

San José State University
Department of Linguistics & Language Development
LING 20, Nature of language, s03, Fall 2018

Course and Contact Information

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| Instructor: | Kaveh Varjoy |
| Office Location: | Clark 406K |
| Telephone: | 408-924-4716 |
| Email: | kaveh.varjoy@sjsu.edu (best way to contact) |
| Office Hours: | TR 10:30am - 11:45am, and by appointment |
| Class Days/Time: | TR 9:00am - 10:15am |
| Classroom: | Boccardo Business Center 125 |
| Prerequisites: | None |
| GE/SJSU Studies Category: | D1 (Human Behavior) |

Course Format

This course adopts a technology intensive/hybrid classroom delivery format. This means you will attend class lectures and receive materials in class, but that materials will also be provided online via Canvas. You will need access to a computer with Internet access to use these materials to fully participate in classroom activities.

Faculty Web Page

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](http://sjsu.instructure.com) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. The direct link to the course Canvas page is <https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1267827>. You are responsible for regularly checking the announcements to learn of any updates.

Course Description

Introduction to the nature of language as a social institution and practice in observing language structure and use in local speech communities.

Course Goals

In this course, Ling 20: Nature of language, we will take a scientific approach to language in order to see it for what it really is. Language is a crucial symbol of social group identity and plays an important role in shaping culture and society. It is both an indicator and creator of social inequality. This course will explore individual beliefs and experiences of language and how these contribute to pattern of language use in local communities and society at large. Concepts of identity and social organizations like age, socioeconomic class, race/ethnicity, and gender will be vital to our discussions as will concepts related to language in use in the social world. We will teach each other a little of each of the languages that the people in the class speak in order to gain an appreciation of this magnificent diversity, and question the idea that people should have a right to tell others how to speak.

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

The topics in this course are geared to help students meet the GE student learning objectives stated below consistent with the contents and competencies required by Core General Education Area D1: Human Behavior. In each topic, the course will explore concepts of language use and perceptions through the use of theory, observation, and collecting and analyzing data. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial context.
2. Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences linkages and interactions between them.
3. Evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.
4. Recognize the interactions of social institutions, culture, and environment with the behavior of individuals.
5. Identify and analyze the social dimension of society as a context for human life, the processes of social change and social continuity, the role of human agency in those social processes, and the forces that engender social cohesion and fragmentation.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Students will demonstrate recognition of the interaction of social institutions, culture, and the environment with the language behavior and identity of individuals
2. Students will demonstrate understanding of language as a creative and systematic human ability.
3. Students will identify processes of language change.
4. Students will demonstrate awareness that different dialects of English are rule-governed systems.
5. Students will use linguistic methods to collect and analyze data from local communities.
6. Students will formulate original conclusions about contemporary language use and its variation in diverse regional, social, cultural, or ethnic communities.

Required Texts/Readings

There is no required textbook for the course. Relevant materials will be posted on Canvas.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

Computer with Internet connection, paper, writing instruments

Library Liaison

Toby Matoush (email: Toby.Matoush@sjsu.edu).

Additional information can also be found under the 'Your Research Resources' page on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

The [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), Course Syllabi (at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), requires the following language to be included in the syllabus: “Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practice. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.” That means you are expected to spend 135 hours throughout the semester, or 9 hours per week.

Requirements

1. Students must actively participate in lectures and class discussions. Active participation means asking and answering questions, completing individual and group classwork, and generally paying attention during class time.
2. Students must complete readings before coming to class in order to fully engage with the materials and their peers. Students are encouraged to take notes on readings and course materials.
3. Homework and quizzes should be completed as they review and reinforce materials covered in class. All work must be completed in order to pass this course.
4. Students must regulate their workload and communicate any issues to the instructor *before* due dates. All due dates are listed in the syllabus as well as on Canvas.

Assignments

1. Language Experience Paper: Students will write a 2-3 page paper reflecting on their own linguistic experiences and heritage and their beliefs about language (GELOs 1, 2, 4, 5).
2. Neologisms Paper: Students will write a 2-3 page paper on *neologisms* discussing words that have recently entered the English language and the processes behind their formation and use (GELOs 1, 4, 5).
3. Transcription Paper: Students will write a 2-3 page paper transcribing a selected portion of media of their choice using their knowledge of the sounds and sound systems of English (GELOs 2, 4).
4. Discourse/Text Analysis Paper: Students will write a 2-3 page paper applying their understanding of discourse analysis to analyze two texts designed for different audiences (GELOs 2-4).
5. Speech Event Paper: Students will write a 2-3 page paper analyzing how language use is context-dependent and describing the factors that influence language use (GELOs 1-4).
6. Language Myths: Students will work with a small group to research a popular myth about language, beginning with inspiration from one of our course texts and extending this research by using additional resources. Students will create an educational video to dispel the myth (GELOs 1-4).
7. Homework and quizzes as assigned throughout the semester (CLOs 1-9).

Grading Information

Your final grade will be assessed according to your performance on the following required assignment groups. Percentages are listed, not individual points. Detailed descriptions of each assignment are available on Canvas.

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|---|-----|
| <i>Homework, Quizzes, and Participation</i> | 15% |
| <i>Language Experience Paper (FA1)</i> | 5% |
| <i>Neologisms Paper (FA2)</i> | 5% |
| <i>Transcription Paper (FA3)</i> | 10% |
| <i>Text Analysis Paper (FA4)</i> | 10% |
| <i>Speech Act Paper (FA5)</i> | 15% |
| <i>Midterm exam</i> | 20% |
| <i>Final exam</i> | 20% |

Breakdown of Grades

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| A+ | 98-100 | B+ | 87-89 | C+ | 77-79 | D+ | 67-69 |
| A | 93-97 | B | 83-86 | C | 73-76 | D | 63-66 |
| A- | 90-92 | B- | 80-82 | C- | 70-72 | D- | 60-62 |
| Note: in order to count towards the GE requirement, a C or better is required. | | | | | | F | < 60 |

Determination of Grades

- All assignments, unless otherwise indicated, must be submitted in the appropriate electronic format.
- Grades are determined solely based on points, weighted by category, accrued throughout the semester.
- Extra credit may be available at the discretion of the instructor, and will only ever be allowed if all assignments have been completed.
- In the event a late assignment is accepted, it will be graded down for each day that it is late.

Classroom Protocol

Please arrive on time. If you must arrive late, please enter the classroom quietly and with respect for your classmates and your instructor.

Please refrain from using your cellphones in class.

This is a workshop-style course, not a purely lecture course. This means that participation in all class activities is mandatory. We will be using lots of group and pair work, as well as whole-class discussion, in which everyone is encouraged to speak up. You are asked to adapt to this kind of format.

University Policies (Required)

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>.

LING 20, Nature of language, Fall 2018, Course Schedule

Note: schedule is tentative and subject to change with reasonable notice (in class and/or by email). Readings should be complete by class time on the date indicated.

Course Schedule

| Week | Date | Topics, Readings | Assignments Due (by 7:59am) |
|------|-------|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 | 8/21 | Introduction to "Nature of Language" | |
| 1 | 8/23 | Language Myths <i>Readings: --</i> | |
| 2 | 8/28 | What is Language? I <i>Readings: Finegan; Yule 02</i> | |
| 2 | 8/30 | What is Language? II <i>Readings: --</i> | Quiz 1 |
| 3 | 9/4 | Heritage Languages Assigned: FA 1 <i>Readings: Kelleher; Wiley</i> | Quiz 2 |
| 3 | 9/6 | Word formations <i>Readings: Kremmer; Yule 05</i> | Quiz 3 |
| 4 | 9/11 | Neologisms Assigned: FA 2 <i>Readings: Contreras</i> | FA 1 |
| 4 | 9/13 | Slang <i>Readings: Eble</i> | Quiz 4 |
| 5 | 9/18 | Sounds of language I Assigned: FA 3 <i>Readings: Yule 03-04</i> | FA 2 |
| 5 | 9/20 | Exercise on FA 3 <i>Readings: Kachru & Smith</i> | Transcription Practice #1 |
| 6 | 9/25 | Sounds of language II <i>Readings: --</i> | FA 3 Prep |
| 6 | 9/27 | Regional and Social Variation <i>Readings: Yule 18-19</i> | Transcription Practice #2 |
| 7 | 10/2 | Ethnography of Communication Assigned: FA 4 <i>Readings: Salzmann</i> | FA 3 |
| 7 | 10/4 | Exercise on FA 4 <i>Readings: Yule 11</i> | Quiz 5 |
| 8 | 10/9 | Register <i>Readings: Holmes</i> | FA 4 Texts |
| 8 | 10/11 | Conversational Style <i>Readings: Tannen</i> | Quiz 6 |
| 9 | 10/16 | Review for Midterm <i>Readings: --</i> | Midterm study guide |
| 9 | 10/18 | Midterm <i>Readings: --</i> | |
| 10 | 10/23 | Exercise on FA 5 Assigned: FA 5 <i>Readings: Yule 10</i> | FA 4 |
| 10 | 10/25 | Language and Culture Assigned: Language Myths <i>Readings: Yule 20</i> | |

| Week | Date | Topics, Readings | Assignments Due (by 7:59am) |
|-------------|-------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 11 | 10/30 | Language, Race, and Ethnicity <i>Readings: Bucholtz; Urciuoli</i> | Quiz 7 |
| 11 | 11/1 | Language, Sex, and Gender <i>Readings: Bucholtz; Tannen</i> | Quiz 8 |
| 12 | 11/6 | Multilingualism and Codeswitching <i>Readings: Holmes</i> | Quiz 9 |
| 12 | 11/8 | Deafness <i>Readings: Yule 15</i> | Quiz 10 |
| 13 | 11/13 | Language Diversity and Education <i>Readings: Tottie</i> | Sign Languages |
| 13 | 11/15 | Language and Policy <i>Readings: Miller; Baugh; Files 10.6</i> | Bilingual Education |
| 14 | 11/20 | Language Debate | FA 5 |
| 14 | 11/22 | Thanksgiving Holiday – Campus Closed – No class | |
| 15 | 11/27 | Case Study 1: African American English <i>Readings: Rickford & Rickford; Baugh</i> | |
| 15 | 11/29 | Case Study 2: Choose Your Own <i>Readings: --</i> | AAE Features |
| 16 | 12/4 | Language History and Change <i>Readings: Yule 17</i> | Minority language report |
| 16 | 12/6 | Endangered Languages <i>Readings:</i> | Language Myth Project (due 12/10) |
| Final Exam | 12/13 | Thursday – 7:00pm - 9:15pm – Venue TBA | |

See the SJSU Academic Year Calendar 2018-2019 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/calendar/2184/index.html>.