Sociolinguistics, Spring 2017

Course: CAS AN 521 / CAS LX 341 / GRS LX 641
Instructor: Professor Fallou Ngom (fngom@bu.edu)
Office: 507, African Studies Center
Class Time: MWF 10:10 am -11:00 am
Location: TBA
Office hours: TBA

Prerequisite:

• CAS LX 250 Introduction to Linguistics
  or CAS AN 351 Language, Culture, and Society
  or consent of instructor

General Overview:

• 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.

Course and Learning Objectives:

• Students will learn about the major frameworks used to study the relationships between language and society. These include: variationist sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, and interactional sociolinguistics.
• Students will learn about the development of pidgins and creoles, multilingualism, globalization and language status and prestige, and language planning and policy.
• Students will gain an understanding of the linguistic and social factors that shape language contact and language attitudes.
• Students will gain an understanding of the motivations, methods, and findings of First, Second, and Third Wave studies in the field of Sociolinguistics.

Readings:

• The readings will be based on influential scholarly papers in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology (available in the course Blackboard) and on the following textbooks to be purchased: Ronald Wardhaugh and Janet M. Fuller, An Introduction to Sociolinguistics, Seventh Edition (Somerville, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), and Walt Wolfram and Natalie Schilling-Estes, American English: Dialects and Variation, Second Edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

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.)
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• 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 discussed in class.

Blackboard:

• Each student will be responsible for submitting one question on an assigned reading in Blackboard by 8:00 PM the Sunday before the reading is discussed. The articles for which students should submit a question are marked with a [Q]. Questions should be posted in the “Discussion Board” section in the appropriate weekly “Forum” in Blackboard. 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.

• 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.

Grades:

• 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%

Expectations for Students Enrolled in CAS LX 341, CAS AN 521, and GRS LX 641:

• Undergraduate students enrolled in CAS LX 341 or CAS AN 521 will have a take-home final exam.

• Graduate students enrolled in CAS AN 521 or GRS LX 641 will (a) develop an approved topic by the seventh week of class, and (b) and write a final research paper of approximately 25 pages (including references) that replaces the take-home final exam.

• Both the final paper of graduate students and the take-home final exam of undergraduate students will be due at 5:00 PM on the day of the final exam. All the materials should be sent via email to fngom@bu.edu.
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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 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

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.

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

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16: NO CLASS (PRESIDENTS’ DAY HOLIDAY)
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17: SUBSTITUTE FOR MONDAY SCHEDULE

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

WEEK SIX (February 25-March 2): Continuation of Language Planning and Introduction to Phase Two
- Continuation of Language Planning. Novalandia (directions in class)
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- 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

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

WEEK TEN (March 30-April 3): Variation: the third wave
- ASSIGNMENT ONE DUE ON MONDAY, MARCH 30.
- ASSIGNMNET TWO INTRODUCED

WEEK ELEVEN (April 6-10): Anthropological contributions
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WEEK TWELVE (April 13-17): Language and gender

WEEK THIRTEEN (April 20-24):
• Continuation of language and gender, wrap-up and overview.
• ASSIGNMENT TWO DUE ON APRIL 20.

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.

FINAL EXAM DUE (Tuesday, May 7):
• Last day to hand in take-home final examination/ and final papers. 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.

Academic Conduct:
• All Boston University students are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity. It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of the Academic Conduct Code’s content and to abide by its provisions. The University’s codes of conduct are available at:
http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/.
http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/grs-forms-policies-procedures/academic-discipline-procedures/

Accommodation for Disability:
• In order to make appropriate arrangements so that the course can be fully accessible, students who have a disability should contact me as soon as possible. If you have questions about requesting academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (www.bu.edu/disability).

OPTIONAL READINGS:


