEEK NINE – MIDTERM; GENDER, CONTINUED
Tuesday, October 21st – MIDTERM!

Thursday, October 23rd


WEEK 10 – SPEECH COMMUNITIES
Tuesday, October 28th

*Presentation by Ann Medaille on library research for your final papers.

Thursday, October 30th

GUMPERZ. The Speech Community. In DURANTI, pp. 66-73.

MORGAN. The African American speech community: Reality and Sociolinguists. In DURANTI, pp. 74-94. (*E)

WEEK 11 – CLASS AND SOCIAL POWER; CODE-MIXING; SOCIALIZATION
Tuesday, November 4th

SPITULNIK. The social circulation of media discourse and the mediation of communities. In DURANTI, pp. 93-113.


Thursday, November 6th


*Optional in Textbook: OCHS and SCHIEFFELIN. Language Acquisition and Socialization: Three Developmental Stories and Their Implications. In DURANTI, pp. 263-301. (most of this is summarized in FOLEY, but if you are interested in the full article it is here)

WEEK 12 – LANGUAGE VARIATION AND STYLE

Tuesday, November 11th – NO CLASS

Thursday, November 13th – LANGUAGE VARIATION AND STYLE


WEEK 13 – LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND STANDARDIZATION

Tuesday, November 18th

Guest presentation by Dr. Kirstin Swagman on language standardization and use in Bosnia-Hercegovina


Thursday, November 20th – Proposal for final paper due!


WEEK 14 -- LITERACY
Tuesday, November 25th


*Optional in Textbook: HEATH. What No Bedtime Story Means: Narrative Skills at Home and School. In DURANTI, Pp. 318-342. (*E) (This too is fairly well-summarized in Foley, but worth a read if you are interested in the topic)

Thursday, November 27th – NO CLASS

WEEK 15 – ORALITY AND VERBAL ART
Tuesday, December 2nd


Thursday, December 4th

Film: Bertsolari (Txintxua Films) – on Basque improvisational poet performers

Extra credit assignment handed out!

WEEK 16 – PERFORMATIVITY
Tuesday, December 9th – Transcription assignment due in class!


BRIGGS and BAUMAN. Genre, Intertextuality and Social Power. In DURANTI, pp. 214-244. (*E)

Thursday, December 11th – FINAL CLASS MEETING (EXAM)

*Note that we meet from 5-7pm instead of our usual time!

FINAL PAPERS DUE at the latest by Monday, December 15th at 11:59pm.