

Ant 257: Language, Culture, & Power

Fall 2018, Term 4

Beijing Room (T,TH) & Durham Room (M,W,F)

Thomas Commons

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Class Meeting Times: We generally meet from 12:30-3:00 M,W,F & 1:00-3:00 T,TH. Some events may take place outside of this regular schedule. Any changes in schedule will be discussed in class.

Course Description

This course examines how language shapes social life. Using the tools and insights of linguistic anthropology, we explore a variety of cultural contexts in order to better understand how language creates, reproduces, and sometimes challenges social identity, group belonging, and patterns of inequality. Throughout the class we examine language as a complex system of signs that enables and shapes our social worlds. We interrogate cross-cultural examples of everyday language practices as well as artistic performances with attention to the production of social power. This course provides the opportunity to better understand the significance of language in our own ongoing social interactions, with the goal of comprehending how language practices contribute to both the construction of and challenges to ongoing patterns of social inequality.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Explain key concepts and methods in linguistic anthropology
- Engage in creative, critical, and informed thinking about language and culture
- Thoughtfully discuss issues of social inequality with attention to how language shapes social worlds and access to social, material, and symbolic resources

The course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphasis on knowledge, inquiry, communication, ethical behavior and intercultural literacy.

Course Texts

Readings are available on Moodle

Course Information

Responsibility: As students at a liberal arts college, you are responsible for your own engagement in the academic conversation. This means being a prepared and active participant. This includes reading the syllabus and all the assigned material, but more importantly, this means thinking critically, asking questions, coming to class having formulated your own ideas and responses to the course material, and engaging in dialogue with others. If you do not

understand a topic of discussion, an assignment, a grade, or have any other questions or concerns, please come and talk with me.

You should not take this class if you do not feel that you are able to (1) complete the required reading, (2) examine course material from an analytic, anthropological perspective, and (3) engage in productive, non-combative discussions.

Class Structure: This class mixes a lecture and a discussion format and is designed to promote interaction and exchange. I expect everyone to contribute to discussion—which requires that you read carefully and think about the assigned material before every class. No one can participate effectively without having completed and contemplated the course readings. Be an informed participant—your comments should relate to the course material and should add to the topic being discussed. I also expect people will listen to each other -- which requires patience, empathy, and mutual respect. Be willing to share your ideas and be open to opposing perspectives. It is possible to disagree and still interact respectfully. Listening carefully, asking questions, and responding to what people have said demonstrate respectful engagement. On the other hand, inattention, sleeping, talking to neighbors, being distracted by computers and cell phones, and rude or disconnected responses all show a lack of respect for the members of this class and for your own intellect.

Technology Policy: Cell phones and laptops are strictly prohibited in class - turn them off and stow them in your bag when you arrive. Exceptions - there will be certain times during class (to be announced) when laptops or tablets will be allowed. When these are in use, I expect that everyone uses these devices for class work only. If you are misusing technology I will issue a warning—after that I will ask you to leave class and other repercussions will follow.

Late Work: Without prior approval or evidence of a serious emergency, late work will not be accepted. If you have any issues, please consult with me **prior** to the assignment deadline.

Attendance: Attendance is required for this course. =You are allowed 1 absence (excused or unexcused) without penalty. After this, your grade will be negatively affected by each additional absence. Missing 3 class sessions will result in an automatic failure.

Evaluation and Grade Scale: See Moodle for assignment and grading details.

For your final grade, I will use the following scale: **A** 93-100; **A-** 90-92; **B+** 87-89; **B** 83-86; **B-** 80-82; **C+** 77-79; **C** 73-76; **C-** 70-72; **D+** 67-69; **D** 63-66; **D-** 60-62; **F** Below 60

However, failure to complete a course assignment and/or missing more than 2 class sessions may result in a failing course grade.

Course Accommodations: Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for

accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>.

Academic Honesty Expectations: Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading "Academic Honesty."

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student in this course who is involved in academic dishonesty (portraying another person's work or ideas as their own, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from the course instructors, facilitating plagiarism, etc.) will not earn credit for the relevant assignments. Other consequences may also ensue such completing a learning contract, not earning credit for the course, and/or being formally charged with academic dishonesty.

Additional Resources: There are a number of resources on campus to support your academic work. I strongly encourage you to utilize the support of the Social Science Consulting Librarian, the Quantitative Reasoning Consultant, the Writing Studio, and the Academic Media Studio. Consultants in these offices can provide both basic help as well as advanced guidance to help polish your research, writing, and presentation skills.

Grading & Assignments

Attendance & Participation

Daily in-class assignments	25%
Moodle Posts	

Quizzes & Exams	25%
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Written Reflections	25%
Reflection papers	
Periodic outside written assignments	

Group Project	25%
Presentation	
Paper	

Participation

Students will be evaluated based on the quality of their presence in the classroom. “Quality” here is defined as informed and respectful participation in class. “Quality” participation is impossible to obtain without carefully reading and thinking about the assigned readings before every class, attending class, actively engaging, and interacting respectfully with others in the classroom. Your grade will be based on how well your presence in the classroom facilitates discussion and comprehension. This means not only speaking constructively but also refraining from activities that inhibit class learning. You are expected to be alert, attentive, and prepared. Sleeping, Facebooking, texting, etc. in class is not acceptable. There will be regular in-class writing assignments, in which you write as a means of organizing your thoughts on a subject. These writing assignments will allow you to illustrate your comprehension and analysis of the readings. You are responsible for all assignments and material covered in class, whether or not you attend and regardless of the reasons for any absence. I will encourage and support your participation in our classroom community, but the final responsibility is yours.

Daily Moodle Posts

To prepare for class discussion your Moodle post is due by 11:00am on the day of class.

Posts are composed of:

- One discussion question for each reading. Questions should be grounded in the readings and demonstrate your thoughtful consideration of material. The questions you post should not be the same as questions already posted by peers.

Your questions should encourage serious reflection on the material and analytic, engaged discussion. They should not solicit either simple summaries of the readings, simple pronouncements of opinion, or require significant factual knowledge outside of the reading material. Be prepared to discuss the questions that you pose.

Quizzes

Occasionally we will have brief in-class pop quizzes covering the day's assigned material.

Exams

We will have weekly in-class exams.

Written Reflections

You will complete brief written reflections on class material and activities throughout the block. More information will be available in class and on Moodle.

Group Project

You will complete one group project. This project will include a group presentation and an individual written paper. More details will be discussed in class and shared on Moodle.