

HONORS 195H SECTION 002

Special Topics in Social Sciences (Linguistics)

How does your brain do language? How do computers do language? What does society do with language?

Spring 2018

Professor: Natasha Warner

Class meets:

12:00-12:50 PM, Wednesday

Harvill 332B

Class website: <http://d2l.arizona.edu>

Office hours: TBA, Douglass 320

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Books/materials:

Readings posted on the d2l site. (No textbook to buy.)

Just Mercy, Bryan Stevenson, 2014. (Honors book for this year.)

What this course is about:

There are about 5000-7000 languages in the world right now, and most of us have never heard of most of them! Children born anywhere in the world learn the complicated rules of the language they hear around them, whether it's Standard American English or French or Japanese or Malay or Navajo or African American English. Children's brains learn how to take the sound coming in their ears and break it up into words and sounds. Societies also do things with languages, like giving more prestige to Standard American English or British English than to other varieties. (Doesn't British English just sound so sophisticated? Why?) The things that societies do also lead to possibly 90% of the world's languages being endangered, but there are some things we can do to try to stop that, too. In this class, we'll take an introductory look at languages of the world, language technologies, how the human brain processes language, and how language works in society.

Learning outcomes:

- Be able to give knowledgeable arguments about language issues in our society
- Be able to locate useful academic sources to answer questions about language and other topics
- Think critically about success and strategies for college

Freshman seminars:

A freshman seminar gives you a chance to learn about an interesting topic you might not run into otherwise, often far out of your own field. It might even lead you to take more linguistics courses! It also gives you a chance to have a small course where you can get

to know a professor and some other students. To do this, we'll have a lot of discussion, lots of activities, and a class debate. We'll also spend some time talking about your experience of the university in general.

Course requirements:

- Keep up on readings (read them before class) and discuss actively in class: 20%
- Class debate: 15%
- Harrington language data activity (worksheet): 15%
- 2 Homework activities/worksheets: 15% each (30% total)
- Final language usage observation and write-up: 20%

Grading scale: 90%+ = A, 80-89.9% = B, 70-79.9%=C, 60-69.9% = D, <60% = E

Late policy: 10% reduction of the possible grade per day late, except for documented hospital, police, or similar level excuses. Homework assignments are due **on d21 by the beginning of class**, and will be counted as one day late if turned in later than that.

Tentative schedule (very much subject to change, partly depending on your wishes for content):

Date	Topic	Readings/requirements
1: 1/10	Intro: Languages of the world, language contact, endangerment	
2: 1/17	Languages of the World, Sounds of the World's Languages, Ethnologue	5-Minute-Linguist Ch. 2, Flutes of Fire pp. 107-122
3: 1/24	Library search methods	fieldtrip to the UA main library?
4: 1/31	Second-language learning (adults), Language shift in immigrants	HW1 due: Exploring Ethnologue; 5-Minute-Linguist Ch. 29, Portes & Hao 1998 pp. 272-274
5: 2/7	Book discussion Part I (general)	<i>Just Mercy</i>
6: 2/14	Book discussion Part II (relate to course topics); Managing College I	Rickford & King 2016
7: 2/21	Endangered languages, stages of endangerment, language documentation and early linguists	Flutes of Fire, Ch. 19
8: 2/28	the Mutsun project, revitalization of dormant languages	Warner et al. 2009, How to Keep your Language Alive, Ch. 1-2
9: 3/14	<i>Harrington notes activity</i>	Worksheet (due at end of class)
10: 3/21	Language and the brain;	Conboy & Mills 2006

	Managing college II	
11: 3/28	Language technologies (language and computers)	TBA or websites only
12: 4/4	The English-Only Movement	Crawford 2008, HW2 due
13: 4/11	Catch-up, Prepare for debate	
14: 4/18	In-class debates: I: Should we save endangered languages? II: Official Language of the U.S.	
15: 4/25	Wrap-up, tell about language observations	
No class: 5/2	No class unless we have to change the schedule	
Finals: Wed. 5/9		Language Observation Write-up due to d2l, by noon

Various statements:

Students with Disabilities:

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Resources (621-3268; drc.arizona.edu) and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

Academic misconduct:

The university's policies about plagiarism, academic honesty, and academic conduct are at <http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies/>. Plagiarism is not acceptable, in any form. The library's website also provides extensive help with learning what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. Some common types of plagiarism are:

- Writing about someone's ideas in your own words and not citing them by name to explain whose ideas these are.
- Using a lot of someone's words, or whole sections of their writing, without putting it in quotation marks. Even if you cite them by name for their ideas, if you use their words without putting them in quotation marks, you're stealing their phrasing.
- Writing your own work while you have a book or a browser window of just one source open in front of you, so that you tend to use too much of the source. Avoid this by reading many sources while taking notes in your own words, then taking a break, then writing an outline without looking at the sources, and then writing the paper without looking at the sources. Papers should synthesize knowledge from many sources into one thing, rather than discussing each source in turn.
- Working on homework together to the point of deciding on a specific answer together.

- Writing homework up together, partly or for the whole document. Avoid this by discussing possible thoughts about the homework together, then going your separate ways to write up your own responses.
- Copying something off the internet, even if it's irrelevant, when you don't understand a homework question or have run out of time. Avoid this by starting work early and going to office hours if you don't understand something.

Potentially offensive/objectionable content:

This course contains some political material and some potentially upsetting material. The book *Just Mercy* discusses the death penalty, executions, and racism at length. We will also be discussing opinions about languages, immigration and people's reactions to immigrants, racism, economic differences among groups, historical cases of genocide and prejudice, government policies about languages, etc. Please let me know if you have concerns about any potentially worrisome content.

Conduct in class and distractions:

Please turn off cell phones when in class and put them away. Everyone is required to treat others in class with respect. Disruptive behavior is prohibited. Please do not use computers or electronic devices for any non-class activities during class (no social media or email, no shopping for shoes or anything else online during class, no using the internet except for things directly related to the topic at hand). This has been shown to decrease both your own and others' learning.

Confidentiality of Student Records:

<http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm>

Subject to Change Statement:

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.