

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:** Jessica Göbel (goes by *Jess*; uses *she/her*)
Natalia Tyulina (goes by *Natasha*; uses *she/her*)

Course meetings

- **Lectures:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30–10:45am in 60 Fifth Ave Rm. 150
- **Recitations**, for small-group discussion and supervised work time:
 - 002: Mon at 2pm with Jess in 10 Washington Pl. Rm. 104
 - 003: Mon at 11am with Natasha in 10 Washington Pl. Rm. 104


Office hours

- **Laurel:** by appointment (in-person or virtually) via Laurel's Calendly page
- **Jess:** Thursdays 3–4pm, 10 Washington Pl. Rm. 309
- **Natasha:** Wednesdays 12–2pm, 10 Washington Pl. Rm. 313

 Weekly plan (p. 5) – 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 (p. 2) – covering course materials, attendance expectations, deadlines, extensions, assignment submission, and more

Course policies

Readings

- Textbook: Van Herk, Gerard. 2018. *What is Sociolinguistics?* Second edition. Wiley.
 - Available electronically through NYU Drive and NYU eBooks.
- Supplementary readings will be made available as PDFs.
- You're expected to have done each reading **before** its associated lecture.

Course materials

- Readings and lecture slides are linked from the weekly plan. We recommend that you make a shortcut to that document (and other course documents) on your own Google Drive by doing File > Add shortcut to Drive. Then organize it somewhere where you can easily find it.
- Assignment instructions and submission points are available on Brightspace, under "Content" and "Assignments."
- **Access to course materials** (readings, lecture slides, assignment instructions) **is restricted to NYU Google accounts**. If you're told that you "do not have permission" to access some course material, you are likely logged in through a personal Google account. Switch to your NYU account and try again.

Class participation & attendance

Both the lectures and the recitations of this class are designed to be interactive. You already know a lot about sociolinguistics, even if you don't realize it, purely by virtue of being a language user in the world. For this reason, we will often solicit your experiences and encourage your contributions in lecture. **Please come to class!** You will not only learn better by participating and asking questions, but you will enlighten your colleagues and improve the class by sharing your expertise as a language user.

Also, the lecture slides for this course are intentionally minimalist. The slides are meant to be visual aids, not lecture scripts. And the lectures are meant to explore concepts beyond the textbook's coverage of them, so definitions from the textbook will rarely be reiterated in class or on the lecture slides. If you miss a lecture, you will need to get notes from a classmate to reconstruct the content of the class.

Though we encourage you to come to lecture for all of the above reasons, we will not formally assess your lecture attendance. Your class participation grade will be assessed on the basis of your recitation attendance record and your level and quality of participation in recitation discussions and exercises. Productive contributions to lecture may boost your grade up, but their absence will not hurt your grade.

If you feel unwell, have been exposed to Covid, or have to quarantine, do not come to class. If you feel well enough to join over Zoom, **contact the entire teaching team at least 30 minutes before class (cc all three of us)**, and we will make an effort to connect you. If you are too unwell to participate at all, contact a classmate to get the notes once you've recovered, and contact a member of the teaching team to fill in any gaps in your understanding.

Deadlines

Assignments for this class are always due at 8pm. However, all assignments also have a grace period: **we will accept them until 11am the next day without penalty.** But please try your hardest to get your assignments in before the 8pm deadline. Sleep is important, and this class probably isn't worth staying up all night for.

Extensions

This grace period **cannot be extended without explicit permission from Laurel.** If you know you are going to need more time on an assignment, or if you miss a deadline due to circumstances out of your control, you must speak to Laurel face-to-face to arrange a revised deadline. This can be an informal chat before/after class, or you can set up an appointment — the important thing is that we work together to construct a reasonable and achievable timeline for completing the work. **Work that is submitted after the grace period ends — by even one minute — will not be accepted without this meeting with the professor.** Your TA cannot grant extensions. Extensions will not be granted by email.

Please plan ahead, comparing the syllabi for your courses now, to see when you have conflicting deadlines or difficult weeks. If things look impossible, please talk to Laurel with plenty of advance notice.

The very last day on which work for this course will be accepted is May 14. No work will be accepted past this date in any circumstances.

Assignment submission

Research project components and the final assignment will be submitted through Brightspace. File submissions should ideally be in PDF format. You should always preview a file submission once you've uploaded it to make sure that it looks right and that you're submitting the correct file.

Portfolio entries are "submitted" as soon as you post them to Padlet. There is nothing to submit to Brightspace for portfolio entries, although the assignment prompts and deadlines will appear there (to keep you organized). Entries are timestamped by Padlet, so we can confirm they were submitted on time.

In no circumstances will the grace period be extended due to submission errors, such as uploading the wrong file to Brightspace, failing to properly post a portfolio entry, or cases of internet outage. **Always preview a file before you submit it, and do not wait until the last minute to submit your work.**

Laptops

You're welcome to take notes on your laptop during lectures, but please try to avoid distractions out of consideration for your classmates' concentration.

Academic honesty

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated, and may result in a zero on an assignment. **You must complete all work individually, without help from other students,** unless an assignment explicitly allows group work.

If you use any scholarly resource other than the textbook and lecture slides as you prepare your portfolio entries or research project, you must provide a scholarly citation for the resource. Linguistics uses APA referencing style. A good reference for APA style is the Purdue Online Writing Lab. Use the links on the side of the page to learn how to format in-text citations. Citations for academic papers can often be found on Google Scholar when you search for the paper.

Academic accommodations

Please don't hesitate to talk to the professor and your TA if there's anything we can do differently to better accommodate your learning needs.

Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, or learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities over the phone at 212-998-4980, in person at 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, or online at www.nyu.edu/csd.

Questions in lecture

- If you have a **clarification question** about part of the lecture content, or are otherwise uncertain about anything that is said, please don't hesitate to put up your hand and ask it. Someone else almost certainly has the same question.
- If you have a **curiosity question** — that is, if something said in lecture sparks your curiosity about something else — please consider two things before you ask it:
 1. Is this a question that can be **answered quickly**? We have a set amount of material to cover each day to stay on track. Questions that require a long answer can delay us.
 2. Is this a question that **all students can benefit** from? You may have much more linguistics experience than your classmates, and they may not understand your question, or the answer. Classroom time is for all students' benefit.

If the answer to one or both of the above questions is no, your question is still valid! But please **write it down**, and then send it to your professor or TA via email, or bring it to office hours or recitation. If the answer to both questions is yes, ask away!

How to succeed in this (or any!) course

- ✓ Do the reading assigned to a lecture **before** the lecture it's assigned to.
- ✓ Attend all lectures, pay attention, ask questions, and take notes. Consider copying the lecture slides to your own Google Drive at the beginning of class and taking notes directly on them.
- ✓ As soon as you get a chance after each lecture, revisit and organize your notes from class by looking back over them, alongside the lecture slides and the reading, to solidify your understanding.
- ✓ Make note of where you have questions about the lectures or the readings. Bring your questions to recitation or office hours.
- ✓ Attend all recitations, and get to know your TA and others in the class.
- ✓ Start your assignments as soon as you get them.
- ✓ Seek help on your assignments well before they are due.

Want to learn more?

- Come to your professor's or TA's office hour!
- Check out the following podcasts about linguistics:
 - Lingthusiasm
 - The Vocal Fries
 - Spectacular Vernacular
- Take another course from NYU's Linguistics Department!

LING-UA 15: Language and Society
Weekly Plan

Week	Day	Topic	Reading	Assignments due
		Mondays are recitations with your TA; Tuesdays/Thursdays are lectures with Laurel.	Complete each reading before 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!
1 1/22–1/26	M	Recitation canceled today! We'll meet each other at the first lecture.	(none)	Due Fri: Portfolio entry #0 (set-up)
	T	Introduction & overview	Van Herk ch. 1 "Introduction"	
	Th	Defining language: Dialect, variety, standard, non-standard	Van Herk ch. 2 "Language and Society"	
2 1/29–2/2	M	Course expectations, your sociolinguistic history, the standard language ideology	(none)	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #1 (prescriptivism)
	T	Defining language & society: Language differences, social groups	(none)	
	Th	Sociolinguistic methods: Linguistic variables, data elicitation	Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015, excerpts from ch. 6 "Language variation"	
3 2/5–2/9	M	Variables & variants, social groups	(none)	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #2 (variable & variants)
	T	Sociolinguistic methods: Data collection, data analysis	(none)	
	Th	Language & place: Dialectology	Giaimo 2016, "Do you like dialect quizzes?" Van Herk ch. 3 "Place"	

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4 2/12–2/16	M	Sociolinguistic research methods, language & place	(none)	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #3 (place)
	T	Language & social status: Identifying groups, basic linguistic patterns	Van Herk ch. 4 “Social Status”	
	Th	Language & social status: More linguistic patterns	(none)	
5 2/19–2/23	M	No recitation! (Presidents’ Day holiday)		Due Wed: Portfolio entry #4 (covert prestige)
	T	No lecture! (Laurel out of town)		
	Th	Language & time: Language change (guest lecture by Chiara Repetti-Ludlow)	Van Herk ch. 5 “Time”	
6 2/26–3/1	M	Discussion of Labov 1966/2006	**Labov 1966/2006 “The social stratification of (r)”**	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #5 (change)
	T	Language & time: Language & age	(none)	
	Th	Language & ethnicity: Ethnolects, ethnolinguistic repertoires	Van Herk, ch. 6 “Ethnicity”	

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7 3/4–3/8	M	Research project brainstorming & samples	(none)	Due Mon: Read research project instructions; bring questions to recitation
	T	Language & ethnicity: African American English	(none)	Due Wed: Research project stage 1 (select topic and [optionally] partner)
	Th	Language & ethnicity: <i>Signing Black in America</i> and <i>Talking Black in America</i> (up to 10:55) film screening and discussion	(none)	
8 3/11–3/15	M	Discussion of Rickford & King	**Rickford & King 2016 “Language and linguistics on trial”**	Due Wed: Research project stage 2 (~25% of data collected)
	T	Data analysis tutorial – bring a laptop/tablet!	(none)	
	Th	Language & gender: Difference & dominance	Van Herk, ch. 7 “Gender”	
3/18–3/22	Spring break! Classes will not meet!			

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9 3/25–3/29	M	Sharing portfolio entries 1–4	(none)	Due Wed: Research project stage 3 (~100% of data collected)
	T	Language & gender: Labov's principles & the Gender Paradox	(none)	
	Th	Language & gender: Gender beyond the binary	(none)	
10 4/1–4/5	M	Guided research project work time – bring a laptop/tablet!	(none)	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #6 (gender)
	T	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"	
	Th	Language & interaction: Conversation	(none)	

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11 4/8–4/12	M	Guided research project work time – bring a laptop/tablet!	(none)	Due Wed: Portfolio entry #7 (emoji)
	T	Language & style	Van Herk, ch. 8 “Style”, starting with the section ‘Defining and measuring style’	
	Th	Language & identity	Dyer 2007 (excerpts) on language & identity Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015 (excerpt) on Martha’s Vineyard	
12 4/15–4/19	M	Guided research project work time – bring a laptop/tablet!	(none)	Due Wed: **Research project report**
	T	Language contact: Societal & individual multilingualism (guest lecture by Jess)	Van Herk, ch. 10 “Multilingualism”	
	Th	Language contact: Borrowing, contact languages	Van Herk, ch. 11 “Language Contact”	

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13 4/22–4/26	M	Code-switching & language contact	(none)	Due Mon: Read final assignment instructions; bring questions to recitation
	T	Language contact: Language maintenance, shift, policy, & planning	Van Herk, ch. 13 “Language as a Social Entity”	Due Wed: (Optional) Propose your own final assignment topic
	Th	Language attitudes	Van Herk, ch. 12 “Attitudes and Ideologies”	
14 4/29–5/3	M	Sharing portfolio entries 5–7	(none)	(none)
	T	Language and the internet (guest lecture by Natasha)	(none)	
	Th	Wrap-up, summary, research project findings	(none)	
15 5/6–5/10	M	Final assignment work time – bring a laptop/tablet!	(none)	Due Wed: **Final assignment**