

*Syllabus—Winter Quarter 2005 (January 3—March 18)*  
*Department of Anthropology*  
*Central Washington University*

**ANTH 381.01: LANGUAGE IN CULTURE**  
(Tuesday & Thursday 1:00--2:50, Black Hall 136)

**INSTRUCTOR:** Penglin Wang, PhD  
Farrell Hall room 343, 963-3217, wangp@cwu.edu  
Office hours: 10:00-10:50 Monday--Thursday, and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course explores human language in the broader context of culture and society by treating language as a cultural resource and speech as a cultural practice. Some of the themes that we will consider throughout the quarter are: the relationship of language to culture and world view; the nature of major theories in linguistic anthropology; and the ways that language interacts with social structure, gender and individual identity. Topics we will cover include: the design features of human language, the origin of language, relations of power and status between speakers, difference in language usage between men and women, the relationship between varieties of spoken and written language, code-switching, pidgin and creole, language as a political and socioeconomic instrument, and the classification of languages. Exploration of these topics aims to enhance students' awareness of language as a cultural phenomenon and sharpen their sensitivity toward the nuances of language use in relation to cultural complexities, with special reference to the English-speaking cultures.

The course text, written by Zdenek Salzmann, complements the lectures. A few additional readings have been selected to provide a sense of the history of anthropological and cognitive thought about language, and to serve as models for the students' own anthropological study.

**COURSE OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of this course the successful student will be able to

- demonstrate understanding of the basic theories and concepts of linguistic anthropology
- acquire knowledge of what possible interrelationships exist between language and culture
- understand how critical language is to cultural adaptation and how unique language is to the human society
- be acquainted with some tools and techniques used in linguistic anthropology for language analysis

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Salzmann, Zdenek. 2004. *Language, Culture, and Society: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*. Third edition. Boulder: Westview Press.

## REQUIRED READINGS

- Boas, Franz. Linguistics and ethnology. *Language in Culture and Society: A Reader in Linguistics and Anthropology*, edited by Dell Hymes, 15-22. New York: Harper and Row. 1964.
- Dehaene, Stanislas. 1997. The cost of speaking English. *The Number Sense: How the Mind Creates Mathematics*, by Stanislas Dehaene, 102-106. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaye, Alan S. 1994. An interview with Kenneth Pike. *Current Anthropology* 35.3:291-298.
- Saussure, Ferdinand. Signs and languages. *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander and Steven Seidman, 55-63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1990.
- Urban, Greg. 2002. Metasignaling and language origin. *American Anthropologist* 104.1:233-246.

The required readings are on reserve in the Anthropology Department reading room.

## GRADING POLICY & COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course grades will be based upon a midterm exam, a final exam, attendance and participation, and a term project on language use in contemporary society. The point breakdown is:

Midterm exam	30%
Final Exam	30%
Attendance and participation	20%
<u>Term project</u>	<u>20%</u>
Total	100%

The exams may be composed of matching, short answers and/or essay questions taken from the lectures and/or readings. Each student will be expected to complete a term project on language use in contemporary society related to the class, along with one class presentation. Possible themes for the project include (but are not limited to) how language reflects and mediates sociocultural life, why some languages are becoming culturally more important than the other languages in global affairs, why many languages are endangered in the modern world, and what attitude towards language use people have in the United States and elsewhere in the world. Students are required to submit a research prospectus during the fourth week of the quarter, which should be only one page long, and written like a research proposal. It should describe what will be studied, what material will be used (e.g. interviews, publications, and documents). Students will give an 8-10 minute class report on their project in the last four weeks of the quarter and turn in a hard-copy written paper. The

final output of the term project will require 4-5 word-processed and double-spaced pages of text and be due before or on March 10 (Thursday). Late submissions will be penalized 10% per day out of the total graded score. The grade for the term project will be based upon the instructor's evaluation of each of these exercises (prospectus, class presentation, and final written report).

Note on exams: No makeups will be given for exams except in case of illnesses, accidents, or emergencies. If you cannot take an exam because of illness or a family emergency, please notify the instructor before the exam. Rescheduling for any other reason must be discussed with the instructor and approved at least one week before the exam.

### SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND EXAMINATIONS

Week I. January 4 & 6. Course introduction; What is linguistic anthropology? Scope of linguistic anthropology, language is many things, culture and the study of language.

Read Salzman, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-18) and Boas.

Week II. January 11 & 13. Language, culture, and society: grammatical categories, possible relationships between language and society, componential analysis, taboo and euphemism.

Read Salzman, Chapter 3 (pp. 42-69) and Dehaene.

Week III. January 18 & 20. Language origin: methods of investigation, monogenesis versus polygenesis, how did language begin, language and biological evolution.

Read Salzman, Chapter 6 (pp. 114-134) and Urban.

Week IV. January 25 & 27. The structure of language: phonology: the anatomy and physiology of speech, articulation of speech sounds, prosodic features, from phones to phonemes, etics and emics.

Read Salzman, Chapter 4 (pp. 70-92) and Kaye.

\*ONE PAGE RESEARCH PROSPECTUS IS DUE THIS WEEK.

Week V. February 1. Ethnography of communication: speech community and related concepts, units of speech behavior, components of communication, pragmatics, rules of conversation, the cooperative principle.

Read Salzman, Chapter 10 (pp. 225-245)

Midterm exam: February 3, Thursday.

Week VI. February 8 & 10. Language through time: language change, internal and external changes, how and why changes occur, semantic change.

Read Salzmann, Chapter 7 (pp. 135-166).

Week VII. February 15 & 17. Language variation: dialects, idiolects, multilingualism, diglossia, code-switching, from pidgins to creoles, African-American English.

Read Salzmann, Chapter 8 (pp. 167-199).

Week VIII. February 22 & 24. Language in its social context: forms of address and greeting, speech and gender, sexual bias in language, sociolinguistic change.

Read Salzmann, Chapter 9 (pp. 198-224).

Week IX. March 1 & 3. Communication and speech: communication and its channels, communication structure: the study of signs, design features of language, animal communication.

Read Salzmann, Chapter 2 (pp. 19-41) and Saussure.

Week X. March 8 & 10. Linguistic anthropology in the contemporary world: cross-cultural communication, language planning, language endangerment, language maintenance and reinforcement.

Read Salzmann, Chapter 13 (pp. 292-309).

Week XI. Final exam: March 17, Thursday, 2:00-4:00.

**Students with special needs:** Students who qualify for specific accommodations under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) should notify the instructor before class begins to allow for planning of accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of his/her needs and to provide the necessary documentation to the director of the Disability Support Services before any accommodation can be made.

**Changes to the syllabus:** The schedule and proceedings in this syllabus are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.