ENGL3366-001: Language in Society  
T/R, 3:30pm-4:45pm, CS111

Instructor  
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FC 262  
Office Hours: T/R 1-3pm; W 11am-12pm; or by appointment

Course Overview  
This course is a theoretical and practical introduction to sociolinguistics. In this course, we will investigate how social aspects motivate and structure language use at various levels (from phonetics to morphosyntax to discourse). Through course readings, class discussions, and hands-on data analysis, we will explore the structured nature of language variation across different groups (e.g. race, gender, age, socioeconomic status), and also at the level of individual (e.g. style, performance, speaker design), and how variation is related to language change over time. We will also cover topics about language in interactional and discoursal contexts (e.g. conversation, storytelling and narrative). Finally, we will consider the applications of sociolinguistics to various professional fields, including education, law, and medicine.

ENGL 3366 is a Liberal Arts course and aims to enhance an understanding of culture, rhetoric, and literature through the study of human language. By gaining a greater understanding of the systematic nature of language as well as the systematic variation in language, students will heighten their meta-linguistic awareness in ways that should extend to their general English studies.

Student Learning Outcomes  
(1) Demonstrate competency in conducting sociolinguistic research  
(2) Demonstrate knowledge of the field of sociolinguistics  
(3) Describe, analyze, and evaluate critically the relationship between language and social factors such as education, culture, and context  
(4) Develop effective written communication skills as it relates to course content

Readings  
• Additional readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Course Policy  
• Late work is not accepted – no exception.  
• Extensions will not be granted.  
• You are not allowed to use your cell phone during class. Doing so would not only be disrespectful but also would distract me and your classmates from concentrating. Your phone should be silenced and kept out of sight for the entire class time. If you absolutely need to check your phone for emergency (e.g. babysitter calling you), please do so outside the classroom. Failure to comply with this policy will result in your severely lowered participation grade.  
• The use of tablet or laptop is not allowed during class, unless otherwise noted for class purposes.
Students are expected to do the readings before each class meeting, and come prepared to talk.

Check your official university email regularly. I will consider the information delivered once I hit send. After that point, it is your responsibility to make sure you do not miss out on something.

Every written work that you submit or post on Blackboard should be free from any grammar or spelling errors. You are always expected to demonstrate your highest quality academic writing.

All written assignments are set up to be automatically checked by SafeAssign on Blackboard. Please review the Originality Report before submitting in order to avoid plagiarizing.

All assignments must follow APA style. The following references and websites provide helpful information on APA style:

- Websites:
  - [http://psychology.vanguard.edu/faculty/douglas-degelman/apa-style/](http://psychology.vanguard.edu/faculty/douglas-degelman/apa-style/)
  - [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

**Requirements and Assessments**

**Attendance**

- Attendance will be checked every class.
- Three late arrivals (arriving after 3:35pm) equal one absence. If you arrive after the attendance check, you must talk to me after class to make sure I change the absence to a late.
- Leaving early without making previous arrangements will be recorded as an absence for the entire class period.
- If you will be unable to attend class for some reason, please inform me well in advance of your absence.
- If you miss five class meetings, your grade goes down a letter (e.g. if you received an “B” in the class, but missed five classes, you will get a “C”). For each additional absence, I will deduct 2% from your final grade.
- Only excused absences or absences granted by the instructor (i.e. with a doctor’s note) will be accepted.
- You are responsible for any material covered and any homework assigned during your absence.

**Participation (100 points)**

- Your participation score will be assessed based on your engagement during in-class activities, in-class activity worksheets that are turned in at the end of the class, and timely Bb tasks assigned during the semester.
- Disrupting the class environment such as chatting, sleeping in class, or surfing the internet will result in loss of participation points as well as being marked absent for a given class session.

**Bb Reading Responses (5pts x 20 = 100 points)**

- Students will post responses to the assigned readings on Blackboard regularly, as marked in the syllabus. Responses are due on the date indicated in the syllabus by the start of class (time-stamped by
There are a total of 23 responses you are required to post, and the lowest three scores will be dropped. Each reading responses (RR) should be 200-300 words long (a little less than 1 page double-spaced), and should contain a minimal amount of summary (less than 30% of the entire response). The RR should contain your critical response to the reading(s), such as a) comparison or contrast between the reading and another reading or lecture from this or another class, b) drawing implications of the reading in any aspect of language and communication or to a related field of your interest, c) relating the reading to events in your own life, with specific examples to illustrate, and d) critiquing the methodology or analysis of the study. The grading scale of RR is 5pts (=meets expectations), 2.5pts (=below expectations), or 0 (=no submission or does not reflect the reading).

**Oral Article Presentation (100 points)**

- Each student will give one 15-minute presentation on a journal article or book chapter of their choice. The article should be an empirical study. Ideally, the article you present will relate to your research interests. You are free to discuss any article on any topic, provided that it deals with some aspect of sociolinguistics. Articles dealing with languages other than (American) English are also welcome. You will be able to find a number of suitable articles in the following journals:
  - American Speech
  - Annual Review of Anthropology
  - Discourse Studies
  - Journal of English Linguistics
  - Journal of Linguistics Anthropology
  - Journal of Sociolinguistics
  - Language and Communication
  - Language in Society
  - Language Variation and Change
  - Pragmatics

In your presentation, you should briefly summarize the article you have chosen (i.e. research questions, methods, findings, etc.). Since it is impossible to cover all aspects of the article in depth in 15 minutes, you should focus on the points which you find most compelling. Your presentation should include at least one question for class discussion. Please prepare a handout or Powerpoint slides to help structure the presentation.

**Assignment #1: Variation (100 points)**

- As a class, we will collaboratively carry out a project on some aspect of linguistic variation. This project will be undertaken from a quantitative sociolinguistic perspective. Early on in the semester, we will decide on a specific topic and a linguistic feature (i.e. variable) to investigate. Each student is required to submit a one-page report on this task. More information will be provided soon.

**Assignment #2: Discourse (100 points)**

- Each student will audio-record a naturally occurring conversation. The recording should be about 5-10 minutes. The recordings are due Thursday, March 19. The recordings must be converted to .wav format.
- Students will transcribe a segment of their recordings (3-4 minutes of conversation), and perform a discourse analysis on the segment, particularly focusing on one or two linguistic or conversational features (e.g. pronunciation, word choice, turn-taking, overlap, etc.).
• The analysis should be delivered in a short-paper (3-4 double-spaced pages, excluding the full transcript which should be attached to the paper), by Thursday, April 9. In this paper, you will a) identify the feature(s), b) provide background information on the segment and the conversation, and c) analyze three short excerpts that clearly illustrate the point you are trying to make. The analysis must be strictly grounded on your transcription.

Midterm (150 points)
• There will be a midterm exam in class (timed and closed-book) on Thursday, Mar 5. These exams assess your understanding of basic terms and topics covered in the readings, lectures, and discussions. They are designed to help you prepare for the final exam as well. Review sessions will be held prior to the exam.

Final paper (200 points)
• The final paper for this course is a well-developed research proposal of your own. For your final paper, you are to choose a topic that is covered in class (e.g. age, gender, race, education, etc.) and form one or two research questions within the chosen topic. Your research questions must be original; your questions must yet be unanswered in the scholarly world. Your research questions must be framed in a sociolinguistic way.
• The paper should read as a coherent text, with the following parts:
  1) Introduction (5 pages)
    a. an introduction of your topic
    b. critical summary and synthesis of at least five sources (apart from the class readings and also apart from the article you use for your article presentation) that directly address your research question(s)
    c. identification of the knowledge gap, left unaddressed by your five sources (= your research questions)
  2) Proposed methodology (1 – 1.5 page)
    a. Data collection (where, who, how)
    b. Data analysis (procedures and methods – justification of these methods)
  3) Hypothesized results (0.5 page)
  4) Foreseeable limitations in conducting the study (0.5 page)

• Your 5 sources must be academic; they must either be peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters.
• The final paper should be approximately 7-8 pages in length, excluding the references list. The paper must be double-spaced, 12-point font-sized, with 1-inch margins.
• Your final paper should also have a title, page numbers, and a list of references. A cover page is not needed.
• Every student must meet with me at least once during the research question formation process. A sign-up sheet will be circulated.
• Criteria for assessment will include the following:
  o Appropriately narrow topic with a well-defined research question
  o Quality of information gathered, sufficiency of sources
  o Clarity of writing and structure
  o Accuracy, substance, and depth of understanding of the topic investigated
  o Lack of misconceptions or glossing over of important distinctions you could be expected to know from the course
  o Evidence of critical thinking (insightfulness in interpreting the existing research)
  o Conclusions that go beyond summarizing
Proofreading (evidenced by lack of typo, grammatical errors, formatting errors, etc.)

**Final exam (150 points)**
- The final exam is scheduled during Week 17 (date and time to be updated). It will be a closed-book exam. The exam will cover topics read about and discussed throughout the semester. A review session will be held prior to the final exam. More information will be provided as the date approaches.

**Grading Summary**
- Participation: 100 points (10%)
- Bb Reading Responses (20): 100 points (5pts x 20) (10%)
- Oral Article Presentation: 100 points (10%)
- Assignment #1: Variation: 100 points (10%)
- Assignment #2: Discourse: 100 points (10%)
- Midterm: 150 points (15%)
- Final Exam: 150 points (15%)
- Final Paper: 200 points (20%)

**TOTAL:** 1000 points (100%)

**Grading Scale (in points)**

A: 900-1000
B: 800-890
C: 700-790
D: 600-690
F: below 600

**Disabilities Accommodations**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Academic Advising**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Dropping a Class**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the
best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. **Friday, April 10, 2020** is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Grade Appeals**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*. These documents are accessible online at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf).

For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html).

**Classroom/professional behavior**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct.

Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a grade of 0 and may result in a failing grade for the course.

- **Definition of plagiarism**: In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:
  - Using the work of another as your own,
  - Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
  - Using resource materials without correct documentation,
  - Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
  - Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>W</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment / Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/21 T</td>
<td>What is ‘language’?</td>
<td>VH Ch2 (p.11-16)</td>
<td>Article Presentation Sign-up</td>
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<td>1/23 R</td>
<td>What is ‘society’?</td>
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<td>RR2</td>
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<td>2/4 T</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2/6 R</td>
<td>Social status</td>
<td>Labov (1972)</td>
<td>RR4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2/11 T</td>
<td>Social status</td>
<td>VH Ch4</td>
<td>RR5</td>
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<td>2/13 R</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>VH Ch5</td>
<td>RR6</td>
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<td>2/18 T</td>
<td>Time</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2/20 R</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>VH Ch6</td>
<td>RR8</td>
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<td>Rampton 1995</td>
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<td>VH Ch10</td>
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<td>Assignment #2 Info</td>
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<td>3/3 T</td>
<td>Review for Midterm</td>
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<td>3/5 R</td>
<td>MIDTERM EXAM</td>
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<td>3/10-12</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3/17 T</td>
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<td>VH Ch9 (p.134-137)</td>
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<td>Schegloff &amp; Sacks (1982)</td>
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<td>3/19 R</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>VH Ch7</td>
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<td>3/26 R</td>
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<td>VH Ch14</td>
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<td>Language and the law</td>
<td>Shuy 2007</td>
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<td>5/12~14 T</td>
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