ANTH 380
CULTURE AND DISCOURSE
Fall 2015
University of Maryland-College Park at Shady Grove, Communication Department

Professor: Dr. Jacqueline Messing, Department of Anthropology, University of Maryland-College Park
Class meets: Wednesday 2:00-4:30pm, USG Building II #3022
Office Hours: Wednesday 4:30pm and by appointment
Email: jmessing@umd.edu *Type “ANTH 380” in your subject header*

Course Objectives:

This course is an introduction to key issues in the study of language, culture, and communication from the linguistic anthropological perspective. Communication is central to the everyday social life of human beings. Our focus is on the comparative study of linguistics, discourse, and language in its cultural context, emphasizing the role of language in the cultural interpretation of social reality. This is an introductory course that assumes no prior background in linguistics or anthropology. Lectures, discussions, readings, video documentaries and assignments introduce theories about the place of language in human life, along with basic skills for the analysis of the structure of languages, doing ethnography of communication, and discourse analysis. We will consider how data from ethnography and discourse analysis can be applied to professional contexts such as the workplace, and institutions such as education, medicine, and law.

Course requirements: Students are expected to attend class, and complete the reading assignments by the dates for which they have been assigned. Graded assignments include the following:

A. In-class exams. There will be two exams, each covering one-half of the course material. These will consist of a combination of “objective” questions (i.e. fill-in, pairing/matching, multiple choice), concept definitions, short answers, linguistic analysis problems, and/or short essay.

   Exam I: October 28
   20% of course grade

   Exam II: December 17
   20% of course grade

B. Exercises & Short papers: In the first part of the course on language structure there will be five exercises, each worth 7.5% of your grade. These exercises will be designed to help you learn how to analyze the structure of languages, to undertake ethnographic exploration of everyday communication, and the analysis of different types of discourse.

   Exercise #1: Morphology/Word structure Due October 14
   Exercise #2: Sounds in language/Phonetics and Phonology Due October 21
   Exercise #3: Ethnography of Communication Observation Paper Due November 11
   Exercise #4: Discourse analysis Due November 25

Exercise #1 consists of the analysis of Morphology – the structure of the components of words.
Exercise #2 focuses on Phonetics and Phonology– the description and structure of the sound system.
Exercise #3 Ethnography of Communication Observation Paper is a one-page paper detailing an ethnographic observation on any aspect of language and communication that you have observed in your life, in your travels, etc.
Exercise #4: Discourse analysis. Students will record a 1-2 minute narrative, transcribe and analyze it in a two-page paper. Details will be discussed in class.

*Recording devices can be smartphones or digital recorders. Digital recorders are available in the library.
* Papers should be typed, double spaced. Further details and examples of possible topics will be discussed in class. Use spellcheck. It is recommended that you have your papers proofread by the Student Writing Center at the Center for Academic Success http://www.shadygrove.umd.edu/campus-services/cas
C. Article Review Group Presentation: The second week of class each student will select and sign up for an article to critically review, within the context of the course subject matter. There will be 3-4 students per article. 10% of grade.
   a. Students as a group should prepare a single, short PowerPoint presentation that illustrates key points in the article. This presentation will be uploaded to the class computer during our mid-class break.
   b. Each presentation is 5 minutes per person.
   c. Highlight 3 main points in the article. Show some examples of the data used in the article.
   d. Questions to address:
      - How does the author approach his/her study of language?
      - How does the author approach interaction of language and culture?
      - What kind of data is analyzed?
      - How was this data collected?
      - What type of discourse is being analyzed?
      - What conclusions are drawn by the author(s)?
      - What did you like and dislike about the article?
   e. Students are encouraged to contact each other in class or through ELMS. Group study rooms in the campus library can be reserved in advance.
   f. Presentations will take place on the date indicated on the sign-up sheet. Presentations cannot be rescheduled, except in case of emergency. The articles are available in ELMS.

D. Class Participation: Students are expected to participate in class by asking questions and contributing to classroom discussion. You can take advantage of office hours, as well as communicating by email when you have questions or points you want to discuss further. 20% of grade.
   Blog and Online discussion. See something in the news about language, communication and culture? See a pop culture example of something we have discussed in class? Post it to the class blog. Need to miss a class? Shy about talking in class? Want to raise your participation grade? Your contributions to the class Blog and ELMS discussion board will positively impact your class participation grade, and may boost your grade if you are one point short of a higher grade at the end of the semester.

E. Videos: Several videos will be shown throughout the course, followed by discussion. Most of these videos are found online or may be available in the library. Material from films may be on the exams.
   You are encouraged to think critically. Keep these questions in mind when you view the videos:
   * What aspects of linguistics are described and depicted in this video?
   * What aspects of social life are described and depicted in this video?
   * What type of discourse is analyzed here?
   * Are aspects of both language and culture represented in this film?
   * Are the filmmakers successful in getting their point across? Why or why not?

Grading: Assignments will be evaluated based on students’ comprehension and understanding of the material presented in the course. Other factors that figure in evaluation of assignments include creative and critical insight, and writing (clarity, coherence, and organization).

GRADE SUMMARY
20% Exam 1
20% Exam 2
30% Exercises
10% Article review presentation
20% Participation
100%
ANTH 380 COURSE POLICIES

1. Please arrive on time to class.

2. Make sure cell phones are turned off. The use of smart phones or other mobile communication devices is disruptive, and is therefore prohibited during class except in case of emergency.

3. It is expected that anthropology students be respectful of their fellow students, instructors, and cultures and traditions which are not their own.

4. Work will not be accepted after the deadlines. Exceptions to this include: 1) a documented medical emergency; and 2) major religious observances that necessitate absence from class. “I” grades will be issued only under extreme extenuating circumstances.

5. Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation because of a disability should contact the professor privately to coordinate accommodations in advance.

6. The university policy on academic honesty, plagiarism and cheating will be strictly honored. Students are required to read the university’s academic policy and information about the Student Honor Council’s pledge at: http://shc.umd.edu/SHC/HonorPledgeInformation.aspx
   “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.”

   Note that UMD has an automated plagiarism detection service which allows instructors to submit student assignments to be checked for plagiarism.

   Students are asked to sign and submit an academic honesty policy handout to the instructor the first week of classes (see last page of syllabus). Any student who is caught cheating on an exam will be subject to a “zero” grade for the exam; if cheating should occur a second time, the student will be subject to an “F” grade for the semester.

7. A number of videos and video clips will be viewed during the semester. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to view the video. Most of these are available online or in the library.

   Weather related closures are updated on our ELMS site and at: http://www.shadygrove.umd.edu/campus-services/public-safety/campus-alerts
   http://www.umd.edu/emergencypreparedness/weather_emer/

8. Laptop policy: Students are permitted to use computers during class for note-taking only. Those using computers during class for work unrelated to this class, or for personal matters, risk having their laptop use privileges revoked. If several students violate this policy one more than one occasion, then a laptop ban will be announced for the entire class, for the remainder of the semester.

9. This syllabus is subject to change, according to the needs of the class.
Course texts:

1. **Bonvillain, Nancy. (2014). Language, Culture and Communication:** The Meaning of Messages. Upper Saddle River, NJ, Prentice Hall. *7th edition only.* This text is available at the bookstore. There may be used copies available.

2. **Additional readings** are on ELMS/Canvas.
   a. **Additional readings** include 3 linguistic packets from Language Files 2011 and other sources. Each student will need to *print and bring to class* on the appropriate days. Titles: Morphology, Phonology, Discourse Analysis.

3. **One additional reading of your choice:** Each student will be required to choose *one* reading from a list provided the second week of the semester. The readings are posted on ELMS.

Schedule of course topics and readings – Fall 2015

1. **Introduction and Basic Concepts (September 2)**
   VIDEO Clips: Do you speak American?

2. **Language and cultural meaning in conversation: Linguaculture (September 9)**
   *Sign-up for article presentation*

   - Bonvillain, Introduction, Chapter 1, pgs. 1-6
   - VIDEO Clips: Do you speak American?

3. **Language, Culture and Communication**
   Concept of “culture;” “discourse and “Discourse;” Micro and macro (September 16)
   - Bonvillain, Language and cultural meaning, Chapter 3, pgs. 38-58; *Skim* bottom of 58-68.

   September 23 – NO CLASS – Yom Kippur holiday

4. **The Form of the Message: Language Structure (October 7)**
   Morphology & What is a word?

   - Bonvillain, The form of the message, Chapter 2 - Morphology, pgs. 7, 14-20
   - Print Morphology packet
   - VIDEO: The human language series: Colorless Green Ideas
   - Exercise #1 Morphology packet begun in class

5. **Sounds in language: Phonetics and Phonology (October 14)**
   Syntax, Semantics, ASL, Nonverbal
   *Presentations Begin & are Scheduled throughout semester*
   **Exercise #1 due October 14:** Morphology

   - Bonvillain, The form of the message, Chapter 2 – Phonology & Phonetics, pgs. 7-14
   - Bonvillain, The form of the message - Syntax, Semantics, ASL, Nonverbal communication- Chapter 2, pgs. 20-36
   - Print Phonology packet
   - Exercise #2 Phonology packet begun in class
6. Nonverbal communication, Digital communications, Introduction to Sociolinguistics
   (October 21)
   Exercise #2 due October 21: Phonetics and Phonology

Bonvillain, The form of the message, Chapter 2, pgs. 28-45
Jones, G. M. and Schieffelin, B. B. (2009), Talking Text and Talking Back: “My BFF Jill” from Boob Tube to
VIDEO CLIPS: Do you speak American?

EXAM 1 (Covers first part of course) (October 28)
   After exam: Discussion of Ex #3 Ethnography of Communication Observation

7. Ethnography of Communication (November 4)

Bonvillain, Contextual components: Outline of an ethnography of communication, Chapt. 4, pgs. 76-110
   Language, Identity, and Education 8 (5)350–364.
Print Discourse packet

8. Discourse workshop; Communicative Competence: Politeness, Status and Discourse (November 11)
   Exercise #3 due November 11: Short Paper: Ethnography of Communication Observation

Bonvillain, Communicative interactions, Chapter 5, pgs. 111-139
Bonvillain, The acquisition of communicative competence, Chapter 8, pgs. 272-297
In class: Discourse Analysis workshop in class. Data: “The worst ways you’ve ever been dumped,” talk show;
   And Labov’s “danger of death question.”

Recommended:
Gee, James Paul. (2007). Introduction (pgs. 1-4), Social languages, situated meanings, and cultural models (Chapter 5, pgs. 87-111), and Discourse analysis (Chapter 6
   pgs. 112-126) IN Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses.

9. Linguistic variation: Class, Race and Ethnicity (November 18)
   African-American Speech & Southern White Speech

Bonvillain, Societal segmentation and linguistic variation: Class and Race, Chapter 6, pgs. 140-180
Alim, H. Samy and Geneva Smitherman (2012). Pgs. 1-30 (chapt. 1), 30-63 (chapt. 2), 94-106 (section of chapt. 4)
   IN Articulate While Black: Barack Obama, Language, and Race in The U.S.
VIDEO CLIPS: Obama fist bump news coverage; Do you speak American?; Appalachian English.
   Recommended:
   Smitherman, Geneva. (2000) Introduction: From Ghetto Lady to Critical Linguist IN Talking that talk: language, culture, and education in

10. Language & Gender (November 25)
   * Exercise #4: Discourse analysis/Narrative paper. Due: November 25

Bonvillain, Language and Gender: English and English Speakers, Chapter 7.
Bonvillain, Cross-cultural studies of Language and Gender, Chapter 8.
VIDEO: Gender and communication: Male-Female differences in language and nonverbal behavior.
11. Language & Ideology in the Multilingual U.S.; Critical Discourse Analysis (December 2)

Bonvillain, Multilingual Nations, *Read only* pgs. 297-313 in Chapter 11.
Hinton, Leanne. (1994). “Language action in California” (Section 21), and “Rebuilding the Fire” (Section 22) (*Keeping the languages alive*), pgs. 221-247 IN Flutes of Fire: Essays on California Indian languages, Heyday Press.

VIDEO: Clips from Disney movies

Recommended:

VIDEOS: Clips from MTV’s Hip Hop Slanguistics, Examples of language revitalization Mexico

13. December 9 - Dr. Messing at a conference

December 16 – Additional office hours (Details TBA)

EXAM 2 (Covers second part of course): December 17, 2015, 1:30pm.
ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY
ANTH 380

I am aware that the University of Maryland- College Park has an academic integrity policy, and of the policy for Anthropology 380.

I will write on each assignment and exam the student honor pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination. http://shc.umd.edu/SHC/HonorPledgeInformation.aspx

I am aware of the class laptop policy.

Name: ____________________________________________

Last four digits of your Student ID number: ___________________

Date: ______________________