

CAS AN 521 Sociolinguistics, Spring 2015

Instructor: Professor Fallou Ngom (fngom@bu.edu)
Office: # 507, African Studies Center
Class Time: MWF 12:00-1:00 PM
Location: CAS 324
Office hours: MWF 2:00-3:00PM and by appointment

Course content: Sociolinguistics, broadly characterized, concerns the investigation of relations between linguistic phenomena and human social organization and social life. In this course we will cover several central theoretical approaches to the study of language and society that have developed over the last forty years: variational sociolinguistics, the ethnography of communication, and interactional sociolinguistics. Each of these three will be explored through the accounts provided in the textbooks (Wardhaugh: *Sociolinguistics*, and Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, *American English*) and through other chapters and influential scholarly papers that exemplify the goals and methods of these approaches. In addition, a variety of other topics will be covered, including the development of pidgins and creoles, multilingualism, globalization and language status, language choice, and aspects of language and culture. Students will gain familiarity with the basic analytic frameworks that are common to most workers in the field and will learn about the progress in the field in the past three decades.

Prerequisites: No formal prerequisites; previous exposure to basic linguistics is very important. Students with no background in linguistics should talk with the instructor.

Course requirements and organization: Weekly reading of assignments and participation in class discussions is required. We will have about 36 meetings during this semester. If you miss more than 6 classes, your final grade will be lowered one letter grade. (If you have medical or other issues of an urgent nature that cause you to miss class, contact me to make arrangements as soon as possible.)

During the seventh week there will be an hour-long in-class exam on the readings from the first six weeks. Over the course of the semester, students will carry out two assignments that will involve collection and analysis of data using the methods and approaches reviewed in class.

There will be a take-home final exam. Advanced graduate students who are ready to write a research paper and who have developed a topic and had it approved by the instructor by *the seventh week of class* may substitute a paper for the take-home final.

Blackboard: Each student will be responsible *for submitting one question* about one assigned paper or chapter on the Blackboard website by 8:00 PM the Sunday before the reading will be discussed. The articles for which you should submit a question are marked with a [Q]. Questions should be posted in the “Discussion Board” section in the appropriate weekly “Forum.” No late questions on chapters will be accepted unless explicitly negotiated with the instructor before the due date. Explicit instructions on these questions will be given in class.

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Additionally, readings from Wolfram, W., and Schilling-Estes, N. 2006, *American English* and other readings will also be posted under the *Information* heading of Blackboard. The list of readings may change slightly. If it does, I will send out an email notice ahead of time. Readings are listed on the day on which they are to be discussed. Readings marked "Wardhaugh" are in Wardhaugh, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Seventh Edition. Cambridge, USA: Blackwell Publishers. The textbook is on sale at the Boston University Bookstore.

It's important that you have a working BU email login. Some people prefer not to use their BU email, but unfortunately, Blackboard does not allow email addresses that are not BU addresses.

Therefore, if you don't use your BU email every day, you need to put a "forward" command into your BU account so that emails from Blackboard will get to you in a timely fashion. Directions are at <http://www.bu.edu/pcsc/email/configure/forwarding/>.

Grades will be assigned on a criterion-referenced basis. The two assignments and take-home final will be graded for thoroughness, clarity, organization, and appropriate and illuminating analysis of data in terms of the materials we have discussed in class. Additional criteria for evaluation of the assignments and take-home final will be distributed before the assignments are due. *Written assignments will have 5 points deducted for every day they are late unless some other arrangement is negotiated before the assignment is due.*

- Questions on readings: 10%
- Exam on readings: 1- 6: 15%
- Assignment 1: 25%
- Assignment 2: 25%
- Take-home final 25%

It is expected that your written work will reflect careful editing for grammar, spelling, and punctuation as well as clarity of content and argumentation. *Each student is responsible for knowing the definitions of academic misconduct and plagiarism, and each student is responsible for avoiding these; penalties may include a failing grade for an assignment or for the entire course.*

NB: Boston University is committed to equal access for students with disabilities. If you have a specific disability and require accommodations in this class, please let me know early in the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made. You must provide me with a letter of needed accommodations prepared by the Office of Disability Services. Contact information for that office is as follows: (617) 353-3658 V/TTY or access@bu.edu. All discussions and written materials will be kept confidential.

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TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

PHASE ONE: MACRO-LEVEL ISSUES

WEEK ONE (January 21-26): *Overview*

- Instructor will introduce the range of topics to be covered, along with a general introduction to the methods and goals of different approaches to sociolinguistics. Introduction to week 2: languages, dialects, and varieties.

WEEK TWO (January 28-February 2): *Languages, dialects, and varieties*

- [Q] Wardhaugh, Chapter 2: Languages, dialects, and varieties. Pp. 27-57.
- Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, Chapter 1: Dialects, standards, and vernaculars. Pp. 1-26 (see Blackboard).
- Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, Chapter 2: Why dialects? Pp. 28-63 (see Blackboard).

WEEK THREE (February 4-9): *Language contact: the range of emergent forms*

- [Q] Wardhaugh, Chapter 4: Languages in contact. Pp. 82-110.
- Wardhaugh, Chapter 5: Contact languages (pidgins and creoles). Pp. 114-134.
- Githiora, C. 2002. Sheng: peer language, Swahili dialect, or emerging Creole? *Journal of African Cultural Studies*. 15.2: 159-181 (see Blackboard).

WEEK FOUR (February 11-17): *Language varieties and language attitudes*

- [Q] Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, Chapter 7: African American English. Pp. 211-232 (see Blackboard).
- Rickford, J. 1999. Suite for ebony and phonics. Chapter 15. *African American Vernacular English: Features, Evolution, Educational Implications*. Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers. Pp. 320-328 (see Blackboard).
- Mesthrie, R., J. Swann, A. Deumert, and W.L. Leap. 2000. Chapter 13. *The sociolinguistics of sign language. Introducing Sociolinguistics*, Philadelphia: John Benjamins. Pp. 419-448 (see Blackboard).

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16: NO CLASS (PRESIDENTS' DAY HOLIDAY)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17: SUBSTITUTE FOR MONDAY SCHEDULE

WEEK FIVE (February 18-23): *Language planning, globalization, Novalandia*

- [Q] Wardhaugh, Chapter 14: Language policy and planning. Pp. 367-393.
 - Wee, L. 2008. Linguistic instrumentalism in Singapore. In Tan, PKW & Rubdy, R. (Eds.) *Language as Commodity: Global Structures, Local Marketplaces*. London: Continuum Publishing. Pp. 31-43 (see Blackboard).
 - Alsagoff, L. 2008. The commodification of Malay: Trading in futures. In Tan, PKW & Rubdy, R. (Eds.) *Language as Commodity: Global Structures, Local Marketplaces*. London: Continuum Publishing. Pp. 44-55 (see Blackboard).
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WEEK SIX (February 25-March 2): *Continuation of Language Planning and Introduction to Phase Two*

- Continuation of Language Planning. Novalandia (directions in class)
- [Q] Wardhaugh, Chapter 8: Language variation and change. Pp. 196-221.
- Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, Chapter 5: Regional dialects. Pp. 134-165 (see Blackboard)
- *March 2: Professor Ngom attends Rodney Seminar, 12:00-2:00 PM (to be confirmed)*

PHASE TWO: FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD WAVE

WEEK SEVEN (Monday, March 4-6): *Midterm and Intro: Variation-- the first wave*

- **IN-CLASS EXAM:** One-hour in-class closed-book exam on readings and lectures from weeks 1-6.
- Introduction to Phase Two: Variation-- first, second, and third wave studies
- **ASSIGNMENT INTRODUCED**

SPRING RECESS: MARCH 7-15

WEEK EIGHT (March 16-20): *Variation: the first wave; intro to second wave*

- Wardhaugh, Chapter 7: Three waves of variation studies. Pp. 169-194.
- [Q] Laferriere, M. 1979. Ethnicity in phonological variation and change. *Language*. Vol. 55.3: 603-617 (see Blackboard).
- Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, Chapter 6: Social and ethnic dialects. Pp. 167-209 (see Blackboard).

WEEK NINE (March 23-27): *Variation: the second wave, continued*

- [Q] Gal, S. 1978. Peasant men can't get wives: Language change and sex roles in a bilingual community. *Language in Society*, Vol. 7. Pp. 1-16. Reprinted in Baugh, J. and Sherzer, J., Eds. *Language in Use: Readings in Sociolinguistics*. 1984. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. Pp. 292-304 (see Blackboard).
- Wardhaugh, Chapter 3: Defining groups (including communities). Pp. 62-79.

WEEK TEN (March 30-April 3): *Variation: the third wave*

- [Q] Eckert, P. and McConnell-Ginet, S. 1999. Communities of practice: Where language, gender, and power all live. *Language in Society* 28, Pp. 484-494 (see Blackboard).
 - Eckert, P. 2005. Variation, convention, and social meaning. Plenary address presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, Oakland, CA. Jan. 7, 2005. Ms (see Blackboard).
 - Bucholtz, M. 1999. "Why be normal?" Language and identity practices in a community of nerd girls. *Language in Society*, 28. 203-223 (see Blackboard).
 - **ASSIGNMENT ONE DUE ON MONDAY, MARCH 30.**
 - **ASSIGNMENT TWO INTRODUCED**
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WEEK ELEVEN (April 6-10): *Anthropological contributions*

- Wardhaugh, Chapter 9: Ethnographic approaches. Pp. 280-305.
 - [Q] Wardhaugh, Chapter 10: Pragmatics. Pp. 248-276.
 - Basso, K.H. 1972. To give up on words: Silence in Apache culture. In P.P. Giglioli, Ed. *Language and Social Context*. pp. 67-86 (see Blackboard).
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WEEK TWELVE (April 13-17): *Language and gender*

- Wardhaugh, Chapter 12: Language, gender, and sexuality. Pp. 309-334.
 - [Q] Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, Chapter 8: Gender and language variation. Pp. 234-264 (see Blackboard).
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WEEK THIRTEEN (April 20-24):

- Continuation of language and gender, wrap-up and overview.
 - **ASSIGNMENT TWO DUE ON APRIL 20.**
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WEDNESDAY APRIL 22: PATRIOT'S DAY HOLIDAY
APRIL 24-26: PROFESSOR NGOM TRAVELS TO ALTA CONFERENCE

WEEK FOURTEEN (April 27-29):

- Last week of class. Wrap-up and final review. No new readings.
 - **TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM HANDED OUT AND REVIEWED.**
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FINAL EXAM DUE (Tuesday, May 7):

- Last day to hand in take-home final examination. Email the take-home to me, bring it to my office, or put it in my mailbox located at the African Studies Center (5th floor, 232 Bay State Road), before 5:00 PM.

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OPTIONAL READINGS:

- Rickford, J. and J. McWhorter. 1998. Language contact and language generation: Pidgins and creoles. In Coulmas, F. (Ed.) *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. Pp. 238-256.
- Albirini, A. 2011. The sociolinguistic functions of code-switching between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic. *Language in Society*, 40: 537-562.
- Vaughn-Cook, A.F. 2007. Lessons learned from the Ebonics controversy. In R. Bayley & C. Lucas (Eds.) *Sociolinguistic Variation: Theories, Methods, and Applications*. Cambridge University Press.
- McWhorter, J. 2005. Strange bedfellows: Recovering the origins of Black English. Chapter 13. *Defining Creole*. Oxford University Press. Pp. 337-366.
- Henry, E.S. 2010. Interpretations of “Chinglish”: Native Speakers, Language Learners and the Enregisterment of a Stigmatized Code. *Language in Society*, 39: 669-688..
- Bodine, A. 1975. Androcentrism in prescriptive grammar: singular 'they', sex-indefinite 'he', and 'he or she'. *Language in Society*, Vol. 4. Reprinted in Cameron, D. (Ed.), *The Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader*. 1998. London: Routledge. pp. 124-138.
- Uchida, A. 1992. When 'difference' is 'dominance': a critique of the 'anti-power-based' cultural approach to sex differences. *Language in Society*, Vol. 21. Reprinted in Cameron, D. (Ed.), *The Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader*. 1998. London: Routledge. pp. 280-292.
- Bradley, J. 1998. Yanyuwa: 'Men speak one way, women speak another'. In Coates, J. (Ed.), *Language and Gender: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. pp. 13-20.