Ling 150: Sociolinguistics

Course website: on bcourses
E-mail: bwsmith@berkeley.edu
Office: Dwinelle 1222
Office hours: Mon 1p–2p, Wed 11a–12p, and by appointment
Time/place: TuTh 9:30a–11:00a @ Wheeler 108

We meet on the following dates:

Week	W00	W01	W02	W03	W04	W05	W06	W07	W08	W09
Tue	—	8/29	9/5	9/12	9/19	9/26	10/3	10/10	10/17	10/24
Thurs	8/24	8/31	9/7	9/14	9/21	9/28	10/5	10/12	10/19	10/26

Week	W10	W11	W12	W13	W14	
Tue	10/31	11/7	11/14	11/21	11/28	
Thurs	11/2	11/9	11/16	—	11/30	⇐ final presentations

Weds   12/13 ⇐ final exam
11:30am–2:30pm

12/15 ⇐ final paper due
Submit through bCourse

DESCRIPTION

Language conveys meaning. But language is more than just the content to each word: speech also carries cues to speakers' social realities.

Variables like race, gender, sexual identity, power asymmetries, and regional identity affect a speaker's language use. This is turn informs how listeners categorize and make assumptions about their speech partners: your social background informs the way you speak, and the way you speak impacts how people perceive you.

In this class, we will explore the connection between **speech** and **society**. In order to study this, we must also address **linguistic variation**, **sound change**, and **identity.**

COURSE LEARNING GOALS

After this course, you will have an understanding of:

(1) factors that condition linguistic variation, especially phonetic variation
(2) how variation is used by speakers to broadcast and construct their identities, including race, gender, socioeconomic class, and sexuality
(3) how sociolinguistic variation is used by listeners to identify a speaker's identity
(4) linguistic discrimination and language policy
(5) the social mechanisms of historical sound change
(6) how to "do" sociolinguistics. We'll see the following methodologies in action:
     a. Collecting natural language data
          i. via sociolinguistic interviews
          ii. via rapid and anonymous surveys
          iii. via corpora
     b. Linguistic surveys
     c. Mapmaking to measure attitudes
     d. Using isoglosses to determine dialect boundaries
     e. Perception experiments

You'll use one (or more) of these methodologies to conduct original research in a group, which you'll present at the end of the course.

EXPECTATIONS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

EXPECTED TASKS	PERCENT OF GRADE
Attend class	0%
Take weekly micro-quizzes (10-15 minutes at start of class on Thursday)	15%
Do the readings and write responses / answer reading questions	25%
Submit a final group paper (and complete intermediate steps)	25%
Present your final paper as a group, and submit feedback to other groups	10%
Cumulative final exam	25%

Attendance (0%): There's no grade for attendance, but I'll still keep track of it. Although there's no grade, you *must* attend in order to:
- take micro-quizzes
- submit assignments
- find out the next reading or assignment
- coordinate with your group

Micro-quizzes (15%) : 10–15 minutes at the beginning of class (9:40a), every Thursday. Always announced in the class before, including the type of question(s) on the micro-quiz. Lowest dropped.

Readings, responses, questions (25%): I expect you to read ***all*** of the assigned readings. Some are difficult. Some are easy. We'll always discuss the readings in class. Sometimes, you'll be asked to write a summary, come up with a discussion question, or answer a list of short essay questions.

Final group paper (25%): In a group of one to four students, you will conduct original sociolinguistic research, using one of the methodologies presented in class. Some class time will be provided for coordination. The plan is for everyone in the group to receive the same grade on his or her paper and presentation. There will be intermediate steps – a paper proposal, a research plan, and a short literature review/introduction. Each of these will also make up a small part of the final paper grade.

Final group presentation (10%): Each group will present a 15-20 minute presentation of the paper during the last class meeting, and classmates will submit feedback to the group members. Not everyone needs to be part of the presentation, but everyone in the group will receive the same grade, and every student should attend the presentations.

Final exam (25%): The cumulative final exam is on Wednesday, 12/13/17, 11:30am–2:30pm in the regular classroom. Exam will consist of T/F questions (explain if False), multiple choice questions, and two essay questions.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Collaboration and independence: Reviewing lecture and reading materials can be enjoyable and enriching things to do together with one's fellow students, and I recommend it. However, homework assignments should be completed independently and materials turned in as homework should be the result of one's own independent work. Some assignments, namely the final paper, are meant to be done together in a group.

Cheating: Anyone caught cheating on a quiz or exam will receive a failing grade and will also be reported to the University Office of Student Conduct. In order to guarantee that you are not suspected of cheating, please keep your eyes on your own materials and do not converse with others during the quizzes and exams.

Plagiarism/Self-plagiarism: You must be original in composing the writing assignments in this class. To copy text or ideas from another source (including your own previously, or concurrently, submitted course work) without appropriate reference is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade for your assignment and usually further disciplinary action. For additional information on plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and how to avoid it, see, for

example:

CLASSROOM ACCESSIBILITY

Accommodations: If you need disability-related accommodations in this class and have an LOA, have emergency medical information you wish to share with me, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me immediately. Please see me privately after class or at my office.

The Disabled Students' Program (DSP): DSP is the campus office responsible for authorizing disability-related academic accommodations, in cooperation with the students themselves, and their instructors. Students who need academic accommodations, or have questions about their eligibility, should contact DSP, located at 260 César Chávez Student Center. Students may call 642-0518 (voice), 642-6376 (TTY), or e-mail dsp@berkelely.edu

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

I'll announce in class exactly when each paper is expected to be read, and you are always welcome to read ahead. Some of these papers will require answering reading questions, writing a response, composing a question, or summarizing. Please ask if any expectations are unclear.

Weeks 0-1: Foundational assumptions, competence vs. performance

Lippi-Green (2012): The linguistic facts of life (Ch 1 of English with an Accent)

Chomsky (1965): *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, pp. 3-15

Weinreich, Labov, & Herzog (1968): *Empirical foundations for a Theory of Language Change,* pp. 98-103

Meyerhoff (2006): Chapters 1–2 (Overview of sociolinguistic variation)

Weeks 2–3: Early work in sociolinguistics regarding social class and prestige

Labov (1972): The social motivation of a sound change

Labov (1972): The social stratification of R in New York City department stores

Labov (1984): Field methods of project on linguistic change and variation

Milroy & Gordon (2008): Excerpt about ethics in data collection

Weeks 4-5: Language change and dialectal variation

Lippi-Green (2012): Language in Motion (Ch 2 of English with an Accent)

Chambers (2013): Patterns of variation including change

*Bucholtz et al. (2007): Hella NorCal or Totally SoCal?: The Perceptual Dialectology
of California

Wagner (2012): Age Grading in Sociolinguistic Theory

Pope, Meyerhoff, & Ladd (2007): Forty Years of Change on Martha's Vineyard

Ash (2013): Social Class (from The Handbook of Language Variation and Change)

(*We ended up skipping this reading.)

Week 6-7: Social networks and communities of practice

Meyerhoff (2006): Social networks and communities of practics (discusses the
Milroys' Belfast study and Labov's Philadelphia study)

Mallinson (2007): Social class, social status and stratification: revisiting familiar
concepts in sociolinguistics

Weeks 8-11: Gender, sexuality, and indexicality

West & Zimmerman (1983): Small insults: a study of interruptions in cross-sex
conversations between unacquainted persons

Ochs (1991): Indexing gender

Bucholtz (1998): Geek the girl: Language, femininity and female nerds

Cameron (1997): Performing gender identity: Young men's talk and the
construction of heterosexual masculinity

Cameron & Kulick (2003): Sexuality as identity: gay and lesbian
language

Podesva (2011): The California vowel shift and gay identity

Eckert (2008): Variation and the indexical field

Weeks 11-14: Ethnicity and audience design

> Green (2005): African American English (Language in the USA, Chapter 5)

> Schilling-Estes (2003): Investigating stylistic variation (Ch 15 of Handbook)

> Rickford & McNair-Knox (1994): Addressee- and topic-influenced style shift: A quantitative sociolinguistic study

> Hay & Mendoza-Denton (1999): Oprah and /AY/: Lexical frequency, referee design and style

> Lippi-Green (2012): Case Study 2: linguistic profiling and fair housing (Chapter 17 of textbook *English with an Accent*)