

**Anthropology 289: Language and the Social World**  
**Winter 2015**  
**Professor Keith M. Murphy**

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**Time:** Tuesdays 12:00-2:50

**Place:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Office:**

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 5:30-6:30 & Thursdays 1:00-2:00; or by appointment

**Course Web Page:**

## **# Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the study of language in culture. One of the main principles guiding the course is that language, in its various guises, is an inherently social phenomenon whose unique properties render it a critical resource for organizing and making sense of cultural life at multiple scales. Treating language in this way requires developing distinct methodological approaches and analytical frameworks. We'll start by exploring the historical and conceptual formation of linguistic anthropology as an autonomous subdiscipline within the broader field of anthropology. We'll then spend the rest of the quarter closely examining some of the most generative themes that have motivated recent linguistic anthropological research, including: semiosis and theories of the sign; the relation of language structure to linguistic practice; language and group formation; indexicality; conversation and the real-time production of social structure; and language and media.

Unfortunately we won't be able to cover every major theme in the field, and some are only just barely touched upon. Notable omissions (or underemphasized topics) include contact linguistics; intercultural miscommunication; language and cognition; language socialization; language and power, and many others. Future iterations of this course (or specialized courses) will most likely include these topics, but if you'd like to learn more about them now, consult some of the recommended readings, or better yet, come talk to me.

Knowledge of formal linguistics is not required for taking this course, though it might be useful for gaining a deeper insight into some of the readings. I won't be spending too much time discussing the ins-and-outs of grammatical analysis, but if you need help at any point, please just ask.

## **# Course Readings**

All of the **required** readings for the course can be downloaded from the **course webpage**:

There are **no books that you're required to purchase**.

The following books are **recommended** to help familiarize yourself with the field in general, or some of the particular topics we'll be covering. They should be at Langson Library, or they can be purchased online, or at some bigger non-online bookstores, or you can borrow them from me.

### Text Books

- Ahearn, Laura. 2011. *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Bonvillian, Nancy. xxxx. *Language, Culture, & Communication: The Meaning of Messages*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall. [There are at least 5 editions of this book floating around, and any of them will do]
- Duranti, Alessandro. 1997. *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Duranti, Alessandro (ed.) 2001. *Key Terms in Language and Culture*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.
- Hanks, William F. 1996. *Language and Communicative Practices*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

### General Readers

- Blount, Benjamin G. 1995. *Language, Culture, and Society: A Book of Readings*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland.
- Brenneis, Donald L. and Ronald Maccaulay. 1996. *The Matrix of Language: Contemporary Linguistic Anthropology*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Duranti, Alessandro (ed.) 2004. *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Duranti, Alessandro (ed.) 2009. *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader. 2nd Edition*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. [The first edition is OK, too]

### Introduction to Linguistics

- Finegan, Edward. 1994. *Language: Its Structure and Use, 2nd edition*. New York: Harcourt.

## # Course Requirements

Your grade will be based on the following components:

### Participation (20%)

You're expected to show up prepared to participate fully in every seminar meeting. Our main goal each week is to engage in interesting and lively conversation about the readings. This means the success of the course rests largely on your collective shoulders. I'll of course bring my own input, but I expect the bulk of the discussion to be self-generated and self-propelled. The best approach is to come prepared to every meeting as if you were responsible for leading the discussion.

Luckily, you will have some practice with this. As part of your responsibilities you will (in a small group) help facilitate at least a portion of a few seminar meetings during the quarter — we'll figure out the exact number when we see how many people enroll. These groups are responsible for leading the entire class through their assigned readings. On the first day of class I will give specific instructions for how to organize your presentations and facilitations.

### Response Papers (45%)

You must complete three (3) response papers (each worth 15%) over the course of the quarter in which you engage critically with the class readings.

#### ***Ground Rules***

It's OK to work through difficult concepts you're having a hard time grasping, or to critique points you find in some way problematic. However this doesn't mean you should fill three pages with rhetorical questions, or just complain that you don't understand what the author is trying to say. To critique is not to criticize — it's to analyze, dissect, elaborate, and evaluate, all while trying to understand the author's point of view. You should feel free to bring in non-course materials (e.g., texts or data), but make sure to contextualize them carefully in relation to the readings you're discussing. You can focus on specific points in one reading, or compare different readings more broadly. Whatever your strategy, though, the overall point of these papers is to demonstrate an understanding of the course topics, and how they integrate with broader concerns in the field of anthropology.

#### ***Practical Issues***

- All papers must be between 500 and 750 words.
- You might be asked to read all or a portion of your paper to the class, so make it ready for public consumption.

- Papers must be turned in to the class's EEE dropbox **no later than 5pm on the Monday before class meets**. Any paper received after the deadline will be marked a zero. No exceptions.

## Final Assignment (35%)

You must also complete a final assignment, **due on Thursday, March 19**. This can take one of three forms, but no matter which you choose, it must in some way deal with material we've covered in class, and also include some material from outside sources.

- A) a paper on a topic of your choosing (including something you're already working on)
- B) a research proposal relevant to your own research (I'll provide guidelines)
- C) a paper based on a specific question I give you, sometime towards the end of the quarter

Please let me know which option you're choosing by Week 7. The paper should be between 4,500 and 6,000 words, though I'm more interested in the quality and usefulness of what you produce than its length. We'll negotiate the specifics as the quarter progresses, but again, remember that whichever option you choose it must focus on language in some way, and draw heavily upon the course readings.

## # Schedule of Topics and Readings

### Week 1: Introductions and Orientations

No readings for this week

### Week 2: Foundations and Influences in the Study of Language and Culture

- Duranti, Alessandro (1997), "The Scope of Linguistic Anthropology," in *Linguistic Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; pp. 1-22.
- Boas, Franz (1911/1966), *Introduction to the Handbook of American Indian Languages*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press; pp. 5-44.
- Boas, Franz (1889), "On Alternating Sounds," *American Anthropologist* 2(1); pp. 72-76.
- Peirce, Charles Sanders (1985), "Logic as Semiotic," in R.E. Innis (ed.) *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press; pp. 1-23.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail (1935/1981), "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Austin: University of Texas Press; pp. 259-300.

**Recommended:** Briggs, Charles L. (2002), "Linguistic Magic Bullets in the Making of a Modernist Anthropology," *American Anthropologist* 104(2), pp. 481-498.

### Week 3: World Views, Thought, and Ontology

- Sapir, Edward (1928/1949), “The Unconscious Patterning of Behavior in Society,” in *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality*, D. G. Mandelbaum (ed.), Berkeley: University of California Press; pp. 544-559.
- Whorf, Benjamin Lee (1939/1956), “The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language,” in *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; pp. 134-159.
- Hallowell, A. Irving (1981), “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View,” in S. Diamond (ed.) *Culture in History*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 19-52.
- Cohn, Carol (1987), “Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals” *Signs* 12 (4), pp. 687–718.
- Viveiros De Castro, Eduardo (1998), “Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4(3), pp. 469-488.
- Course, Magnus (2010), “Of Words and Fog: Linguistic Relativity and Amerindian Ontology,” *Anthropological Theory* 10(3), pp. 247-263.

**Recommended:** Volosinov, V. N. (1986), *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

### Week 4: Indexicality

- Ochs, Elinor (1992), “Indexing Gender,” in A. Duranti and C. Goodwin (eds.) *Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; pp. 335-358.
- Silverstein, Michael (2003), “Indexical Order and the Dialectics of Sociolinguistic Life,” *Language and Communication* 23, pp. 193-229.
- Agha, Asif (2003), “The Social Life of Cultural Value,” *Language and Communication* 23, pp. 231-273.
- Agha, Asif (2011), “Commodity Registers,” *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 21(1), pp. 22-53.
- Garfinkel, Harold (1969), “Common Sense Knowledge of Social Structures: The Documentary Method of Interpretation in Lay and Professional Fact Finding,” in *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Cambridge: Polity Press; pp. 76-103.

**Recommended:** Hanks, William F. (2000), “Indexicality,” *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 9(1-2), pp. 124-126.

**Recommended:** Sebeok, Thomas A. and Jean Umiker-Sebeok (1983), “‘You Know My Method’: A Juxtaposition of Charles S. Peirce and Sherlock Holmes,” in U. Eco and T.A. Sebeok (eds.) *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 11-44.

## Week 5: Performance and Performativity

- de Saussure, Ferdinand (1916/1972), *Course in General Linguistics*, New York: Open Court; pp. 8-15.
- Chomsky, Noam (1965), *Aspects of a Theory of Syntax*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; pp. 3-15.
- Austin, John L. (1962), *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford: Clarendon Press; pp. 1-11; 25-38; 67-82; 94-108.
- Bauman, Richard (1975), “Verbal Art as Performance,” *American Anthropologist* 77(2), pp. 290-311.
- Goffman, Erving (1959), *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York: Anchor; pp. 16-53.

**Recommended:** Hall, Kira (2000), “Performativity,” *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 9(1-2), pp. 184-187.

## Week 6: Activity and Situation

- Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1953/2009), *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford: Blackwell; §1-43; 48-53; 65-71; 193-241 (42pp.)
- Goffman, Erving (1964), “The Neglected Situation,” *American Anthropologist* 66(6), pp. 133-136.
- Goffman, Erving (1983), “The Interaction Order,” *American Sociological Review* 48(1), pp. 1-17.
- Goodwin, Charles (1994), “Professional Vision,” *American Anthropologist* 96(3), pp. 606-633.
- Lebaron, Curtis D. and Jürgen Streeck (1997), “Built Space and the Interactional Framing of Experience During a Murder Interrogation,” *Human Studies* 20, pp. 1-25.

## Week 7: Making Sense in Realtime

- Pollner, Melvin (1974), “Mundane Reasoning,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 4, pp. 35-54.
- Garfinkel, Harold (1969), “Passing and the Managed Achievement of Sex Status in an Intersexed Person, Part 1,” in *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Cambridge: Polity Press; pp. 116-185, plus Appendix.
- Lynch, Michael (1991), “Laboratory Space and the Technological Complex: An Investigation of Topical Contextures,” *Science in Context* 4(1), pp. 51-78.

- Peirce, Charles S. (1955), "Abduction and Induction," in J. Buchler (ed.), *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, Mineola, NY: Dover, pp. 150-156.

**Recommended:** Murphy, Keith M., Jonas Ivarsson, and Gustav Lymer (2012), "Embodied Reasoning in Architectural Critique," *Design Studies* 33, pp. 530-556.

**Recommended:** Maynard, Doug (1991), "Goffman, Garfinkel, Games," *Sociological Theory* 9(2), pp. 277-279.

## Week 8: Talk and Conversation as Social Infrastructure

- Heritage, John (1984), "Conversation Analysis," in *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*, Cambridge: Polity Press; pp. 232-292.
- Goodwin, Marjorie H. (1990), *He-Said-She-Said: Talk as Social Organization among Black Children*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

## Week 9: Critical Discourse Analysis — Race and Terror

- Blommaert, Jan and Chris Bulcaen (2000), "Critical Discourse Analysis," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29, pp. 447-466.
- Hodges, Adam (2010), "Discursive Constructions of Global War and Terror," in N. Coupland (ed.), *Handbook of Language and Globalization*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 305-322.
- Pérez, Raúl (2013), "Learning to Make Racism Funny in the 'Color-Blind' Era: Stand-Up Comedy Students, Performance Strategies, and the (Re)production of Racist Jokes in Public," *Discourse and Society* 24(4), pp. 478-503.
- Kiesling, Scott (2001), "Stances of Whiteness and Hegemony in Fraternity Men's Discourse," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 11(1), pp. 101-115.
- Pardo, Rebecca (2013), "Reality Television and the Metapragmatics of Racism," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 23(1), pp. 65-81.

## Week 10: Discourse, Technology, and New Media

- Squires, Lauren (2010), "Enregistering Internet Language," *Language in Society* 39, pp. 457-492.
- Gershon, Ilana (2011), "Un-Friend My Heart: Facebook, Heartbreak, and Promiscuity in a Neoliberal Age," *Anthropological Quarterly* 84(4), pp. 865-894.

- Vaisman, Carmel L. (2014), “Beautiful Script, Cute Spelling and Glamorous Words: Doing Girlhood Through Language Playfulness on Israeli Blogs,” *Language and Communication* 34, pp. 69-80.
- Keating, Elizabeth and Chiho Sunakawa (2010), “Participation Cues: Coordinating Activity and Collaboration in Complex Online Gaming Worlds,” *Language and Society* 39(3), pp. 331-356.
- Sherouse, Perry (2014), “Hazardous Digits: Telephone Keypads and Russian Numbers in Tbilisi, Georgia,” *Language and Communication* 37, pp. 1-11.