

Language in Society

SL362.01 / EN122.01 / SC362.01
Tuesday & Thursday 10:30–11:45
Devlin Hall 112

Instructor: Adam Szczegielniak
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Office Hours: Tue 10-10:30, 11:15-12:30, Thu 10-10:30, 11:15-12:30

1. Course description

SL362 / EN122 / SC362 is an introduction to sociolinguistics, that is, to the study of language in its social context. We will examine a number of classic issues in sociolinguistics including the varieties of language associated with social class, ethnicity, and locale; bilingualism; pidgin and creole languages; proposals about the relationship of language, thought, and culture; and the structure and role of discourse in different cultures. The course concludes by investigating several sociolinguistic issues of contemporary interest: language and gender; the “U.S. English” controversy; language and public policy.

Student responsibilities include attentive reading and preparation for class discussion, two written assignments, one in-class practice, a small independent project in which students gather and analyze original sociolinguistic data, and midterm and final exams. Previous course work in linguistics is not required. Enrolled undergraduates receive Cultural Diversity credit.

2. Course materials

One textbook is required, and is available at the B.C. Bookstore under SL362: Ronald Wardhaugh’s *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 4th edition (2002, Basil Blackwell). Additional materials will be placed on Reserve at O’Neill Library, at the Media Center (2nd floor, O’Neill), and the Educational Resources Center (Campion Hall).

3. Grading

Research project	30%
Midterm exam	35%
Final exam	35%

Final course grades are those described in the *Boston College Bulletin 2003–4*, pp. 37–8. In general: a grade of A \geq 97%; B = 86 to 89%; C = 75 to 78%; D = 64 to 67%; F \leq 59%. “Plus” and “minus” grades fall somewhere in between.

4. Student Responsibilities

- Regular attendance and careful preparation for class are essential.
- Please submit written assignments on time
Late work is penalized as follows: Assignments turned in late within a week will be reduced by one grade. After that, no credit will be given.
- Students must be thoroughly familiar with College-wide policies regarding academic integrity. Please read the *Boston College Bulletin 2003–4*, pp. 31–32, and seek clarification of any policy or procedure you are unfamiliar with.

5. Tentative course schedule and outline of assignments

Date	Topic	Assign. due / test scheduled (Complete readings <i>before</i> class)
09/06	Introduction to the course	
09/08	Kinds of linguistic variation; Inter'l Phonetic Alpha.	Ch. 1, 2
09/13	Pidgin & creole languages	Ch. 3
09/15	Bilingualism	IPA practice
09/20	Bilingualism, con't.: code-switching / mixing	Ch. 4
09/22	Regional language variation in the US	Ch. 5
09/27	Socially-based language variation	Ch. 6
09/29	Language & social status: New York City, Martha's Vineyard, 4th century Rome	Ch. 7, 8
10/06	African-American vernacular English	
10/11	Disadvantages -Register; slang; euphemism & dysphemism	Ch 14
10/13	Language Variation and Change and Language Acquisition	
10/18	<i>Review for exam</i>	
10/20	Mid-term exam	
10/25	Research project; Sapir-Whorf hypothesis	Ch. 9
10/27	Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, con't.	
11/01	Discussion of projects	
11/03	Ethnography of speaking: speech & silence	Ch. 10
11/08	Ethnography of speaking: power, politeness, solidarity Proj. proposal due 5:00 PM	Ch. 11
11/10	Structure of discourse	Ch. 12
11/10	Structure of discourse: conversation & cooperation	
11/15	Language & gender	Ch. 13
11/17	Language planning	Ch. 15
11/22	<i>Project Progress discussion</i>	
11/24	Thanksgiving	
11/29	U.S. educational policy & language; "Ebonics"	Project due 5:00 PM
12/01	<i>Student research presentations</i>	
12/06	<i>Student research presentations</i>	
12/08	<i>Review</i>	Ch. 16

Final Exam