

Anthropology 4: Culture and Communication
Winter 2021 M-W 11am-12:15pm online

Revised on January 13, 2021
(This replaces the December 3c1, 2020 version)

The online live lectures will be recorded and uploaded to the class website on CCLE
Attendance to the live lectures is recommended but not required

Class web site

<https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/21W-ANTHRO4-1>

Instructor: Alessandro Duranti, Distinguished Professor of Anthropology
Email: aduranti@anthro.ucla.edu

Office Hours (by Zoom): Monday 1-2pm and Tuesday 9-10am

Teaching Assistants:

Jarred Brewster (jmebrewster@g.ucla.edu)
Sara Castro Font (saraicastro@g.ucla.edu)
Spencer Chen (scchenucla@gmail.com)
Lily Kohn (lilykohn@g.ucla.edu)
Alessandra Laurer Rosen (allyrosen15@g.ucla.edu)
Doga Tekin (dogatekin@ucla.edu)

This course satisfies the General Education (GE) requirement in Social Sciences and is the first course in the linguistic anthropology series. It is offered as a P/NP or as a letter grade.

Course Description

This course is designed to familiarize students with topics and methods in linguistic anthropology, one of the four original subfields of anthropology in the U.S. Lectures will focus on three main themes: (a) narratives, (b) speech as social action, and (c) intentions. Each of these themes will be analyzed from a variety of theoretical perspectives and three methods of data collection: participant-observation, open-ended interviews, and audio- or video-recordings of spontaneous interactions. Students will find out how the study of language use in everyday interaction can help us understand a variety of important social and cultural phenomena, including political arguments, linguistic and social stereotypes, inclusion/exclusion, inequality, social identity, racism, everyday story-telling, humor, tolerance/intolerance, discrimination, and access to educational opportunities and the job market.

Goals of the course

Students will be introduced to several specialized fields of study all aimed at discovering in what ways the use of language and other forms of communication makes a difference in people's personal life and in society at large. The goal is to acquire the analytic tools to be able to identify the implicit meanings and possible effects of

linguistic expressions within particular contexts of interaction. Language will be shown to rarely be a *neutral* medium. The ways we speak, write, or use a combination of speech, gestures, and communicative technologies (e.g., pencil and paper, print, electronic communication) always come with a history of uses, attitudes, implications, associations, and ethical values that we are only partly aware of. By uncovering these hidden layers of meaning we will gain the analytical tools needed to identify how social relationships (e.g., kinship ties, friendship, comradery, subordination) are established, reproduced, challenged, resisted, or changed by means of language (broadly conceived).

Final grade based on:

Five exams/assignments (100%). Participation in sections is highly recommended but not required.

There will be no make-ups for any of the assignments. Medical or other kinds of emergencies will need documentation.

Readings

Students will be **expected to know** the contents of following:

a) PowerPoint slides shown during the live (and recorded) lecture and posted as a separate pdf within 24 hours after each lecture, handouts, and any other written material.

b) A number of chapters (listed in the week-by-week schedule) from Duranti, Alessandro, ed. 2009. *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader. Second Edition*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. [Abbreviated "Reader"] (In case there is a delay with getting copies of this book, pdf's of the chapters for the first few weeks will be made available to the students on the class website)

c) Conley, Robin (2016). *Confronting the Death Penalty: How Language Influences Jurors in Capital Cases*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Abbreviated "Conley"] [You can get access to pdf's of chapters of this book through the UCLA Library – search for Robin Conley Riner – she added "Riner" to her maiden name – and when you see the title "Confronting the death penalty [electronic resource]" click on it and you'll get to the page where you'll see "ONLINE ACCESS Restricted to UCLA." If you click on that, you'll be given a number of choices. If you go to the top one, "Oxford Scholarship Online Complete," you'll get to the Oxford [University Press] Scholarship Online, where you can download each chapter as a pdf"]

d) Supplemental readings (chapters, articles or sections of books) made available as pdf's on the class website throughout the quarter and listed on the syllabus. You might want to have the books or pdf's available to you during lectures in case the instructor refers to some particular passages and you want to follow along.

Additional resources for learning about linguistic anthropology:

The instructor and the TAs will do their best to help you handle the academic jargon you are likely to encounter in some parts of the books and in the additional readings.

But in case you decide that you would feel more comfortable having access to a textbook, here are three introductory texts and a collection of short entries (“Key terms”) that should help you clear the linguistic fog and give you a broader perspective on the field of linguistic anthropology.

Ahearn, Laura 2017. *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology, Second Edition*. Malden, MA: Wiley & Sons. (Excellent Introduction to concepts and methods in linguistic anthropology)

Wilce, James M. 2018. *Culture and Communication: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Excellent introduction to some basic concepts useful for this course)

Duranti, Alessandro, ed. 2001. *Key Terms in Language and Culture*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. (A collection of short essays explaining particular concepts written by experts)

Duranti, Alessandro 1997. *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press. (A treatise on the field of linguistic anthropology as developed in the twentieth century organized as an advanced textbook, with sections that cover most of the concepts used in this course; written for upper division and graduate courses).

There are also many good introductions to “language” or to linguistics that cover some of the same contents. Wikipedia entries on linguistic terminology have improved over the last few years and offer you additional resources and references, but be aware of the fact that the quality of Wikipedia entries varies considerably because their accuracy depends on who took the time to insert information, check sources, or make corrections. For more reliable scholarly publications that have been peer-reviewed, consult professional journals or articles on websites where authors sign the entries. For a good example, see *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <https://plato.stanford.edu/>

The Reader for this course also has a list of *Suggestions for Further Readings* in the Introductions to each of the four Sections of the book. That is a good place to start for those who want to go deeper into a topic or issue.

If you want to learn more about a given topic and cannot find what you are looking for or what you find is too specialized, ask your TA or the instructor for alternative recommended readings.

Professional development

It is important for you to acquire certain professional habits regardless of whether you plan to become an anthropologist or any other kind of social scientist. Pay attention to authors and titles. In years to come, if someone asked you which books you read for this course, you should be able to remember the main title and the authors of the ones that you found interesting. You should also read other works of the authors you found inspiring. Acquiring the habit of going beyond the confines of any list of readings should be a habit you practice in college. Build your own list of readings if you want to become an expert in anything.

Classroom Etiquette (on Zoom)

If possible, show your face (and feel free to use a virtual background). If you have questions or comments, use the “Chat.” The TAs will keep track of those comments and will bring some up for discussion during the lecture or later (in their sections or in future correspondence/interactions with the Instructor). **There will also be times during each lecture when the floor will be open for live questions and comments.**

Communication with Instructor

Best medium: email (aduranti@anthro.ucla.edu). Do *not* call the office phone. Professor Duranti usually answers email messages within 24 hours. If you haven’t heard from him after that period, write again. He might have missed it in the midst of the daily avalanche of emails. Take advantage of office hours (which this quarter are on Zoom).

Power Point Slides

Each live lecture, together with comments and questions from the students will be uploaded to the class website within a few hours.

Plagiarism

To become familiar with what constitutes plagiarism, consult www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Academic-Integrity.

Accommodations

If you wish to request an accommodation due to a disability, please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible at A255 Murphy Hall, (310) 825-1501 / TDD: (310) 206-6083. Website: www.osd.ucla.edu. Make sure to inform your TA and the Instruction of your request.

Feedback on Grading

Given the size of the class, we cannot guarantee that you will receive written comments on your tests and quizzes. You are encouraged to first meet with your TA and if that is not satisfactory, you can write to the instructor with a detailed description of the particular points you want to discuss and why.

Writing

For this course, you will be asked to turn in written assignments of various lengths (from short paragraphs to several pages). Remember that clarity of exposition is important in all styles and formats. Therefore, if you think you need assistance to improve your writing, make sure to take advantage of the UCLA Writing Center, their website is: www.wp.ucla.edu. You might also be able to call them at 310-206-1320 or email them at wcenter@g.ucla.edu. (There might be special instructions due to the pandemic).

Assignments and Final Grade:

Your final grade will be based on the total amount of points you will get for the assignments (maximum 100 points), each of which will be worth up to 20 points (or 20%).

There will in fact be 6 assignments but only 5 will be counted for the final grade. The lowest grade that you received out of the 6 will be discarded, including the “zero” points you might have received for a missed assignment.

LEADING CONCEPT for the COURSE:

Linguistic anthropologists ask the following general question: What does the study of languages (and other communicative codes) tell us about their speakers?

This means that for linguistic anthropologists the study of a language (or any other semiotic code or medium of communication, including gestures) is instrumental to the study of its users, that is, it is guided by an interest in what speakers do with language or how they are affected by it. Language in general (the language faculty) or a language in particular (e.g., English, Hopi, Korean) is then typically studied in order to gain an understanding of other things, like people’s attitudes, cultural practices, social identities, social organization, institutions, and ways of making sense of their own existential condition.

To understand what particular groups do with language and what language itself does for or to members of those groups, linguistic anthropologists, especially in the past, have had to provide adequate descriptions of languages that had not been previously studied. This means that from the beginning of the discipline (i.e., the end of the 19th century), linguistic anthropologists have contributed to the study of a vast number of languages (in the Americas and elsewhere). Their work has thus overlapped with the work of descriptive and theoretical linguistics.

COURSE TOPICS and WEEKLY SCHEDULE

The lectures are meant to help you understand each topic, issue, line of argumentation, methods of inquiry, data collection, and author’s style. You will have to pace yourself to make sure you do not fall behind. For some of you, it will be important to do the readings before hearing/watching the lecture that covers them. For others, it might work to do the readings after the lecture. Some students find it useful to read the relevant texts both before and after the lecture. The assignments will be based on the readings up to the prior week. This means that if there is a test/assignment on Week 3, you will be responsible for knowing the readings for week 1 and week 2, in addition to whatever else was covered in lecture during those previous weeks (additional concepts and authors, theories and methods of inquiry, etc.).

(N.B. The following weekly list of topics and readings may be modified if we fall behind schedule or something extra is needed to help clarify a concept and add information on a topic).

WEEK 1 (Jan. 4-6) The study of language(s) in anthropology and a brief comparison with the study of language(s) in linguistics: Boas and Malinowski. Going beyond the stereotype of the “primitive,” discovering humanity in difference.

a) Boas on capturing language diversity ("each language in its own terms"); b) Malinowski's "pragmatic speech" and "context of situation"; c) Chomsky's view of the goals of linguistics.

Readings:

- a) Boas, Franz 1911. "Introduction." *Handbook of American Indian Languages*. Ed. Boas, Franz. Vol. BAE-B 40, Part I. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution and Bureau of American Ethnology. [pdf] [Start reading on p. 15, Section II. The Characteristics of Language, all the way to p. 43; then go p. 59, Section IV. Linguistics and Ethnology, read all the way to p.73]
- b) Malinowski, Bronislaw 1923. "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages." *The Meaning of Meaning*. Eds. Ogden, C.K. and I.A. Richards. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 296-336. [pdf] [Focus on pp. 297- 316 and 326-327; p. 333 on pronouns, and any other highlighted parts; you can skip section V, pp. 316-326, and don't have to know about the chapter by Ogden and Richards that Malinowski refers to] [Important statements in the text are highlighted to guide your reading]
- d) Chomsky, Noam. 1965. *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. MIT Press. Pp. v-vii, pp. 3-10 [Important statements in the text are highlighted to guide your reading]
- e) Duranti, A. "Linguistic Anthropology: History, Ideas, and Issues, ("Reader," Introduction, pp. 1-5, and Section 3 "The Birth of Linguistic Anthropology in the United States," pp. 8-10)

WEEK 2 (Jan. 11-13) Language as a non-neutral medium.

a) The influence of our native language(s) on our ability to hear the sounds of other languages (Boas); b) a bigger claim about "linguistic relativity" (Whorf); c) Rethinking "linguistic relativity" in terms of the non-neutrality of language(s).

Readings:

- a) Boas, Franz 1889. "On Alternating Sounds." *American Anthropologist* 2 (o.s.): 47-53. [pdf]
- b) Whorf, Benjamin Lee. [1940] 1956. "Science and Linguistics," in *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Ed. Carroll, John B. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 207-219.
- c) Malinowski, Bronislaw 1935. *Coral Gardens and Their Magic, Vol. 2: The Language of Magic and Gardening*. London: Allen & Unwin, pp. 5-65pp. [pdf] [Important statements in the text are highlighted to guide your reading]
- c) Duranti, Alessandro 2011. "Linguistic Anthropology: Language as a Non-Neutral Medium." *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Ed. Mesthrie, Raj. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 11-17.

WEEK 3 (Jan. 20) Lecture cancelled.

Readings (will be discussed in Week 4)

- a) Austin, J. L. (1962) "Lecture 1," *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford, pp. 1-10. [pdf]
- b) Duranti, *Linguistic Anthropology*, Section 1.4 "Theoretical concerns in contemporary linguistic anthropology," pp. 14-22 (Performance, Indexicality, Participation).
- c) Duranti, A. "Linguistic Anthropology: History, Ideas, and Issues, ("Reader," Section 6, "A Focus on Performance," pp. 21-23, 26-33)

WEEK 4 (Jan. 25-27) Doing things with language. From utterances to speech events
a) The notions of “performance,” “performative,” and “performativity”; b) What constitutes a formal event”? c) What is a “greeting” and what does it do?

Readings:

- a) Irvine, Judith T. "Formality and Informality in Communicative Events." ("Reader," Chapter 7)
- b) Duranti, Alessandro "Universal and Culture-Specific Properties of Greetings." ("Reader," Chapter 8)

WEEK 5 (Feb. 1-3) Miscommunication and linguistic inequality
(a) Gumperz' notion of “Crosstalk”; (b) Unequal symbolic power of languages.

Readings:

- a) Baxter, James, and Deena Levine 1982. "Review of Crosstalk by John Twitchin." *TESOL Quarterly* 16.2: 245-253. [This is a review of the BBC Television program “Crosstalk” based on linguistic anthropologist John Gumperz’ research on cross-cultural miscommunication] [pdf]
- b) Bailey, Benjamin 1997. "Communication of Respect in Interethnic Service Encounters." ("Reader," Chapter 4)
- c) Hill, Jane H. 2001. "Language, Race, and White Public Space." ("Reader," Chapter 20)
- d) Duranti, A. "Linguistic Anthropology: History, Ideas, and Issues, ("Reader," Section 5, "Communicative Competence and the Speech Community," pp. 17-21)

Video segment from the original BBC program “Crosstalk” (from UC Berkeley Library)
<https://www.lib.berkeley.edu/video/catalog/OjdQxsasEeSyGp9u7sfHgA/QAQY9zM6xGPuc59yyShKA/1605988726>

WEEK 6 (Feb. 8-10) Death penalty as an object of inquiry.
(a) Studying the death penalty. Fieldwork in your own country. Facts, methods, and analytical concepts; (b) The “objectivity” of science and the “objectivity” of the law; (c) mediated emotions.

Readings:

- Conley, Robin. *Confronting the Death Penalty*, Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (pp. 1-81)

WEEK 7 (Feb. 17) Empathy and social distance: the role of language
(a) Personal reference: names, noun phrases, pronouns, and deictics.
(b) Narrative accounts and the non-neutrality of language, face, and demeanor.

Readings:

- a) Conley, *Confronting the Death Penalty*, Chapters 4 and 5 (pp. 82-159)
- b) Duranti, Alessandro. "Narrating the Political Self in a Campaign for U.S. Congress." ("Reader," Chapter 10)

WEEK 8 (Feb. 22-24) Agency, intentions, and responsibility in death sentences
(a) Individual vs. distributed responsibility; (b) mitigation of agency; (c) dehumanization and democracy.

Readings:

Conley, *Confronting the Death Penalty*, Chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 160-208)

WEEK 9 (March 1-3) Two models of language socialization; family dinner as context for socialization

(a) Language acquisition vs. language socialization; (b) the non-universality of “baby talk” and other cultural differences; (c) narrative activities and family dynamics

Readings:

a) Ochs, Elinor and Bambi Schieffelin, “Language Acquisition and Socialization: Three Developmental Stories,” (Reader, Chapter 12)

b) Ochs, Elinor & Taylor, Carolyn, “The “Father Knows Best” Dynamic in Dinnertime Narratives” (“Reader,” Chapter 18)

c) Duranti, A. “Linguistic Anthropology: History, Ideas, and Issues, (“Reader,” Section 7, pp. 23-26).

WEEK 10 (March 8-10) Getting to “meaning”: Notions of “aspect seeing,” and “professional vision”

(a) “Seeing as” (Wittgenstein); (b) Professional vision (Goodwin); Linguistic relativity (Whorf)

Readings:

a) Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1958. *Philosophical Investigations*, Part II, Section IX, pp. 193-204. [pdf]

b) Bourdieu, Pierre 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge University Press, Chapter 2, starting on p. 78, section “Structures, habitus and practices.” [Focus on the concept of “habitus; you can skip the section on “culture and personality”, read the long paragraph on the Kabyle house, pp. 90-1

c) Goodwin, Charles, “Professional Vision.” (“Reader,” Chapter 19)

d) Duranti, A. “Linguistic Anthropology: History, Ideas, and Issues, (“Reader,” Section 4, Linguistic Relativity, pp. 11-17)