

FSP 125-01: LANGUAGE IN SOCIETY (RIFKIN)

FALL 2013 SYLLABUS

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, AND DUE DATES

You will need to log on to Canvas (canvas.tcnj.edu) and select FSP 125 to see many of the readings and all of the assignments.

UNIT 1. INTRODUCTION: AUG. 27 (TUESDAY) 2:00 – 4:50 PM IN 331 SOC SCI

Focus: (a) What is this course about? How is it structured? (b) What is language? What do we use it for? (c) How did language come about? (d) What disciplines study language?

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: For this and all other classes we will begin with our weekly quiz. This week we will also review the syllabus and course policies. Then we will get to work: We will learn about one another's language expertise and experiences. We will watch video clips and discuss what we mean by "applied linguistics" and "language in use". We'll also listen to some audio clips and describe salient language features of the language in the clips. You'll need to have watched the TED Talk by Steven Pinker and then to have read Chapter 1 in Lippi-Green in order to participate effectively in these activities (and to do well on the quiz). For part of class we'll split up in teams based on who read Deutscher and who listened to the additional Pinker interview and compare notes about what we learned from these two texts; students will teach one another about the texts they read and listened to.

Readings and Other Activities to Prepare for This Class Session: You must read or view these things *before* our first class as we will talk about them in class (and they will be on the first quiz!)

1) All students must watch a TED Talk by linguist Steven Pinker. You will find this video online at this link:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/wqjuchdfq7bau1i/StevenPinker_%20Linguistics%20as%20a%20Window%20to%20Understanding%20the%20.mp4

(I have the link to this talk in Module 01 of our website at Canvas so you can just click it without having to retype from the link in this syllabus.)

2) All students must read Lippi-Green, introduction and chapter 1, pp. 1-26. This is one of our required books, but in order to facilitate your work, this one chapter of the book is also posted to Canvas in Module 01. (Subsequent reading assignments from this book are not posted to Canvas.)

3) In addition, if your last name begins with the letters A-M you must read Deutscher. If your last name begins with N-Z, then you are assigned to listen to the interview with Steven Pinker (all 3 mp3 files – one interview broken up into 3 files). All readings (and listening texts) are on Canvas in Module 01 for this class session. (In the future all readings and listening excerpts for

our course are on Canvas in the relevant Module, except for readings from the main textbooks, Bonvillain and Lippi-Green, and the podcasts and TED Talks, which are in a folder linked to our Canvas website.)

4) In addition, if you're interested, you can read the optional texts in Module 01 in Canvas.

UNIT 2. LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD: SEPT. 3 (TUESDAY / FOLLOWS MONDAY SCHEDULE) AT 2:00 TO 4:50 PM IN 331 SOC SCI

Focus: How many languages are there in the world? What is universal and what is unique about various languages? **If you have a laptop with wireless, bring it to class for a class activity.**

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: First we will discuss what distinguishes human communication from communication in other species. Then we will use the information in Crystal the MLA Languages Map, and other on-line resources to work in teams to answer the following questions for the language assigned to each team:

1. Where is the language spoken?
2. What are the major features that distinguish this language from other world languages?
3. To what other languages is this language related?
4. Are there significant communities of speakers of this language in the US and if so, where?
5. Is there anything else important about this language that your classmates should know about or that you think would surprise or interest them?

Readings to Prepare for This Class Session: Part IX of "The Languages of the World" in Crystal, David, ed. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge University Press (Bb). Read sections 47-50 and 54-55 carefully, but don't get bogged down in details of specific examples of language change. Instead, focus on the bigger picture. Read Part X "Language in the World" of Crystal, David, ed. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge University Press, sections 56-57. *Bring a print-out of the text in section 51-53 if you don't bring an electronic version on your laptop.* Listen to the McWhorter interview on the nature of language. **In addition**, students with last names N-Z must read about language and chimps (<http://animals.howstuffworks.com/mammals/chimps-learn-language.htm> - read all four sections), while students with last names A-M must listen to an audio file about a special parrot named Alex (Alex and Me, mp3 file on Canvas). Readings and listening texts for this week's class are in Module 02 in Canvas.

Podcast Assignments for This Class

Ejectives – Gabrielle Okun

Dolphins – Ryan Borchert

UNIT 3. STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS OF LANGUAGE: SEPT. 9 (CLASS MEETS REGULARLY FROM NOW ON MONDAY EVENINGS AT 5:30 IN 323 SOC SCI)

Focus: How are languages structured? What are phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics?

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: In this class we will have exercises on each of the major systems of language listed above: phonetics & phonology, morphology (grammar), syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. These topics are the focus of your reading assignment for class today, so pay special attention to how each of these systems is defined and described (yes, that was a hint). We will listen to recordings of the Pledge of Allegiance by native speakers of English from different regions and by speakers with different native languages; students will work in teams to identify the features that distinguish each regional or foreign accent from “Standard American English” or “Central New Jersey English.” Next we will work in groups to come up with an explanation for the use of different but closely related English words. For our discussion of morphology, we will try to articulate rules for how the future tense is expressed in English; then we will analyze some sentences that might have grammatical errors and discuss how we perceive grammar in English. Then we will come up with as many different interpretations as we can for some ambiguous sentences in English. Lastly, we will devise apologies appropriate for different social contexts, each of which includes the same physical action.

Readings to Prepare for This Class Session: Bonvillain Chapter 2, Yule Chapter 11 (on Canvas in Module 03).

Podcast Assignments for This Class:

By Their Words – Kristen Borowski

UNIT 4. LANGUAGE VARIATION 1: SEPT. 16

Focus: How do varieties of the same language differ in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics? Why do groups of people who apparently share “the same language” sometimes use it very differently? What is the difference between a language and a dialect? What variation can we observe in languages like English, French, Spanish, or Arabic?

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: We will screen brief excerpts from the documentary *American Tongues* and discuss how what we watch connects with what we read for today’s class and the other readings we’ve read so far this semester. Then we will work in groups to describe images and compare our descriptions to determine whether the gender of the speaker had an impact on the choice of descriptors. Next we will watch a coffee commercial from the 1950s and analyze the use of language in the context of gender stereotypes from that period and from the present day. We will use these experiences to come to a broader discussion of language variation in our own lives and the lives of our family members and friends and neighbors.

Readings to Prepare for This Class Session: Read Lippi-Green Chapters 3-4 and Bonvillain Chapter 10. Read also the essay on line “The Strange Decline of the Philly Accent” in Canvas Module 04.

Podcast Assignments for This Class:

Fawth Flaw (New Yawk) Parts 1 and 2 – Ryan Simio

UNIT 5. LANGUAGE VARIATION 2: SEPT. 23

First Draft of Paper 1 Due Today in 2 Hard Copies and in Canvas (submit through Assignment section).

Focus: How and why is language use related to important social variables such as ethnicity, religion, class, gender, age, and education? How do people co-exist when there are two or more languages or varieties used in a particular community? How does a particular language variety come to be regarded as the “standard” variety, while others are regarded as “non-standard”? What is the relationship between language and power? What is the relationship between language and race? What is linguistic stereotyping and profiling? How can we avoid linguistic biases?

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: Some of us will listen to a story from NPR entitled “The Cost of Sounding Black”, while others of us will listen to a different story from NPR on people struggling with a Boston accent. We will consider the nexus of prejudice and discrimination based on language use. Then we will watch a short video segment from a Hollywood film and analyze it with the methodology used in Lippi-Green Chapter 7. In this activity, we will analyze language data, not judge language use. Lastly, we will watch another excerpt from *American Tongues* and discuss it on the basis of what we’ve read for today’s class.

Readings to Prepare for This Class Session: All students read Lippi-Green chapter 7 and “Does President Obama Speak White?” In addition – students with last names A-M must also read Lippi-Green chapter 10 and listen to “The Cost of Sounding Black”, while students with last names N-Z must read Bonvillain Chapter 9 and listen to “Bostonians Want to Lose Their Accent.”

Homework for next class: You can begin working on the accent survey (download from Canvas): each student has to interview 5 people from your hometown. In addition, create your three-minute oral presentation assignment and upload it to the Assignment for Oral Presentation #1 on Canvas as per the assignment instructions. (Next week you’ll do your peer reviews of some of your classmates’ presentations, which I will assign you.)

Podcast Assignments for This Class:

Rachel Jeantel – Jeffrey Farina

Jumpin’ Salty in the O – Cooper Morrison

UNIT 6. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT 1: SEPT. 30**Oral Presentation #1 Due Today (Uploaded to Canvas Assignment).**

Focus: First, we will wrap up our discussion of the issue of accents in New Jersey. Next, students who watched the documentary last week will share with us what they learned. Then we will turn to our new topic: How do we learn words? What allows a baby to hear words, see objects, actions and events and to fuse the two? *Please bring your laptops for this class session.*

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: We will watch a number of video segments featuring children of different ages communicating with language and will analyze the stage of their language development based on the reading assigned for today's class. We will share stories of the observation of language use by little children in our own lives (younger siblings, nieces, nephews, cousins, neighbors, or our own children or the children of friends).

Readings to Prepare for This Class Session: All students read Bonvillain, excerpt from Chapter 7 starting on p. 172 through p. 177, but I recommend that you read this part after the assigned selection from Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek. Students are assigned to read selected chapters from Robert Michnick Golinkoff and Kathy Hirsh-Pasek (*How Babies Talk: The Magic and Mystery of the First Three Years of Life*) as follows: Students with last names A-H read chapter 3; students with last names from I through Pe read chapter 4; and students with last names from Pi to Z read chapter 5. **In addition, bring your NJ accent survey results (notes and map) to this class session; this homework assignment is part of your class participation grade for this session.**

Podcast Assignments for This Class:

Learning in Utero – Matthew Johnson

UNIT 7. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT 2: OCT. 7**Final Version of Paper 1 Due Today in Hard Copy (including first draft and group edit) and in Assignment Folder in Canvas.**

Focus: How do children learn to use language in culturally specific, culturally appropriate ways? What is the path of language development for children who are deaf?

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: We will interview one another on our perspectives on family and childrearing and draw up a table of similarities and differences reflected in our own class. Then we will watch three video segments on the socialization of children and language acquisition and analyze how they fit onto the table of findings in our own class. We will debate different theorists' approaches to child language acquisition (e.g., Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff vs. Garrett). We will consider the important findings reported by Fox about language in a community of deaf and hearing individuals and what these findings tell us about the human language instinct. Lastly, we will review for the midterm exam.

Readings to Prepare for This Class Session: All students read Bonvillain Chapter 4 and listen to the Radio lab recording. At halfway into the recording, there's a buzz and the story picks up

after the buzz; be sure to listen to the whole recording. Students with last names A-M also read Garrett “Language Socialization” from Elsevier Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics, while students with last names N-Z read Fox, Chapter 13 from *Talking Hands*.

Podcast Assignments for This Class:

Talking to Kids – Andrew Piccarelli

UNIT 8. LANG. DEVELOPMENT OF BI- AND MULTILINGUAL CHILDREN: OCT. 14

Peer evaluations of Oral Presentation #1 are due today.

Focus: How do children learn more than one language simultaneously? Are the two languages fused in the beginning or can young children still keep them separate? Is it true that bilingualism slows down language development?

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: In this class we will continue to talk about bilingualism. We’ll watch some videos about bilingual children and then discuss these videos on the basis of what we’ve read for class.

Readings to Prepare for This Class Session: All students read Bonvillain Chapter 12. Students with last names A-M will read Genesee, et al., “Bilingual First Language Acquisition,” while students with last names N-Z will Goldstein “Clinical Implications of Research on Language Development and Disorders in Bilingual Children” in the journal *Topics in Language Disorders*. Be prepared to “teach” your article to a partner who read the other article.

Podcast Assignments for This Class:

Don’t Insist on English – Tyler DeSanctis

UNIT 9. LANGUAGE AND LITERACY IN EDUCATION: OCT. 21

Focus: What do we mean by literacy? What is the difference between oral and literate cultures? How do we understand discourse? What are primary and secondary discourses?

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: First we will the meaning of literacy in different cultures as described in the readings assigned for today’s class. Then we will watch a video and read two short newspaper articles about language use in the public sphere: the first of these articles concerns the decision of a restaurant in Philadelphia to require customers to order in English and the second describes the murder of a Polish man in a Canadian airport. In both cases, language played a very significant role. We will discuss these texts on the basis of the readings assigned for today’s class. We will also review for the Take-Home Midterm Exam today; the Midterm is due on Wed., October 30.

Readings to Prepare for This Class Session: There are 3 readings for this week’s class (all students read all the readings). (1) Andrea Fishman “Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish,” p. 239-250, in *Literacies: Reading, Writing, Interpretation*. Terence Brunk, Suzanne Diamond, Priscilla Perkins, and Ken Smith, eds. New York: Norton, 1997. (2) Shirley Brice Heath “Literate Traditions,” p. 299-313, in *Literacies: Reading, Writing, Interpretation*. Terence Brunk, Suzanne Diamond, Priscilla Perkins, and Ken Smith, eds. New York: Norton, 1997. (3) Bonvillain, Chapter 13.

Podcast Assignments for This Class:

Texting Language – Stephen Swider

Distribution of take-home midterm in class. It will also be posted to Canvas. Don’t forget that you have up to upload your midterm version of your oral presentation to Canvas in addition to the written part of your midterm exam.

OCTOBER 28 – NO CLASS: FALL BREAK

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM DUE IN CLASS AND SUBMITTED THROUGH CANVAS (INC. ORAL PRESENTATION #2) DUE ON OCTOBER 30 BY 11:59 PM.

UNIT 10. COMMUNICATIVE INTERACTIONS: NOV. 4

Focus: What linguistic and cultural features form the basis of our communication with one another?

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: Today we will begin by brainstorming questions to ask a bilingual or multilingual person about their language learning history, emotional ties to their various languages, and language choices for emotional purposes. We will watch two short videos about cultural conflict and then we will interview foreign-born guests (in groups). After our guests leave class we will share our findings with one another.

No Readings to Prepare for This Class Session, but I will present information in class for which you will be responsible on the final exam.

Podcast Assignments for This Class:

Not Just One Story – Zachary Peterson

UNIT 11. LANGUAGE AND LITERACY IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES: NOV. 11

Paper 3: Reflection on Tutoring ESL Due Today in Hard Copy and in Assignment Folder in Canvas.

Oral Presentation #3: Given in class today.

Focus: Do all children start school on an equal footing? What happens when children speak a non-standard variety of the main language? How should we treat children who come from non-English-speaking families and are not yet fully competent in English? Is learning the language through immersion the best way to do it?

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: We will watch videos in which individuals talk about their stories as members of a minority and discuss them in the context of the readings assigned for this class. Then we will read (in class) some very short articles about the English Only movement in the US and debate the proposition that US public K-12 schools should *not* offer bilingual education.

Readings to Prepare for This Class Session: Bonvillain Chapter 11 and Luis C. Moll and Norma Gonzalez, “Lessons from Research with Language-Minority Children” from *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook*, edited by Ellen Cushman, Eugene Kintgen, Barry M. Kroll, and Mike Rose. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001. In addition, read two short articles, also posted to Canvas: one on native speakers of Russian refused passage on a plane for which they held tickets *because they were speaking Russian* and the other about a student at a community college in Arizona *objecting to other students speaking Spanish*.

Podcast Assignments for This Class:

English Was Good Enough for Jesus – Emmanuel Mendoza

UNIT 12. SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING: NOV. 18

First Draft of Paper 2 Due Today in 2 Hard Copies and in Assignment Folder in Canvas.

Focus: What does it mean to know a second language? What is the difference between competence and performance?

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: We will listen to recordings of non-native speakers of English and assess their speech in accordance with the Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Then we will describe our own experiences learning a foreign language. Next we will watch a video of a foreign language lesson and evaluate it in the context of the readings assigned for today's class. Lastly, we will experience a foreign language lesson and consider what it means for us to learn a foreign language.

Readings to Prepare for This Class Session: All students read “Second Language Acquisition/Learning,” Chapter 15 in Yule's *The Study of Language*, and *The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (both on Canvas of course). In addition, all students must read the general preface from the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012*, also on Canvas, as well as the guidelines for speaking. In addition, students are assigned to read one other section of the *Proficiency Guidelines* in the following groups: students with last names from A-H read

the writing guidelines; students with last names from I-Pe read the listening guidelines; and students with last names from Pi-Z read the reading guidelines.

Podcast Assignments for This Class:

Language in the Curriculum – Courtney Carsillo

Heritage Languages – Stephanie Zuidervliet

UNIT 13. LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE: NOV. 25

Peer edit of Paper 2 due today in 2 hard copies and in the Assignment Folder in CANVAS.

Focus: How do linguistic and cultural differences play out in multilingual multicultural workplaces?

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: First we'll look at a slideshow of poorly worded signs in English from around the world and analyze the source of the errors of ambiguity in those signs. We will share with one another our impressions of the readings about intercultural communication in Solomon-Schell and Storti (which we are reading in groups). Then we will use the frameworks in those readings to analyze the cases in Chaney & Martin in groups; groups will present their conclusions to the whole class for discussion. Next we will consider Kale's "Ethics in Intercultural Communication" in application to one or two excerpts from *Worlds Apart*, a documentary about language and culture barriers in the US healthcare system.

Readings to Prepare for This Class Session: Everyone reads the following: (1) Bailey (1997) "Communication of Respect in Interethnic Service Encounters," *Language in Society*, 26, 327-356); (2) "Oral and Nonverbal Communication Patterns" (Chapter 6) from Chaney & Martin's *Intercultural Business Communication*; and (3) Kale's "Ethics in Intercultural Communication," from *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*, edited by Samovar and Porter. In addition, students with last names A-M read Solomon-Schell Chapter 7; students with last names N-Z read Storti Chapter 3.

Podcast Assignments for This Class:

Body Language – Nicholas Verdiramo

UNIT 14. ISSUES OF LANGUAGE IN SOCIETY: DEC. 2

Final version of Paper 2 due today in hard copy and through Canvas.

Focus: Students have read and written (Paper #2) about one of three different books: (a) Fadiman's *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors*; (b) Tannen's *Talking from 9 to 5: Women and Men at Work*; or (c) Valdes's *Learning and Not Learning English*. Today we will discuss and debate these books in the context of what we have been studying all semester.

Discussion Topics and Activities in Class: First students will work in groups together with classmates who read the same book (Fadiman, Tannen, or Valdes). In these groups, students will

agree on the most important points to share with classmates who read one of the other books. Next, students will work with partners who read different books to share impressions with one another of the books they read. Finally, we will come together as a class to discuss important issues, questions, and challenges facing all of us as members of a multilingual society and an increasingly interconnected global community. We will return to the pre-course survey and reconsider attitudes and beliefs in light of the journey we have shared in this class.

Readings to Prepare for This Class Session: No additional readings assigned for today's class. Optional: "Words on Trial," an article on forensic linguistics.

Final examination: to be scheduled as per Records & Registration.

You must upload your Oral Presentation #4 to Canvas by the date of the final examination.