Attention!

This is a representative syllabus.

The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

Linguistics 3603: Language Across Cultures

Syllabus

Instructor: **Email:**
Class Time: T/R, 12:45-2:05pm   **Office:**
Class Location: **Office Hours:**
Credit Hours: 3 credits

Course Coordinator: Prof. Hope Dawson, dawson.165@osu.edu, 114 Oxley Hall, 614-292-5420

Course Basics

Course Description

This course examines interactions between human languages and the cultural environments in which those languages are spoken. Language is a fundamental aspect of the human experience and cultural expression. The ways in which languages are similar and different across cultures thus offer insight into ways in which humans engage with the world around them. Students will explore the complexity of language-culture interactions by comparing different societies, with a view to cross-cultural comparison. Topics include: (1) how language differences among members of a society reflect differences in social/cultural beliefs and values, (2) the role that language plays in creating cultural change, and (3) the relationship between language and such aspects of culture as kinship relations, folk classifications of nature, and representation of the world. Investigating these topics from a cross-cultural perspective will allow the class to compare and analyze how language is used to represent cultural environments, how cultural environments influence language, and the complexity of these human-environment interactions.

Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, students should be able to…
1. … describe interactions between language as an aspect of human behavior and cultural environments, with a focus on cross-cultural comparison;
2. … appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity through exposure to a wide variety of languages and cultures;
3. … explore the role of cultural beliefs in shaping child language socialization and other community language practices;
4. … examine language as a way in which humans represent cultural environments;
5. … apply and critique theories from the anthropological and linguistic sciences about language-culture interactions;
6. … collect and analyze interview data in a hands-on way via a language consultant project.

Prerequisites: None

Course materials

The following book is required:

- Ahearn, L. M. (2021). *Living language: An introduction to linguistic anthropology, 3rd edition*. John Wiley & Sons. (print or ebook is fine)

This book is available through the OSU Bookstore (Barnes & Noble, 15th Ave. & High St.). They will price match, if you find a better deal somewhere else; see their website for details. Paperback list price: $47.95, but you should be able to find less expensive used copies.

In this course we will also read published research articles. These will be available through Carmen (https://carmen.osu.edu/).

General Education Information

Legacy General Education (GEL) Course Information

This course satisfies the *Social Sciences: Individuals and Groups* and *Diversity: Global Studies* GEL requirements.

GE Social Sciences: Individuals and Groups

Goals: Students understand the systematic study of human behavior and cognition; the structure of human societies, cultures, and institutions; and the processes by which individuals, groups, and societies interact, communicate, and use human, natural, and economic resources.

Expected learning outcomes:

1. Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of individuals and groups.

2. Students understand the behavior of individuals, differences and similarities in social and cultural contexts of human existence, and the processes by which groups function.

3. Students comprehend and assess individual and group values and their importance in social problem solving and policymaking.

The course will meet these learning outcomes by exploring the relationship between different cultures and the grammatical and social structure of their languages. You will learn about theories and methods of social science inquiry – especially, anthropological linguistic (ethnographic) methods – by reading/discussing/journaling about published research articles, through in-class activities that give you a chance to practice the ethnographic methods that you will employ in the consultant project, and through original data collection with a consultant who grew up in a culture outside the U.S. The class will also discuss questions about culture-language connections by looking at questions having to do with language in educational policy, and monolingual vs. multilingual societal policies.

GE Diversity: Global Studies

Goals: Students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens.

Expected learning outcomes:

1. Students understand some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world's nations, peoples, and cultures outside the U.S.

2. Students recognize the role of national and international diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values as global citizens.

This course will meet these learning outcomes by exploring the use of language in a wide variety of cultural environments around the world through readings, discussions, training in ethnographic methods, and original data collection with a consultant who grew up in a culture outside of the United States.

New General Education (GEN) Course Information

This course can be used to partially fulfill the *Themes: Lived Environments* GEN category.

Goals

1. Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are, e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.

2. Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

3. Successful students will explore a range of perspectives on the interactions and impacts between humans and one or more types of environment (e.g. agricultural, built, cultural, economic, intellectual, natural) in which humans live.

4. Successful students will analyze a variety of perceptions, representations and/or discourses about environments and humans within them.

Expected Learning Outcomes. Students will…

1.1. Engage in critical and logical thinking.

1.2. Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or ideas within this theme.

2.1. Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences.

2.2. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

3.1. Engage with the complexity and uncertainty of human-environment interactions.

3.2. Describe examples of human interaction with an impact on environmental change and transformation over time and across space.

4.1. Analyze how humans' interactions with their environments shape or have shaped attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors.

4.2. Describe how humans perceive and represent the environments with which they interact.

4.3. Analyze and critique conventions, theories, and ideologies that influence discourses around environments.

This course will meet these learning outcomes by examining relationships between language (as a fundamental aspect of the human experience) and the cultural environments in which languages are spoken. The ways in which languages are similar and different across cultures offer insight into ways in which humans engage with the world around them.

- Through readings, in-class discussions, discussion board participation, journaling, and a language consultant project in which you will collect original data, you will engage in critical thinking about language-culture relationships.

- Most of the assigned readings in this course are published original research articles, encouraging you to engage with the topics from an analytic perspective and at an advanced level. Class time will often be spent discussing these readings, including synthesizing different approaches.

- Journaling assignments are designed to encourage you to reflect on how the course material connects to your pre-existing knowledge.

- The consultant project (which you will work on throughout the semester) will challenge you to engage not only with the complexity of language-culture interactions, but also how these interactions can vary over space (e.g. from one culture to another), change over time, and reflect/shape humans' broader attitudes, beliefs, and values. Many students find that the consultant project also leads them to reflect on their *own* attitudes, beliefs, and values about language in new ways.

Ultimately, investigating language-culture interactions from a cross-cultural perspective will allow you to compare and analyze how language is used to represent cultural environments, how cultural environments influence language, and the complexity of these human-environment interactions.

Course Technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.
- Self-Service and Chat support: http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice
- Phone: 614-688-HELP (4357)
- Email: 8help@osu.edu
- TDD: 614-688-8743

Technology skills necessary for this specific course
- Using Carmen discussion boards
- Recording a slide presentation with audio narration
- Using Zoom, including making recordings

Necessary equipment
- Computer or tablet: must be able to run Zoom and access Carmen

Necessary software
- [Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus](https://) All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus through Microsoft's Student Advantage program. Each student can install Office on five PCs or Macs, five tablets (Windows, iPad® and Android™) and five phones.
- Students are able to access Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and other programs, depending on platform. Users will also receive 1 TB of OneDrive for Business storage.
- Office 365 is installed within your BuckeyeMail account. Full instructions for downloading and installation can be found https://ocio.osu.edu/kb04733.

Grading

Possible Points & Grading Scale
As can be seen in the chart below, I organize grades in an additive fashion. You need to earn a minimum of 465 points to get an A in this class. If you look below, you will notice that, if you sum up the points that can be earned by the various kinds of assignments, it is more than 500 pts. This gives you some flexibility about attendance, discussion board participation, and journals. For example, if you get all of your attendance and discussion board points, you could skip two journals. On the other hand, if you've missed some attendance/discussion board points, you could do another journal to get some more points. Please note that the language consultant assignments and final project are NOT optional because they are group assignments. My goal is to get you to demonstrate to me that you have mastered the material in the course. Earning points is how you do that.

Component	Component Points Available		Course Letter Grade	Course Point Total
Attendance/Participation	60		A	465 – 500+
Discussion Board Participation (12 x 5)	60		A-	450 – 464
Journals (6 x 20)	120		B+	435 – 449
Language Consultant Assignments (4 x 50)	200		B	415 – 434
Language Consultant Final Project	100		B-	400 – 414
			C+	385 – 399
			C	365 – 384
			C-	350 – 364
			D+	335 – 349
			D	300 – 335
			E	0 – 299

Assignments

Attendance & Participation: Being present and prepared for class is very important as we will be applying concepts from the readings to in-class discussions and group activities. This part of your grade will be based on both being present and a variety of different small assignments throughout the semester. These assignments will not be announced in advance, but rather will be made available to you during classtime on arbitrary days.

Discussion Board Participation: You are expected to contribute to the relevant Carmen discussion board before class once a week, based on that day's reading(s) (or video where relevant). If your last name begins with A-L, you are assigned to contribute to the discussion board on Tuesdays by classtime. If your last name begins with M-Z, you are assigned to contribute to the discussion board on Thursdays by classtime. If you post after 12:45pm on your assigned day, you will not receive credit. Your participation can take the form of a new discussion question or comment, or a thoughtful response to an existing question/comment. This is your opportunity to help decide the direction of class discussions, so your goal should be to identify important issues–especially things that are confusing. You may ask purely comprehension questions (e.g. definitions of words) via the discussion boards as well, but this does not count as discussion board participation. However, answering someone else's comprehension question does count as participation. The goal is to encourage you to help each other.

Journals: There will be six journal assignments covering the course material (readings, videos, lectures, discussions). See the Course Schedule for dates. The journals will be a way for me to assess whether you are understanding the material we have covered. The journal prompts are also designed to encourage you to reflect on how the course material connects to knowledge you bring from previous courses or other sources.

Language Consultant Project: This project is a centerpiece of the course. You will work in a group of three. You will establish a relationship with someone from a non-English speaking country, and who is not a native English speaker (nor a native speaker of your language, if your native language is not English). This person will serve as your 'language consultant' throughout the semester. This project is designed to give you an opportunity to investigate a different language, and its relationship to the culture in which it is embedded, in a hands-on, exploratory way. You will complete four assignments and a final project that together form the language consultant project. See the Course Schedule for deadlines. The four assignments are on specific topics. For the final project, you will also give a presentation and write a final paper for which you have free choice of topic (within the scope of the course). You will turn in a topic for your final presentation/paper in advance. There is a separate assignment sheet for the language consultant project that contains instructions for the individual assignments, in addition to general guidance and formatting requirements.

Turning in Assignments
All assignments must be typed and must be submitted by the beginning of class on the day the assignment is due. Everything must be submitted electronically, preferably as a pdf, through Carmen. DO NOT email me your work.

Late Assignments
You get three grace days that you can use at any time over the course of the semester. You can use

each day on a different assignment or put all three together for one assignment. The weekend counts as one day. You may use all three days for your final paper. In order to use your grace days, you must email me by the time your assignment is due to let me know a) that you are turning your assignment in late and b) how many grace days you are using. Late discussion board participation will not be accepted.

Feedback and Response Time
I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. These are estimates, not firm promises. (Remember that you can call 614-688-HELP at any time if you have a technical problem.)

Grading and feedback: For large weekly assignments, you can generally expect feedback within 7 days.
E-mail: I will reply to e-mails within 24 hours on school days (M-F).
Discussion board: I will check and reply to messages in the discussion boards every 24 hours on school days.

Discussion and Communication Guidelines
The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.
- Writing style: Discussion board writing can be informal in style, but you should do your best to write in a way that communicates your ideas clearly. To this end, please reread your posts before submitting them and consider whether they will be clear to me and your classmates.
- Tone and civility: A major component of this course is learning about new cultures and linguistic phenomena. Some of the topics of discussion may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable, but it is important that we maintain an open-minded, respectful, and encouraging atmosphere in class. Please do not talk over one another or interrupt whoever is speaking. Please refrain from doing other things on your device during class time, as this will decrease the quality of the class for everyone.
- Citing your sources: When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. (For the textbook or other course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.)
- Backing up your work: Consider composing your academic posts in a word processor, where you can save your work, and then copying into the Carmen discussion.

Other Course Policies

Academic Integrity Policy
- Journals: You must complete your journals yourself, without discussing with your classmates. All writing must be your own. The journals will cover topics that we have already discussed in class, so be sure to ask questions in class and discuss with your classmates BEFORE beginning to write your assignment.
- Language consultant written assignments and final paper: These assignments will be group work, so you will collaborate with your group to complete and write the assignments. No one outside your group should be involved in writing up these assignments, but you may discuss your responses with classmates from outside your

group. In formal assignments, you should follow APA style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources.

- Reusing past work: In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you've explored in previous courses, please discuss the situation with me.
- Falsifying research or results: All research you will conduct in this course is intended to be a learning experience; you should never feel tempted to make your results or your library research look more successful than it was. Scientific research sometimes fails to produce the expected results – this is a normal part of science!

Academic Misconduct Statement

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/.

Copyright Disclaimer
The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Statement on Title IX
Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleix@osu.edu.

Accessibility Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: **slds@osu.edu**; 614-292-3307;

slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue**.**

Accessibility of Course Technology

This online course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools (e.g. streaming audio and video). If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.

Your Mental Health!

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Diversity

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Course Schedule

Readings are to be completed for the day they are listed. Assignments are due on the day listed before class. Discussion board posts are due every Tuesday before class (last names A-L) and every Thursday before class (last names M-Z).

The following schedule may change. I will try to give one week's notice of any deviations. If you are confused about what is due when, check the most recent version of the course schedule on Carmen first. If you are still unsure, please ask.

Ahearn = *Living Languages*. All other readings/videos are available through Carmen.

Week	Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
		**Module 1: Intro to Language in/across Cultural Environments**		
Week 1	Day 1 (T)	Course introduction		
	Day 2 (R)	Linguistic anthropology: The study of how language interacts with cultural environments	- Syllabus - Ahearn Ch. 1 [31 pp.] - Watch *Rising Voices* [56 min.]	
Week 2	Day 3 (T)	Knowing a language is more than knowing grammar: What it means to be a culturally competent speaker of a language	- Hymes (1972) [25 pp.]	
	Day 4 (R)	Ethnographic methods: Tools for investigating language-culture connections	- Ahearn Ch. 3 [19 pp.] - *Language Files* 11.5 [3 pp.] - Wolfram (1998) [9 pp.]	Confirm language consultant
		**Module 2: Language, Cultural Environments, and Representations of the World**		
Week 3	Day 5 (T)	Language, culture, and representations of the world: Intro to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis	- Ahearn Ch. 5 [30 pp.]	Journal #1
	Day 6 (R)	Color terms and color concepts across cultures: Do you see more (or different) colors if you have more (or different) color words?	- *Language Files* 11.2 [4 pp.] - Wierzbicka (2005) [28 pp.]	
Week 4	Day 7 (T)	Does language shape how people represent the world around them? Linguistic representations of number and events	- Colapinto (2007) [20 pp.] - Goldin-Meadow et al. (2008) [6 pp.]	
	Day 8 (R)	Does language shape how people represent the world around them? Linguistic representations of spatial reasoning	- Li et al. (2011) [21 pp.]	Language Consultant Assignment #1

Week	Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
Module 3: The Relationship between Language and Cultural Continuity or Transformation				
Week 5	Day 9 (T)	Language choice in multilingual communities: Language as a community resource that reflects (and shapes) cultural change	- Gal (1984) [13 pp.]	Journal #2
	Day 10 (R)	Language and communities of practice	- Ahearn Ch. 6 [30 pp.]	
Week 6	Day 11 (T)	Sign language communities of practice	- Ahearn Ch. 2 [19 pp.] - Groce (1980) [7 pp.]	
	Day 12 (R)	Indexicality: How speakers use language to take stances and construct personas, and how this differs from one environment to another	- Ahearn Ch. 9 [25 pp.] - *Language Files* 11.1.4 [2 pp.] - Ochs (1993) [20 pp.]	Language Consultant Assignment #2
Module 4: Language Socialization Across Cultural Environments				
Week 7	xxx (T)	**NO CLASS—INSTRUCTIONAL BREAK 1**		
	Day 13 (R)	Intro to language socialization	- Ahearn Ch. 4 [19 pp.]	Journal #3
Week 8	Day 14 (T)	Intro to language socialization	- Schieffelin & Ochs (1986) [29 pp.]	
	Day 15 (R)	Language socialization and communicative competence across cultures	- Ochs (1982) [28 pp.]	
Week 9	Day 16 (T)	Language socialization and educational policy: Language-culture connections and ideologies in educational settings	- Ahearn Ch. 8 [17 pp.]	Language Consultant Assignment #3
	Day 17 (R)	Language emergence: How new sign languages develop, and the environmental conditions that facilitate them	- Senghas et al. (2005) [20 pp.]	
Module 5: Multilingualism in a Global Context: Attitudes, Values, Behaviors				
Week 10	Day 18 (T)	Multilingualism is the norm around the world (just not in most parts of the U.S.) Cultural attitudes about multilingualism	- Ahearn Ch. 7 [18 pp.] - Mekacha (1993) [14 pp.]	Journal #4 Submit topic for final paper
	Day 19 (R)	How globalization has created new cultural attitudes (positive and negative) around multilingualism	- McIntosh (2010) [17 pp.]	

Week	Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
Week 11	Day 20 (T)	Language endangerment and language death: How cultural values lead to loss of languages	- Ahearn Ch. 12 [19 pp.] - Dorian (1986) [12 pp.]	Language Consultant Assignment #4
	Day 21 (R)	Language maintenance: How cultural values lead to maintenance of languages	- Lipembe (2016) [11 pp.]	
Week 12	Day 22 (T)	Language revitalization: How cultural values lead to renewal of languages	- Dorian (1994) [26 pp.] - Williams (2014) [31 pp.]	
	xxx (R)	**NO CLASS—INSTRUCTIONAL BREAK 2**		
Module 6: Politeness, Impoliteness, Swearing, and Taboo Language Across Cultures				
Week 13	Day 23 (T)	The linguistics of politeness	- Yule (1996) excerpts [10 pp.] - Hoza (2008) [25 pp.]	Journal #5
	Day 24 (R)	Politeness across cultures: How language reflects cultural beliefs and attitudes about politeness	- Keenan (Ochs) (1996) [17 pp.]	
Week 14	Day 25 (T)	Taboo language across cultures: How language reflects cultural beliefs about impoliteness	- Mirus, Fisher, & Napoli (2012) [17 pp.] - Treis (2005) [29 pp.]	
	Day 26 (R)	Language consultant project presentations		Journal #6
Week 15	Day 27 (T)	Language consultant project presentations		
	Day 28 (R)	Language consultant project presentations		
Final paper is due on xxx date at 2:00pm				

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