

## **Welcome to Language and Society (LING-UA 15)!**

This course investigates the ways in which language reflects and creates the social order. We'll study how variation in language relates to social factors like gender, age, social class, and ethnicity, and we'll explore the social contexts under which languages are born, die, and change. The course will feature hands-on research, allowing you to collect and analyze data on how people use language in real life.

Through successfully completing this course, you will

- be familiar with the major social correlates of variation and change in language.
- understand the theory and methods underlying the field of sociolinguistics.
- collect, analyze, and write about real-world linguistic data.
- be able to discuss matters of sociolinguistic variation with scientific rigor and cultural sensitivity.

This course has no prerequisites.

## **People**

- **Instructor:** Dr. Laurel MacKenzie (goes by *Laurel* or *Prof. MacKenzie*; uses *she/her*)
- **TAs:** Patrick Kinchsular (goes by *Patrick*; uses *he/they*)  
Molly Cutler (goes by *Molly*; uses *she/her*)

## **Course meetings**

- **Lectures:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30–1:45pm in Kimmel 808
- **Recitations**, for small-group discussion and supervised work time:
  - 002: Thursday from 3:30–4:45pm with Patrick in Tisch Hall Rm. LC19
  - 003: Thursday from 4:55–6:10pm with Molly in 19 W. 4th St. Rm. 102


## **Office hours**

- **Laurel:** Most Tuesdays from 3:30–4:30pm in 10 Washington Place, Room 305, but check availability (and book another time if needed) at <https://calendly.com/laurel-mackenzie>
- **Patrick:** Mondays from 1-2pm in 10 Washington Place, Room 409
- **Molly:** Mondays from 4-5pm in 10 Washington Place, Room 309

## **Weekly plan** (p. 2) – with class topics, links to readings and lecture slides, and assignment deadlines

## **Grade components**

- Digital portfolio (30%)
- Research project (30%)
- Final assignment (30%)
- Participation & attendance (10%)

 **Course policies** (available to enrolled students) – covering course materials, attendance expectations, deadlines, extensions, assignment submission, and more

**LING-UA 15: Language and Society**  
Weekly Plan

Week	Day	Topic	Reading	Assignments due
		L = lecture; R = recitation	Complete each reading <b>before</b> the class it's associated with. Readings marked with ** will require extra time – plan ahead!	Most assignments can be completed within a week, but assignments marked with ** will require extra time – plan ahead!
<b>1</b> 1/19–1/23	T	L1: Introduction & overview	Van Herk, ch. 1 “Introduction”	Due Fri: Portfolio entry #0 (set-up)
	Th	L2: Defining language: Dialect, variety, standard, non-standard	Van Herk, ch. 2 “Language and Society”	
	Th	R1: Course expectations, your sociolinguistic history, the standard language ideology	(none)	
<b>2</b> 1/26–1/30	T	L3: Defining language & society: Language differences, social groups	(none)	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #1 (prescriptivism)
	Th	L4: Sociolinguistic methods: Linguistic variables, data elicitation	Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015, excerpts from ch. 6 “Language variation”	
	Th	R2: Variables & variants, social groups	(none)	
<b>3</b> 2/2–2/6	T	L5: Sociolinguistic methods: Data collection, data analysis	(none)	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #2 (variable & variants)
	Th	L6: Language & place: Dialectology	Giaimo 2016, “Do you like dialect quizzes?” Van Herk, ch. 3 “Place”	
	Th	R3: Language & place	(none)	

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<b>4</b> 2/9–2/12	T	L7: Language & social status: Identifying groups, basic linguistic patterns	Van Herk, ch. 4 “Social Status”	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #3 (place)
	Th	L8: Language & social status: More linguistic patterns	(none)	
	Th	R4: Sociolinguistic research methods	(none)	
<b>5</b> 2/16–2/20	T	<b>No lecture! (Legislative “Monday”)</b>	(none)	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #4 (covert prestige)
	Th	L9: Language & time: Language change	Van Herk, ch. 5 “Time”	
	Th	R5: Discussion of Labov 1966/2006	**Labov 1966/2006 “The social stratification of (r)”**	
<b>6</b> 2/23–2/27	T	L10: Language & time: Language & age	(none)	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #5 (change)
	Th	L11: Language & ethnicity: Ethnolects, ethnolinguistic repertoires	Van Herk, ch. 6 “Ethnicity”	Due Thu: Read research project instructions; bring questions to recitation
	Th	R6: Research project brainstorming & samples	Research project instructions	

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7 3/2–3/6	T	L12: Language & ethnicity: African American English	(none)	Due Wed: Research project stage 1 (select topic and [optionally] partner)
	Th	L13: Language & ethnicity: <i>Signing Black in America</i> and <i>Talking Black in America</i> (up to 10:55) film screening and discussion	(none)	
	Th	R7: Discussion of Rickford & King	**Rickford & King 2016 “Language and linguistics on trial”**	
8 3/9–3/13	T	L14: Data analysis tutorial – <b>bring a laptop/tablet!</b>	(none)	Due Wed: Research project stage 2 (~25% of data collected)
	Th	L15: Language & gender: Difference & dominance	Van Herk, ch. 7 “Gender”	
	Th	R8: Sharing portfolio entries 1–4	(none)	
3/16–3/20	Spring break! Classes will not meet!			
9 3/23–3/27	T	L16: Language & gender: Labov’s principles & the Gender Paradox	(none)	Due Wed: Research project stage 3 (~100% of data collected)
	Th	L17: Language & gender: Gender beyond the binary	(none)	
	Th	R9: Guided research project work time – <b>bring a laptop/tablet!</b>	(none)	

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<b>10</b> 3/30–4/3	T	L18: Language & interaction: Communicative competence, politeness	Van Herk, “Interlude” Van Herk, ch. 8 “Style”, up to the section “Defining and measuring style” Van Herk, ch. 9 “Interaction” <i>Strongly recommended, to inform most research project topics:</i> Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015 (excerpt) on politeness	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #6 (gender)
	Th	L19: Language & interaction: Conversation	(none)	
	Th	R10: Guided research project work time – <b>bring a laptop/tablet!</b>	(none)	
<b>11</b> 4/6–4/10	T	L20: Language & identity (guest lecture by Molly)	Dyer 2007 (excerpts) on language & identity Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015 (excerpt) on Martha’s Vineyard	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #7 (emoji)
	Th	L21: Language & style	Van Herk, ch. 8 “Style”, starting with the section ‘Defining and measuring style’	
	Th	R11: Guided research project work time – <b>bring a laptop/tablet!</b>	(none)	

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<b>12</b> 4/13–4/17	T	L22: Language contact: Societal & individual multilingualism	Van Herk, ch. 10 “Multilingualism”	Due Wed: **Research project report**
	Th	L23: Language contact: Borrowing, contact languages	Van Herk, ch. 11 “Language Contact”	
	Th	R12: Code-switching & language contact	Final assignment instructions	
<b>13</b> 4/20–4/24	T	L24: Language contact: Language maintenance, shift, policy, & planning (guest lecture by Patrick)	Van Herk, ch. 13 “Language as a Social Entity”	(none)
	Th	L25: Language attitudes	Van Herk, ch. 12 “Attitudes and Ideologies”	
	Th	R13: Sharing portfolio entries 5–7	(none)	
<b>14</b> 4/27–5/1	T	L26: Language variation in acquisition: How do children acquire gendered speech? (guest lecture by Jess Göbel)	(none)	(none)
	Th	L27: Language in later life (Laurel’s ongoing research)	(none)	
	Th	R14: Final assignment work time – <b>bring a laptop/tablet!</b>	(none)	
<b>15</b> 5/4–5/8	T	L28: Wrap-up, summary, research project findings	(none)	Due Wed: **Final assignment**