Ling135: Introduction to Sociolinguistics

Fall 2023

Course Description

This course is an introduction to sociolinguistics: the study of the relationship between language and society. We will examine the role of language in human social interactions and how language variation is tied to identity and context. In particular, we will consider language as it relates to social status, age, gender, ethnicity, and location, as well as how language is used in context in conversation, in the media, and beyond. At the end of this course, students will be more aware of how language is used across different contexts in their own daily lives. They will also be able to critically discuss the reasons for language variation and to understand and argue the sociolinguistic perspective on language attitudes.

Time and Place

Lecture: 2-3c
                Tuesdays & Thursdays
                10:10am-11:55pm
                Weitz 230

Professor

Dr. Morgan Rood (call me Morgan!)
Email: mrood@carleton.edu (preferred method of contact)
Student Hours: Thursdays 3:15-4:30pm, Willis 404
                      By appointment via Zoom (link to my Zoom room)
                      Make an appointment with me here

Course Schedule

The content of this course is not set in stone. Each week there will be a theme and required reading, as well as a number of additional articles that are available for student presentation/article reviews/reflections. There are far more articles here then we have time for, so we will adjust as the term progresses. I will update the course schedule as we go!

Bolded articles are available for student presentations. [You can sign up for article presentations here.](#)

Week	Date	Topic	Required Reading	Additional Articles
1	9/12	Intro to Socio		
	9/14		IS[1] Chapters 1 & 2	
2	9/19	Language Variation	IS Chapter 6	
	9/21		**Hillbillies, hicks, and Southern belles: the language rebels. (Lippi-Green 2012a)** **The California vowel shift and gay identity (Podesva 2011)** **A sociophonetic account of gradient /z/ devoicing among Chicanx high schoolers (Holliday & Brogan 2022)**	
Article reviews and reflections for the week's readings are due at 12 pm Friday, 9/22. Short paper #1 (Linguistic Autobiography) is also due at 12pm on Friday, 9/22.				

---

[1] IS = An Introduction to Sociolinguistics, 7th edition (Wardhaugh and Fuller). Link to full text on Moodle.

| 3 | 9/26 | Variation and Language Change | IS Chapter 7

The Social Stratification of (r) in New York City Department Stores. (Labov 1972) | |
| | 9/28 | | **(r) we there yet? The change to rhoticity in New York City English (Becker 2014)**

"(r) You Saying Yes to the Dress?" Rhoticity on a Bridal Reality Television Show (Eberhardt & Downs 2015). | |

Article reviews and reflections for the week's readings are due at 12 pm Friday, 9/29.

| 4 | 10/3 | More Variation; Sociolx of Gender and Sexuality | IS Chapter 8

Adolescent social structure and the spread of linguistic change (Eckert 1988)

Girlz II women: Age‑grading, language change and stylistic variation (Rickford & Price 2013) | Transgender language reform: Some challenges and strategies for promoting trans-affirming, gender-inclusive language (Zimman 2017b) |

			IS Chapter 12	
	10/5 (no class)		**Dude (Kiesling 2004)** **Variability in /s/ among transgender speakers: Evidence for a socially grounded account of gender and sibilants (Zimman 2017a)**	

Article reviews and reflections for the week's readings are due at 12 pm Friday, 10/6. (At least one) video essay is also due at 12pm on Friday, 10/6.

	10/10 (remote class)		**Language and Woman's Place (Lakoff 1973)**	
5	10/12	More gender; Sociolx of Ethnicity	Language and the construction of ethnic identity. (Fought 2006) **Language, race, and white public space. (Hill 1998)** **Linguistic Profiling (Baugh 2003)**	And the Injun goes "How!": Representations of American Indian English in white public space. (Meek 2006)

Article reviews and reflections for the week's readings are due at 12 pm Friday, 10/13. Short paper #2 (Opinion Article Response) is also due at 12pm on Friday, 10/13.

| 6 | 10/17 | Sociolx of Ethnicity; A closer look at AAE | African American English (Spears 2014)

I'd better schedule an MRI (Fought 2020)

'First things first, I'm the realest': Linguistic appropriation, white privilege, and the hip‑hop persona of Iggy Azalea (Eberhardt & Freeman 2015) | |
| | 10/19 | | **Language and linguistics on trial: Hearing Rachel Jeantel (and other vernacular speakers) in the courtroom and beyond (Rickford & King 2016)**

Testifying while black: An experimental study of court reporter accuracy in transcription of African American English. (Jones et al 2019) | |

Article reviews and reflections for the week's readings are due at 12 pm Friday, 10/20.

7	10/24	Pragmatics	IS Chapter 10 **Compliments revisited: Contemporary compliments and gender. (Rees-Miller 2011)**	
	10/26		**Answers and evasions (Clayman 2001)** **Swearing, identity and power in professional interaction (Debray 2023)**	

Article reviews and reflections for the week's readings are due at 12 pm Friday, 10/27.

8	10/31	Discourse Analysis	IS Chapter 11	The whiteness of nerds: Superstandard English and racial markedness. (Bucholtz 2001) Constructing ethnicity in interaction (Schilling-Estes 2004) Put down that paper and talk to me! (Tannen 1991)
	11/2		**Linguistic and ethnic media stereotypes in everyday talk: Humor and identity construction among friends (Sierra 2019)**	

			Because Internet, excerpts (McCulloch 2019)	
			Article reviews and reflections for the week's readings are due at 12 pm Friday, 11/3. Short paper #3 (Analyzing (your) Conversation) is also due at 12pm on Friday, 11/3.	
9	11/7	Language, and Media	Data workshop! **Teaching Children how to Discriminate: What we learn from the Big Bad Wolf. (Lippi-Green 2012b)** **Bias in Automatic Speech Recognition: The Case of African American Language (Martin & Wright 2022)**	
	11/9		Final Presentations [Signups for final presentations](#)	
			Article reviews and reflections for the week's readings are due at 12 pm Friday, 11/10.	
10	11/14		Final Presentations	
				Final Paper Due on Saturday, November 18th at 6pm

Assessment

Your grade in this course will not be determined by a traditional grading system. Instead, you will have the option to choose assignments based on your interests and strengths. Your successful completion of each assignment will accumulate points that will eventually determine your final grade. The assignments available to you are article reviews, reflections, short papers, and article presentations. Everyone will complete a final project as well. The assignments are worth the following:

Assessment	Point for each	Total possible
Article Review (up to 5)	10	50
Video Essay (up to 2)	10	20
Reflection (up to 5)	5	25
Article Presentation (up to 2)	20	40
Short paper (up to 3)	15	45
Final Project	50	50
Total Available:		230

The 230 points available to you would require far more work than is expected for an introductory class. I do not want or expect you to acquire 220 points! Instead you should use this as an opportunity to focus on the topics and assignments you find most interesting. Be strategic in planning your time - your success in this course depends on how you design your workload. **You will need to accumulate at least 130 points to earn an A in this class.** The grading scale is as follows:

130 and above	A
125-129	A-
120-124	B+
115-119	B
110-114	B-

105-109	C+
100-104	C
95-99	C-
90-94	D
Below 90	F

You will receive full credit for an assignment if it meets expectations. If your work does not meet expectations, you will have one week from when you receive my feedback to revise and resubmit. Otherwise you will not earn any points. **There are no partial credits.**

The two exceptions to this "all or nothing" system are article presentations and final projects. I will grade those traditionally using a rubric that will be made available to you. **You must receive a passing grade on at least one article presentation <u>and</u> the final project in order to pass the class.**

This system means there are multiple avenues to earning an A in this course. Here are two examples:

> Student A submits:
> | | | |
> |---|---|---|
> | 3 article reviews: | 30 | |
> | 3 reflections: | 15 | |
> | 1 presentation: | 18 | |
> | 2 short papers | 30 | |
> | 1 final project | 40 | |
> | total: | 133 | = A |
>
> Student B submits:
> | | | |
> |---|---|---|
> | 0 article reviews: | 0 | |
> | 4 reflections: | 20 | |
> | 2 presentations | 40 | |
> | 3 short papers | 45 | |
> | 1 final project | 32 | |
> | total: | 137 | =A |

Both Student A and Student B earned an A in this course. Note that both Student A and Student B did not receive maximum points for their presentations and/or final projects because these are graded on a traditional rubric.

You will be responsible for determining what and when you do your work for the course. I advise you to plan ahead based on your schedule for the term and your academic strengths and interests.

All assignments will have due dates and I will not accept late work under any circumstances. See policy on late work here.

Reflections (5 points each):

This is the most open-ended assignment in our course. In this short reflection, you will continue the thread of a discussion/activity/reading from the week with an additional insight or example either from your own experience or outside source. It is also appropriate to include media (twitter posts, newspaper articles, movie clips, etc) if you would like. Be sure to explicitly tie this paper to something specific from our class or a class reading.

You should aim for 1-2 pages, double spaced, with reasonable fonts and margins. This is an informal paper, so you may choose to write in the style/register/dialect of your choice.

Article Reviews (10 points each):

This is a 2-3 page summary and critique of any article listed in the Course Schedule, regardless of whether we read or discuss it in class that week. You may not submit an article review for the same article you present in class.

You can find more detailed information about the article reviews here.

Article Presentations (up to 20 points each):

You, in a group with one or two additional classmates, will present an article we read in class and lead class discussion. Your presentation should include a 5-10 minute summary of the reading followed by a 15-20 minute guided discussion or other thoughtful enrichment activity. This is graded on a traditional rubric. Signups for article presentations are here.

You can find more detailed information about your presentations here. (Rubric here)

Short Papers (15 points each):

Throughout the semester you will have an opportunity to write three short papers (~3-5 pages). Each will require a different style of writing. We will discuss these assignments in more detail throughout the term. Due dates for these papers are on the Course Schedule and repeated below for convenience:

Short Paper	Due Date
Linguistic Autobiography	Friday, 9/22 at 12pm
Opinion Article Response	Friday, 10/13 at 12pm
Analyzing (your) Conversation	Friday, 11/3 at 12pm

Final Project (up to 50 points):

In lieu of a final exam, your final project will be a small scale sociolinguistics study. This project will be done in pairs. The project begins with drafting a research question with your partner based on some topic we have covered in class and finding academic scholarship that informs either your research question or potential methodology (or both!).

The second component of this project will be your data collection. We will discuss this in more detail later in the term.

The third component will be an in-class presentation on the last two days of class during which you will share your research with your classmates. The final component is a 7-10 page paper. You can find more details about the final project here.

The final paper must be **submitted electronically through Moodle as a PDF by Saturday, November 18th at 6pm.**

Late Assignment Policy:

All assignments are due on the date and time indicated in the Course Schedule and on Moodle. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** You have flexibility in this course to determine which assignments you will complete, but you have no flexibility in their due dates.

For any assignment that does not meet expectations, you will have an opportunity to revise and resubmit your work. You will have one week to resubmit once I have notified you that the assignment has not earned credit. The clock will start on this revising period once I publish my comments on Moodle. **Make sure to have your Moodle notifications on - I will provide feedback on all assignments!**

For extenuating circumstances that impact your ability to meet deadlines or participate in class activities, you are responsible for alerting me as soon as possible. Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances.

Readings

We will be reading quite a few chapters from the following textbook, which is fortunately available full text at the library:

Wardhaugh, R., & Fuller, J. (2014). An Introduction to Sociolinguistics. 7th edition.

There will be additional required readings, including the articles and chapters available for student presentations. This is a nonexhaustive list:

Baugh, J. (2005). Linguistic profiling. In *Black linguistics* (pp. 167-180). Routledge.
Becker, K. (2014). (r) we there yet? The change to rhoticity in New York City English. *Language Variation and Change*, *26*(2), 141-168.
Bucholtz, M. (2001). The whiteness of nerds: Superstandard English and racial markedness. *Journal of linguistic anthropology*, *11*(1), 84-100.
Clarke, I., & Grieve, J. (2019). Stylistic variation on the Donald Trump Twitter account: A linguistic analysis of tweets posted between 2009 and 2018. *PloS one, 14*(9), e0222062.
Clayman, S. E. (2001). Answers and evasions. *Language in society*, *30*(3), 403-442.
Debray, C. (2023). Swearing, identity and power in professional interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *215*, 145-158.

Dubois, S., & Horvath, B. (1999). When the music changes, you change too: Gender and language change in Cajun English. *Language Variation and Change*, 11(3), 287-313.

Eberhardt, M., & Downs, C. (2015). "(r) You Saying Yes to the Dress?" Rhoticity on a Bridal Reality Television Show. *Journal of English Linguistics*, *43*(2), 118-142.

Eberhardt, M., & Freeman, K. (2015). 'First things first, I'm the realest': Linguistic appropriation, white privilege, and the hip-hop persona of Iggy Azalea. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *19*(3), 303-327.

Eckert, P. (1988). Adolescent social structure and the spread of linguistic change. *Language in society*, *17*(2), 183-207.

Fought, C. (2020). I'd better schedule an MRI. In Blake, Renée, Buchstaller, Isabelle & Rickford, John R., eds. *The Routledge companion to the work of John R. Rickford*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Fought, C. (2006). Language and the construction of ethnic identity. *Language and ethnicity*. Cambridge University Press.

Hill, J. H. (1998). Language, race, and white public space. *American anthropologist*, *100*(3), 680-689.

Holliday, N., & Brogan, F. D. (2022). A sociophonetic account of gradient /z/ devoicing among Chicanx high schoolers. *Language Variation and Change*, *34*(2), 165-182.

Jones, T., Kalbfeld, J. R., Hancock, R., & Clark, R. (2019). Testifying while black: An experimental study of court reporter accuracy in transcription of African American English. *Language*, *95*(2), e216-e252.

Kiesling, S. F. (2004). Dude. *American speech*, 79(3), 281-305.

Labov, W. (1972). The Social Stratification of (r) in New York City Department Stores. In *Sociolinguistic Patterns* (pp 43-54). University of Pennsylvania Press.

Lakoff, R. (1973). Language and woman's place. *Language in society*, *2*(1), 45-79.

Lippi-Green, R. (2012)a. Hillbillies, hicks, and Southern belles: the language rebels. In *English with an accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States* (pp 214-234). Routledge.

Lippi-Green, R. (2012)b. Teaching Children how to Discriminate: What we learn from the Big Bad Wolf. In *English with an accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States* (pp 101-129). Routledge.

Martin, J. L., & Wright, K. E. (2022). Bias in Automatic Speech Recognition: The Case of African American Language. *Applied Linguistics*, amac066.

McCulloch, G. (2019). Because internet: Understanding the new rules of language. Riverhead Books.

Meek, B. A. (2006). And the Injun goes "How!": Representations of American Indian English in white public space. *Language in Society*, *35*(1), 93-128.

Podesva, R. J. (2011). The California vowel shift and gay identity. *American speech*, *86*(1), 32-51.

Rees-Miller, J. (2011). Compliments revisited: Contemporary compliments and gender. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *43*(11), 2673-2688.

Rickford, J. R., & King, S. (2016). Language and linguistics on trial: Hearing Rachel Jeantel (and other vernacular speakers) in the courtroom and beyond. Language, 92(4), 948-988.

Rickford, J., & Price, M. (2013). Girlz II women: Age-grading, language change and stylistic variation. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *17*(2), 143-179.

Schilling-Estes, N. (2004). Constructing ethnicity in interaction. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *8*(2), 163-195.

Sierra, S. (2019). Linguistic and ethnic media stereotypes in everyday talk: Humor and identity construction among friends. Journal of Pragmatics, 152, 186-199.

Spears, A. K. (2014). African American English. In *Languages and Dialects in the US* (pp. 117-130). Routledge.

Tannen, D. (1991). *You just don't understand : Women and men in conversation* (1st Ballantine Books ed.). New York: Ballantine.

Zimman, L. (2017a). Variability in/s/among transgender speakers: Evidence for a sociallygrounded account of gender and sibilants. *Linguistics*, *55*(5), 993-1019.

Zimman, L. (2017)b. Transgender language reform: Some challenges and strategies for promoting trans-affirming, gender-inclusive language. *Journal of Language and Discrimination*, 1(1), 83-104.

All required reading will be available on Moodle

Name/Pronouns

I will do my best to address you by a preferred name or gender pronoun that you have identified. Please advise me of this preference early so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

My pronouns are she/her/hers.

Class Policies

AI Generative Tools

ChatGPT, Google Bard, and other AI tools can be useful learning tools if they are being used as exactly that, an aid for you to learn, and not as a replacement for your own work, in which case they will detract from your skill advancement and, without proper citation, amount to plagiarism. AI tools are not always correct or able to do the work in a way that

fits our course, but even if they were, your brain and body won't learn the same way they would when you are not using AI tools. College is a time for you to challenge yourself and exit with improved skills and knowledge. AI tools rely on human brains, so use your human brain in a way that can improve AI tools, and not the other way around. I am okay with you using AI tools to generate ideas if you feel stuck. Any ideas generated by an AI program must be cited like any other reference material. From then on out, I expect all work to be your own.[2]

Academic Honesty

It is assumed that a student is the author of all course work (quizzes, problem sets, online contributions, tests, papers, lab work, etc.) that [they] submit, whether for a grade or not, and that the work has not been submitted for credit in another class without the instructor's permission. Images, ideas, data, audio clips, or phrases borrowed from others should be fully identified by standard procedures for making such acknowledgment. All permitted collaboration with others must still be acknowledged. At Carleton College, an act of academic dishonesty is therefore regarded as conflicting with the work and purpose of the entire College and not merely as a private matter between the student and an instructor; all cases involving such dishonesty are referred for appropriate action to the Academic Standing Committee (ASC) via the Associate Dean of Students or the Associate Dean of the College.

(above excerpted from the '[Academic Integrity](#)' page of Carleton's Academic Regulations and Procedures Handbook)

In-Class Technology

The Assistive Technologies program brings together academic and technological resources to complement student classroom and computing needs, particularly in support of students with physical or learning disabilities. Accessibility features include text-to-speech (Kurzweil), speech-to-text (Dragon) software, and audio recording Smartpens. If you would like to know more, contact aztechs@carleton.edu or [visit their website](#).

Inclusion

I strive to create an inclusive and respectful classroom that values diversity. Our individual differences enrich and enhance our understanding of one another and of the world

---

[2] Policy largely inspired by Professor Schicker in the German department.

around us. This class welcomes the perspectives of all ethnicities, cultures, gender identities, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities.

Disability Accommodations

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Office of Accessibility Resources (Henry House, 107 Union Street) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact OAR@carleton.edu or call Sam Thayer ('10), Director of the Office of Accessibility Resources (x4464), to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

Sexual Misconduct

Carleton is committed to fostering an environment free of sexual misconduct. Please be aware all Carleton faculty and staff members, with the exception of Chaplains and SHAC staff, are "responsible employees." Responsible employees are required to share any information they have regarding incidents of sexual misconduct with the Title IX Coordinator. Carleton's goal is to ensure campus community members are aware of all the options available and have access to the resources they need. If you have questions, please contact Laura Riehle-Merrill, Carleton's Title IX Coordinator, or visit the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website.

Student Health

Your health and well-being should always be your first priority. At Carleton, we have a wide-array of resources to support students. It is important to recognize stressors you may be facing, which can be personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. Sleep, exercise, and connecting with others can be strategies to help you flourish at Carleton. For more information, check out Student Health and Counseling (SHAC), the Office of Health Promotion, or the Office of the Chaplain.

The Writing Center:

The Writing Center is offering a full schedule of video conferences with peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process (brainstorming to final proofreading). Hours and more information can be found on the writing center website. You can reserve specific times for conferences by using their online appointment system.

If English is not your first language and you believe you might benefit from working regularly with a writing consultant this term, email Melanie Cashin, Multilingual Writing Coordinator, at mcashin@carleton.edu. She can arrange once- or twice-a-week meetings between you and a specific writing consultant throughout the term.

Class Presentations and Public Speaking Support:

Speech coaching is a student-staffed resource designed to assist you with class presentations, comps talks, and other speech-related events. Support for speech & communication skills including clarity, organization, articulation, projection, body language, eye contact, and effective use of aids (e.g., notes, PowerPoint, Keynote, etc.) can be arranged. Depending on your goals, you can also work on the content of the presentation: organization, voice, clarity, and, ultimately, persuasive impact. You can find more information here.

Library:

Library staff can help you find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. You can make an appointment with the linguistics librarian Adam Lewis, get help via chat 24/7 from any page on the library's website, email, or call. For more information and hours, visit the Gould Library website.