

# LING 131: Sociocultural Linguistics (Spring 2020)

## Zoom University aka UCSB

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**Instructor:** Anna Bax (she/her)

Email: bax@ucsb.edu

**TA:** deandre miles-hercules (they/them)

Email: dmiles@ucsb.edu

**TA:** Giorgia Troiani (she/her)

Email: gtroiani@ucsb.edu

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**Course Description:** Sociocultural linguistics is an interdisciplinary field dedicated to understanding the connections between language, culture, and society. Building on the knowledge of linguistics acquired in your introductory course, LING 131 will familiarize you with the core theoretical models and methods associated with the twin fields of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, including both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This development will be informed by readings from two textbooks as well as supplementary articles. These pieces cover a range of cultural contexts and languages, including but not limited to those found in the United States.

**Prerequisites:** LING 20 (or equivalent introductory course / instructor permission).

**Fulfillments:** LING 131 fulfills requirements for the major in Language, Culture, and Society and the minor in Sociocultural Linguistics. It also satisfies the Writing Requirement.

All course materials will be posted on GauchoSpace, including a continually updated copy of the syllabus; lecture videos; an updated calendar of readings; a link to Perusall, where you can access the readings; announcements; and all assignment instructions.

### **Remote Learning Adjustments**

**Lectures:** These will be asynchronous, meaning they'll be pre-recorded and posted on the GauchoSpace page for you to view as your schedule allows.

**Sections:** Also asynchronous; your TAs will post videos answering your most commonly asked questions.

**Office hours:** Over Zoom (see instructions in the "Talking to us + one another" tab on GauchoSpace)

**Readings:** On Perusall (see below)

**Assignment and quiz submission:** On GauchoSpace

**Asking questions** about lectures & assignments and interacting with peers: On Nectir

### **Requirements and Grading**

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| 1. Social reading comments (5/reading) | <b>20%</b> |
| 2. Weekly quizzes                      | <b>15%</b> |
| 3. Writing/analysis assignments        | <b>30%</b> |
| 4. Final paper                         | <b>35%</b> |

#### **1. Social reading comments (20%)**

We will be using a free, collaborative learning software called Perusall to collectively engage with (mark up, highlight, ask questions about, problematize, etc.) the assigned readings. This will allow you to communicate with your peers about the assigned readings, to broaden your understanding of course material, and to use one another as learning resources.

On Perusall, you highlight an area of a text or image and make comments on the text. You should write a couple of short sentences, but there is no maximum length or topic requirement; you can ask or answer a question, link to something (an article, video, etc.) relevant to the class with some explanation of why you find it interesting, make a connection between a reading topic and something you've experienced in real life, or anything else that relates to the class material. Perusall is a "social reading" app that automatically sorts you into a small subgroup of readers within our class, so I encourage you to talk to each other about the text, particularly if you are confused about how to interpret any part of the reading. When several students are confused about the same part of the reading, Perusall flags this part of the reading for the instructor, so remember that you are helping other students when you say you are confused.

Perusall uses an algorithm to automatically suggest a score between 0 and 2 based on the complexity of your comment. This score is generally pretty accurate. This means that very basic comments like "Good point!" get a low score, while more

developed ideas get the full score of 2 points per comment. Additionally, Perusall gives you points for engaging with all parts of the text, so you should be sure to read and comment throughout (e.g. don't just comment on the first 4 pages of 10-page article). Please make a minimum of 5 comments on each reading, although if you make more, Perusall will pick your best 5 comments for a grade. You should complete all of your Perusall comments by 11:59pm each Friday (except for week 1).

In this online course, Perusall is an important part of your participation in class. If your TA or a peer asks you a question or makes a comment on something you've written in Perusall, be sure to respond to their comment as well.

## **2. Weekly quizzes (15%)**

Each week, you will take a short quiz after you have watched the video lectures and completed the readings. These quizzes will be posted on the current week's tab in GauchoSpace. These small assignments are designed to give you instant feedback about whether you understand the main points of the week's lectures. The quizzes are open-note and open-book. Each quiz may only be attempted once, but the allotted time should be more than enough. If you have technical difficulties while taking the quiz, please email your TA immediately with a screenshot of the problem. You should complete your weekly quiz by 11:59pm on Saturdays.

## **3. Writing/analysis assignments (30%)**

Most weeks (but not all), you will complete a short writing or analysis activity that is designed to help you practice some of the key concepts and methodologies of sociocultural linguistics. These assignments will be due on GauchoSpace on Sundays at 11:59pm.

## **4. Final paper (35%)**

In your final paper, you will apply one of the analytical approaches we discuss in class to a piece of audio or video data. There will be multiple deadlines for the various elements of this paper throughout the second half of the class to help you space out your work. You will also engage in peer review. Guidelines will be distributed during week 6 or 7; the paper is due during finals week.

## **Rules of Engagement**

**Requests for accommodation.** If you need accommodations for quizzes or assignments or if you have other learning needs I should be aware of, it is your responsibility to let me know early in the session. Please request accommodations by contacting the Disabled Students Program: <http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/dsp>

**Names and pronouns.** If UCSB's records do not reflect the name and pronouns you use, let us know - we will happily honor your correct name and gender pronouns.

**Email etiquette.** Email is a convenient and useful tool. Please don't abuse it. You should write emails like you would write a letter, not a text message. You will need to monitor your UCSB email account regularly, as I will send important updates to the class throughout the quarter. If you email me, please allow up to 24 hours for a response. **IMPORTANT:** Please email your TA and me only from your UCSB email account, as other addresses tend to go to spam.

**Grading scale. A+ 98-100 A 93-97 A- 90-92 B+ 88-89 B 83-87 B- 80-82 C+ 78-79 C 73-77 C- 70-72 D+ 68-69 D 63-67 D- 60-62 F 59 and below.**

**Academic honesty.** All students are expected to understand and comply with university policies regarding plagiarism and originality of work. We believe this to be a reasonable and beneficial standard. Plagiarized assignments (including copying of a friend's work) will receive a grade of 0 and will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs.

## **Copyright Notice**

All course materials (videotaped class lectures and discussions, assignments, quiz questions, web materials) and the intellectual content of the course itself are protected by United States Federal Copyright Law, the California Civil Code. The UC Policy 102.23 expressly prohibits students (and all other persons) from recording lectures or discussions and from distributing or selling lectures notes and all other course materials without the prior written permission of the instructor (See <http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710530/PACAOS-100>). Students are permitted to make

notes solely for their own private educational use. Exceptions to accommodate students with disabilities may be granted with appropriate documentation. To be clear, in this class students are forbidden from selling study guides or course material to any person or organization. This text has been approved by UC General Counsel.

In other words, please don't put my materials on the internet! They belong to me. I am allowing you to keep personal copies, but they are not yours to distribute (and certainly not to profit from).

### **How to Succeed in this Class**

**Do the work.** The workload for this course is not extremely difficult, as long as you stay on top of it. Don't fall behind on readings or quizzes, meet your deadlines, and work to the best of your abilities.

**Use the GauchoSpace.** The course page has the most up-to-date information about the course: the reading schedule, assignment instructions, lecture recordings, and other materials. If you have any difficulty accessing or using the site, let us know promptly so that you do not miss out on any part of the course.

**Meet with us.** We are here to help you, but we can't unless you talk to us. If you can't make our regularly scheduled online office hours, make an appointment. You'll also have a better learning experience if we know who you are as an individual.

### **Principles for our adjusted course in the time of coronavirus**

*(adapted from Brandon Bayne, UNC Chapel Hill)*

1. Nobody signed up for this.

- Not for the sickness, not for the social distancing, not for the sudden end of our collective lives together on campus.
- Not for an online class, not for teaching remotely, not for learning from home, not for mastering new technologies, not for varied access to learning materials.

2. The humane option is the best option.

- We are going to prioritize supporting each other as humans.

- We are going to prioritize simple solutions that make sense for the most.
- We are going to prioritize sharing resources and communicating clearly.

3. We cannot just do the same thing online.

- Some assignments are no longer possible.
- Some expectations are no longer reasonable.
- Some objectives are no longer valuable.

4. We will foster intellectual nourishment, social connection, and personal accommodation.

- Accessible asynchronous content for diverse access, time zones, and contexts.
- Optional synchronous discussion to learn together and combat isolation.

5. We will remain flexible and adjust to the situation.

- Nobody knows where this is going and what we'll need to adapt.
- Everybody needs support and understanding in this unprecedented moment.

**Late work and extensions:** Things are rough for everyone right now. Do your best to make the deadlines I've set for the course, since they will help keep you on a regular rhythm. If you find that this isn't working for you or if you need extra time, please reach out to me and your TAs sooner, rather than later, so that we can help you figure out a way to stay on track with classwork.

**In case of emergency:** We recognize that students may experience personal or family emergencies or extenuating circumstances during the quarter. If something comes up, please email us as soon as you can so that we can help you plan to complete the course and/or connect you with appropriate resources.

*This course is taught by  
unionized workers.  
Our working conditions are  
your learning conditions!*



## **LING 131, Sociocultural Linguistics (S20)**

### **Reading and Assignment Schedule**

#### **Week 1**

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Reading: Ahearn ch. 1: "The socially charged life of language" (p. 3-17 only) (15 pages)  
Lippi-Green (2012): Preface + Introduction + "The linguistic facts of life" (30 pages)

Due: *Friday at 11:59pm:* Perusall reading comments  
*Saturday at 11:59pm:* Lecture quiz 1  
*Sunday at 11:59pm:* **Assignment 1** (Intro module)

#### **Week 2**

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Reading: Holmes ch. 2: "Language choice in multilingual communities" (27 pages)  
Heller (1992): "The politics of codeswitching and language choice" (18 pages)

Due: *Friday at 11:59pm:* Perusall reading comments  
*Saturday at 11:59pm:* Lecture quiz 2  
*Sunday at 11:59pm:* **Assignment 2** (Multilingualism)

#### **Week 3**

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Reading: Meyerhoff ch. 2: "Variation and language" (18 pages + 2 pages of lexical sets)  
Meyerhoff ch. 3: "Variation and style" (25 pages)

Due: *Friday at 11:59pm:* Perusall reading comments  
*Saturday at 11:59pm:* Lecture quiz 3  
*Sunday at 11:59pm:* **Assignment 3** (Variationism)

#### **Week 4**

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Reading: None! Take a break and catch up

Due: None; catch up on any outstanding assignments

#### **Week 5**

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Reading: Meyerhoff ch. 10: "Gender" + Holmes on communities of practice (39 pages)

Due: *Friday at 11:59pm:* Perusall reading comments  
*Saturday at 11:59pm:* Lecture quiz 4  
*Sunday at 11:59pm:* **Assignment 4** (Communities of practice)

#### **Week 6**

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Reading: Kiesling (2009): "Style as stance: Stance as the explanation for patterns of sociolinguistic variation" (22 pages)  
Vocal Fries podcast episode: "Between Iraq and a Hard Place"

Due: *Friday at 11:59pm:* Perusall reading comments  
*Saturday at 11:59pm:* Lecture quiz 5  
Midterm course evaluation (optional, but highly recommended)

## **Week 7**

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- Reading: Cameron ch. 1: "What is discourse and why analyze it?" (12 pages)  
Cameron ch. 2: "Collecting data: Practical and ethical considerations" (12 pages)  
Cameron ch. 3: "Transcribing spoken discourse" (14 pages)
- Due: *Friday at 11:59pm:* Perusall reading comments  
*Saturday at 11:59pm:* Lecture quiz 6  
*Sunday at 11:59pm:* **Assignment 5** (Transcribing spoken discourse)

## **Week 8**

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- Reading: Meyerhoff ch. 5: "Being polite as a variable in speech" (21 pages)
- Due: *Friday at 11:59pm:* Perusall reading comments  
*Saturday at 11:59pm:* Lecture quiz 7  
*Sunday at 11:59pm:* **Assignment 6** (Power and politeness) (**extra credit**)

## **Week 9**

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- Reading: Cameron ch. 7: "Sequence and structure: Conversation Analysis" (19 pages)
- Due: *Friday at 11:59pm:* Perusall reading comments  
*Saturday at 11:59pm:* Lecture quiz 8  
*Sunday at 11:59pm:* **Data, transcription, and short proposal for final paper**

## **Week 10**

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- Reading: Nothing required, but several optional readings listed below
- Due: Final course evaluation (optional, but highly recommended)

## **Finals week**

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- Due: *Wednesday 6/10 at 11:59pm:* **Final discourse analysis paper**

### **Required readings**

#### **Excerpts from textbooks:**

- Ahearn, Laura (2011). *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Cameron, Deborah (2001). *Working with Spoken Discourse*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Holmes, Janet (2013). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Lippi-Green, Rosina (2012). *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Meyerhoff, Miriam (2006). *Introducing Sociolinguistics* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.

#### **Articles, chapters, and other resources:**

- Heller, Monica (1992). The politics of codeswitching and language choice. *Journal of Multilingual & Multicultural Development* 13(1-2): 123-142.
- Kiesling, Scott F. (2009). Style as stance: Stance as the explanation for patterns of sociolinguistic variation. In Alexandra Jaffe (ed.), *Stance: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Oxford University Press. 171-194.

- Vocal Fries Podcast (2019). Between Iraq and a Hard Place. Interview with Dr. Zack Jagers. <https://vocalfriespod.com/2019/12/12/between-iraq-and-a-hard-place-transcript/>

**Optional resources, compiled with reference to the Black Lives Matter uprising of 2020**

- Assar, Vijith (2015). An interactive guide to ambiguous grammar. *McSweeneys*. <https://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/an-interactive-guide-to-ambiguous-grammar>
- Barchas-Lichtenstein, Jena (2020). Twitter thread on the importance of language in media framing of police violence. <https://twitter.com/neoyorquinanerd/status/1267082947720613889>
- Charity, Anne H. (2008). Linguists as agents for social change. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 2(5): 923-939.
- Jones, Taylor, Jessica Rose Kalbfeld, Ryan Hancock, and Robin Clark (2019). Testifying while black: An experimental study of court reporter accuracy in transcription of African American English. *Language* 95(2): e216-e252.
- Rickford, John (1997). Unequal partnership: Sociolinguistics and the African American speech community. *Language in Society* 26(2): 161-197.
- Rickford, John, and Sharese King (2016). Language and linguistics on trial: Hearing Rachel Jeantel (and other vernacular speakers) in the courtroom and beyond. *Language* 92(4): 948-988.
- Vocal Fries Podcast (2020). Linguistic Injustice (Interview with Dr. Sharese King.) <https://vocalfriespod.com/2020/03/22/linguistic-injustice-transcript/>