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Course Outline for ANTH 4

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Effective: Fall 2008

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

ANTH 4 — LANGUAGE AND CULTURE — 3.00 units

The course is an introduction to the core concepts of linguistic anthropology and the study of language in culture and society, including how language perpetuates the identity of individuals through their social interactions and their culture in everyday speech events. Topics such as identity, social status, gender, race, and institutional power, are examined in contemporary language use. The course includes traditional study of the methods of linguistic anthropologists as well as the study of biological basis of communication and speech, the structure of language, language origins, language through time, language variation, the ethnography of communication, sociolinguistics, nonverbal communication and writing, and how cultural context sets meaning.

3.00 Units Lecture

Grading Methods:

Optional

Discipline:

	<u>MIN</u>
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT:

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe the origins, development, and change of languages through time
2. Distinguish, compare and contrast verbal and nonverbal communication
3. Compare verbal and nonverbal communication to writing systems
4. Explain the physiology of language development in the human species
5. Describe theories of language acquisition in children
6. Analyze and evaluate conversations and speech events
7. Describe the phonology and morphology of language systems
8. Explain how speech and conversation are produced and used
9. Describe the anthropological approach to the study of language, culture, and society and apply these principals to contemporary issues
10. Relate the structure of language to its social context, including participants' identities and social positions as well as how language instantiates or perpetuates social hierarchies, power or powerlessness in regard to race, ethnicity, gender, or minority status
11. Gain an appreciation for the dynamic relationships between language, social context, thought, and cultural norms

V. CONTENT:

- A. Introduction to the four field approach and linguistic anthropology methodology
- B. Language origins and the biological basis for language: language and human evolution
 1. anatomy and physiology of speech, language and the brain; language acquisition,
 2. comparison of communication systems with other animals
 3. theories on language origins in the human species and language evolution
- C. Learning Language
 1. "critical period" in early language acquisition
 2. categories of language structure
 3. cross-linguistic universal sequences
- D. Nonverbal communication and writing:
 1. paralinguistics
 2. kinesics and proxemics
 3. sign languages
 4. origins and types of writing systems
- E. The structure of language, of words and sentences:
 1. speech sounds, phones and phonemes
 2. morphemes and allomorphs
 3. syntax, semantics, generative grammar

- F. Language families and reconstructing languages, theories on estimating the age of languages.
- G. Language variation: idiolects, dialects and styles;
 - 1. multilingualism
 - 2. diglossia and code-switching
 - 3. pidgins, creoles, and lingua francas
 - 4. endangered languages and language death
- H. Languages and cultural meaning; the relationship between language and culture:
 - 1. Ethnoscience/ethnosemantics
 - 2. the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis
 - 3. language, cultural context, and worldview
 - 4. semantic frames and metaphor
- I. Language competence and communication in a social context:
 - 1. linguistic etiquette
 - 2. speech communities/speech events
 - 3. the ethnography of communication
 - 4. components of communication
- J. Language, identity, and power
 - 1. language and gender, including sexual bias
 - 2. class or social status
 - 3. race/ethnicity
 - 4. language in institutions and language ideologies
- K. Linguistic anthropology in the contemporary world
 - 1. intercultural communication
 - 2. language maintenance and reinforcement

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. Textbook reading assignments; additional reader or handouts will be assigned
- C. **Lecture** -
- D. **Audio-visual Activity** - Presentation of audio-visual materials
- E. **Research** - Research project
- F. **Discussion** - Class and group discussions

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Lectures 1. Language origins and the biological basis for language, the theories about the evolution of human language, the anatomy and physiology of speech sounds, how language is acquired by children, and what universals are found in language use, and comparisons of communication systems with language systems. 2. Ethnoscience/ethnosemantics and how meaning and world view are seen through categorization 3. The relationship between language and culture such as review of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and of theories about language and worldview; 4. How social biases are revealed in language use in various social contexts including linguistic etiquette, gender relationships and sexual bias, code switching (between ethnic identities or between superior/subordinate), B. Reading assignments 1. Read Language, Culture, and Communication chapter on "Societal segmentation and linguistic variation." 2. Read the Ottenheimer text "Language in Action" 3. Read the Farb handout titled "In other words" C. Homework 1. Read Ottenheimer text chapter on language in action answer the following questions: a. Describe how ethnography of communication was a new approach to understanding meaning in its cultural context. b. How is Chomsky's original definition of "linguistic competence" considered too narrow a definition to describe how real speakers use language? Give an example from your own experience of how setting and individuals' competent language use shows that multiple meanings for a single word are possible (depending on social context). c. What are the seven basic areas of research in an ethnography of speaking suggested by Hymes? Describe one of the seven areas in your own words and give an example from your own experiences. D. Class and group discussions 1. Class discussion topic: Have you ever heard, or used, or were the target of a derogatory term meant to describe or place you in a particular social hierarchy or context? How did this language usage situate you in the social hierarchy? 2. Group discussion topic: Give an example of code switching you do much of the time and describe what social setting triggers it. Now that you have studied the social function of code switching, can you name a case from your own life where a code switch done by you or someone else was unexpected or a surprise because it placed you in a social context you had not anticipated? E. Audio-visual materials 1. Power point notes in lecture and posted to Blackboard for review. F. Research project 1. Students collect data from outside speech events or situations with some collection permitted from written sources. Students will be required to record or transcribe each with the intent to both label the type of speech event observed and if applicable to also analyze whether the event observed instantiates cultural meaning in regard to power, gender, race, other social context. The final paper will be a description of the speech events collected but also will outline whenever the speech event observed or the written discourse analyzed is a case where the language used perpetuates social structure or the social power of one group over others, or reinforces or perpetuates cultural identity within the community observed. Observations about language competency, conversation style, political or gender relations, class, race, or embedded language ideologies are expected.

VIII. EVALUATION:

- A. **Methods**
 - 1. Exams/Tests
 - 2. Research Projects
 - 3. Home Work
- B. **Frequency**
 - 1. Midterm and Final Examinations
 - 2. Quizzes on homework assignments
 - 3. End-of-term evaluation of research project

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- 1. Ottenheimer, Harriet Joseph *The Anthropology of Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology.*, -, 2005.
- 2. Bonvillian, Nancy *Language, Culture, and Communication, The Meaning of Messages.* 4th ed., -, 2003.
- 3. Fromkin, et al *An Introduction to Language.* 8th ed., -, 2007.
- 4. Farb, Peter *Word Play: What happens when people talk?.*, -, 1973.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

