

Queens College
Anthropology 104
Language, Culture, and Society
<Fall 2021>

Instructor		Prerequisites: None
Class Meets		3 hours, 3 credits
Office Hours:		Pathways:
E-mail:		Flexible Core: Individual and Society (IS)
First Class:		College Option: Language (LANG)

Course Description

Language plays a very important role in our everyday life. Not only is linguistic behavior the central focus of many social settings, but it is also on linguistic evidence that we base many of our evaluations of the world around us. Yet attitudes towards language and the ways in which we use language are highly dependent on social and cultural factors. This course provides an introduction to the field of linguistic anthropology: the study of language use in its socio-cultural context from anthropological perspectives. It focuses on the relationships among language, culture, and society by addressing such questions as: To what extent does language shape our thoughts and identities? What does it mean to know a language? Do all children follow the same language acquisition patterns within a society or across cultures? What is the nature of sign language? How do languages develop and change? What are the differences between language and dialect? How does language reinforce or challenge social stratification? What is the relationship between language and ethnicity? Do women speak more politely than men? Do men and women miscommunicate? How do we study language use and attitudes? How do conversations work? Do we need English-Only laws in the United States? Why is Ebonics controversial? Should we do anything about disappearing languages? Is English going to be the world language? Examples of linguistic phenomena in ethnographic perspective are drawn from peoples around the world.

Course Goals

Discipline/Course Specific Learning Objectives:

This course provides students with a general overview of the discipline of linguistic anthropology introducing its theoretical and methodological issues and central topics of its concern. Numerous empirical studies are used to illustrate the workings of language in its sociocultural context, the role of individual language users and social groups in sociolinguistic and linguistic change, and how linguists and anthropologists engage in knowledge production and in real world issues. We address commonly held misconceptions about language and explore important issues related to linguistic diversity and the politics of language across societies and cultures.

CUNY Common Flexible Core and College Option Course Learning Objectives:

FC 1: Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
FC 2: Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
FC 3: Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.
IS 1: Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the relationship between the individual and society, including, but not limited to, anthropology,

communications, cultural studies, history, journalism, philosophy, political science, psychology, public affairs, religion, and sociology.
IS 2: Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices.
IS 3: Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises.
IS 4: Articulate ethical uses of data and other information resources to respond to problems and questions.
IS 5: Identify and engage with local, national, or global trends or ideologies, and analyze their impact on individual or collective decision-making.
QC1: Address how, in the discipline (or disciplines) of the course, data and evidence are construed and knowledge is acquired; that is, how questions are asked and answered.
QC2: Position the discipline(s) in the liberal arts curriculum and the larger society.
QC 3: Understand and use the concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field.
QC 4: Gather, interpret and assess information from various sources, and evaluate arguments critically.
QC 5: Solve problems, support conclusions, or defend insights.
LANG 1: Differentiate types of language and appreciate their structures.
LANG 2: Appreciate what is lost or gained in translations among languages.
LANG 3: Relate language, thought, and culture.
LANG 4: Compare natural languages, formal languages, and logic.
LANG 5: Understand the processes involved in learning languages.

Course Format and Requirements

This course will be fully online. Students are expected to prepare for and attend and participate in **online/synchronous** class meetings (Tu/Th 3:10~4:25 p.m.) complete homework assignments (due before class at 3:10 p.m.), and respect for your fellow participants and QC codes of conduct.

If you need any technology access related support such as devices/equipment and internet, please email Queens College Center for Teaching and Learning at keeplearning@qc.cuny.edu. For learning space request please use the form at <https://qc-cuny.libcal.com/r/new>

I. Course Grade:

The course grade will be based on the following activities.

In-Class Activities and Participation	200 pts
Homework Assignments	300 pts
Total	500s

II. Course Website on Google Classroom:

Syllabus, Readings, Homework Assignments, and other Course Materials are available via our course page on on Google Classroom. If you need assistance contact the Helpdesk at 718-997-4444, the Dining Hall, Room 150, or helpdesk@qc.cuny.edu.

III. Class Meetings via Zoom <TIME>

Join Zoom Meeting using the following link:

<LINK> <password>

Virtual classroom interaction policies:

- Please use your full first and last names as listed on the class roster (You may also add a nickname at the end in parenthesis, e.g., Beatriz Amari (Bea).
- Please turn on your video when possible. It is helpful to be able to see each other, just as in an in-person class. See above if you need assistance with equipment or internet, or learning space.
- Mute your mic when you are not talking (to eliminate background noise). Be in a quiet place when possible. Use a headset when possible (with a microphone would even be better).
- Please use raise/lower hand function to speak, and chat to pose questions or comments relevant to class. Please stay on topic. No disrespect or hate speech.

IV. Reading and Viewing Assignments:

All course materials are available in our Google Classroom course page. Keeping up with reading and viewing assignments in order to complete your homework assignments (see below) and prepare for class meetings is very important.

V. Homework Assignments:

You will be asked to complete online homework assignments (see below for the schedule), which combine multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions. Late submissions are accepted but for partial credit.

VI. Academic Honor Pledge:

Please be advised that CUNY regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. Please see the [CUNY Academic Integrity Policy](#). The first homework assignment will include an Academic Honesty Statement to be submitted.

VII. ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Candidates with disabilities who may need academic accommodations in this class should: (1) contact The Office of Special Services by email gc.spsv@gc.cuny.edu or by calling 718-997-5870; (2) arrange to have a letter sent to the instructor by the end of the first week of class. The Office of Special Services can also help with assistive technology for remote learning.

COURSE CALENDAR

The following schedule provides information on how the semester is broken down into topic units, and provides a list with due dates of required reading, viewing, and homework assignments. You are expected to have completed all assignments ahead of class. Homework assignments are due at 3:10 pm on the due date. Any changes to the schedule will be announced in class meetings and Google classroom. Please check them regularly.

Class Meeting (3:15~4:30pm)	Reading & Homework Due at 3:15pm	Objectives/ Criteria Met
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I: INTRODUCTION

8/26 (W)	Intro to the Course	✓ <i>We all speak a language that will go extinct</i>		QC2
8/31 (M)	The Nature of Language	✓ <i>The Linguistic Fact of Life</i>	#1	FC1, QC3, LANG4

II: BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

9/2 (W)	Language Development & Acquisition I	✓ <i>A Linguistic Big Bang</i> ✓ <i>Silent Children, New Language</i>	#2	QC2, LANG5
(9/7)	<i>NO CLASS (College Closed – Labor Day)</i>			
9/9 (W)	Language Development & Acquisition II	✓ <i>The Day Language Came into My Life</i> ✓ <i>Cultural Dimensions of Language Acquisition</i> ✓ <i>American Sign Language</i>	#3	IS1, QC3, LANG3, LANG5
9/14 (M)	Language, Thought, & Culture I	✓ <i>Learning the Grammar of Animacy</i>	#4	LANG2, LANG3
9/16 (W)	Language Thought, & Culture II	✓ <i>Metaphors We Live By</i>	#5	IS1, QC3, LANG1, LANG3
9/21 (M)	Language Origin	✓ <i>The Origins and Evolution of Language</i> ✓ <i>Noam Chomsky's View on Language Evolution</i>	#6	QC1, LANG4
9/23 (W)	Historical Linguistics	✓ <i>The Austronesians</i>	#7	FC1, QC1, QC4

III: LANGUAGE IN SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT

9/29 (Tue)	USA Speech Community	✓ <i>Do You Speak American</i>	#8	IS1, IS2
9/30 (W)	Sociolinguistic Variation & Attitudes I	✓ <i>They Speak Really Bad Down South and in New York City</i>	#9	IS1, IS2
10/5 (M)	Sociolinguistic Variation & Attitudes II	✓ <i>The Social Stratification of (r) in New York City Department Stores</i>	#10	QC3
10/7 (W)	Ethnicity, Race & Standard Language Ideologies I	✓ <i>Talking Black in America</i>	#11	FC1, FC2, QC4,
10/14 (W)	Ethnicity, Race & Standard Language Ideologies II	✓ <i>Suite for Ebony and Phonics</i>	#12	IS1, LANG4

10/19 (M)	Ethnicity, Race & Standard Language Ideologies III	✓ <i>Communication with Aboriginal Speakers of English in the Legal Process</i>	#13	IS1, IS2
10/21 (W)	Ethnicity, Race & Standard Language Ideologies IV	✓ <i>In My Blood It Runs</i> ✓ <i>Dujuan Hoosan's speech</i>	#14	FC1, FC2, QC4, QC5
10/26 (M)	Indexicality, Stance & Cultural Discourse I	✓ <i>Dude</i>	#15	IS1, IS2
10/28 (W)	Indexicality, Stance & Cultural Discourse II	✓ <i>Dude</i>	#16	QC3
11/2 (M)	Ethnographic Fieldwork	✓ <i>Veiled Sentiment</i>	#17	QC1, IS3, IS4
11/4 (W)	Research on Language Practice & Ideology	✓ <i>Veiled Sentiment</i>	#18	QC1, IS5
11/9 (M)	Language Socialization I	✓ <i>Negotiating Age: Direct Speech and Sociolinguistic Production of Childhood in the Marshall Islands</i>	#19	IS1, QC1
11/11 (W)	Language Socialization II	✓ <i>Negotiating Age ... in Marshall Islands</i>	#20	FC3
11/16 (M)	Literacy Practice I	✓ <i>Literacy, Power, and Agency: Love Letters and Development in Nepal</i>	#21	IS1, IS2, QC1
11/18 (W)	Literacy Practice II	✓ <i>Literacy, Power, and Agency: Love Letters and Development in Nepal</i>	#22	FC3
11/23 (M)	Interaction & Gender I	✓ <i>'The Father Knows Best' Dynamic in Family Dinner Narratives</i>	#23	IS1, IS2, QC1
11/25	Thanksgiving Recess			
11/30 (M)	Interaction & Gender II	✓ <i>'The Father Knows Best' Dynamic in Family Dinner Narratives</i>	#24	FC3, QC5
12/2 (W)	Language Shift & Reclamation	✓ <i>Being Rapa Nui, Speaking Spanish...on Easter Island</i>	#25	IS1, QC1
12/7 (M)	Language Endangerment	✓ <i>Being Rapa Nui, Speaking Spanish...on Easter Island</i>	#26	FC3, QC5
12/9 (W)	Language, Culture, and Society	✓ <i>We Still Live Here As Nutayunean</i>	#27	FC3, QC2
12/15 (M)	Final Exam Meeting		#28	FC3, QC2, QC5