

LINGUISTICS 160 – Language, Culture and Society
Course Syllabus

Department of Linguistics Simon Fraser University Fall 2015

Instructor: Dr. Debopam Das

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Office Hours: Wednesday 11:30 am – 1:30 pm (or by appointment)

TA: Noortje de Weers

Class: Wednesdays 2:30 pm – 5:20 pm at SWH10041

Course Information: This syllabus and other course information will be available on Canvas
(<http://www.sfu.ca/canvas.html>)

Course Description:

LING 160 explores the relationship between language and society. In particular, it examines why people use language differently in different social situations, and aims to explain how they convey social meaning and signal aspects of our social and cultural identity through language. We will discuss how language is used in multilingual and monolingual speech communities, explore the reasons for language change, and identify the social and contextual factors conditioning various linguistic responses.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course, you will be familiar with key sociolinguistic concepts such as bilingualism, code-switching, language change, language shift, language death, language revival, standard and vernacular languages, national and official languages, regional and social dialects, politeness. You will also develop an understanding of how language use is affected by solidarity/distance and power relationships, gender, age, socio-economic class, and social networks. You will learn about sociolinguistic methods through illustrations from a variety of languages, as well as applications within your own speech community, and in Canada. You will develop the ability to critically think about hard questions in a disciplined way that will help you in other courses, too.

This course may be applied towards the Certificate in Liberal Arts or the Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language, but not both.

Required Readings and Materials:

- Holmes, J. (2013). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (4th Revised Ed.) Toronto: Pearson Education Ltd. (Longman). ISBN: 978-1-4082-7674-7. Be sure to obtain the correct edition. Older Editions will not be used!
- The textbook is available for purchase at the SFU Bookstore.
- The textbook is also on reserve at SFU Bennett library (2-hour loan period).
- Other editions of the textbook CANNOT be used.
- Other readings, if required, will be available for free to SFU students either through the course Canvas site or from the SFU Library's electronic journals.
- Lecture notes (will be posted on Canvas).
- This syllabus.

Schedule of Topics, Events and Readings:

Week	Date	Topics/Events	Read (before class)
1	Sept 9	Introduction to the Course What do sociolinguists study?	The LING 160 Syllabus Chapter 1
2	Sept 16	Language Choice in multilingual communities	Chapter 2
3	Sept 23	Language maintenance and shift	Chapter 3
4	Sept 30	Midterm 1 (60-75 minutes) Linguistic varieties and multilingual nations	Will cover Chapter 1, 2 and 3; and lecture notes of week 1, 2 and 3. Chapter 4
5	Oct 7	Review of Midterm 1 National languages and language planning	Chapter 5
6	Oct 14	Regional and social dialects	Chapter 6
7	Oct 21	Midterm 2 (60-75 minutes) Gender and age	Will cover Chapter 4, 5 and 6; and lecture notes of week 4, 5 and 6. Chapter 7
8	Oct 28	Review of Midterm 2 Gender and age Ethnicity and social networks	Chapter 7 Chapter 8
9	Nov 4	Language change	Chapter 9
–	Nov 11	Remembrance Day (Holiday)	No Class; No Office Hours
10	Nov 18	Midterm 3 (60-75 Minutes) Gender, politeness and stereotypes	Will cover Chapter 7, 8 and 9; and lecture notes of week 7, 8 and 9. Chapter 12
11	Nov 25	Review of Midterm 3 Language, cognition and culture	Chapter 13
12	Dec 2	Analysing discourse	Chapter 14

Exam Schedule and Course Grade:

Component	Date and Time	Weight
Midterm 1	Sept 30 (Wednesday, 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM)	20%
Midterm 2	Oct 21 (Wednesday, 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM)	25%
Midterm 3	Nov 18 (Wednesday, 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM)	25%
Final Exam	Dec 9 (Wednesday, 12:00 Noon – 2:00 PM)	30%
Total		100%

The course grade is based on credit earned, according to the weightings mentioned above. Final letter course grades will be computed from percentage scores on all three exams. The following table provides a rough estimate of grade breakdowns for the final grade. There is no university-wide standard scale. An instructor adopts a grade scale appropriate to the level and content of the course.

A+	95-100%	B+	80-84%	C+	65-69%	D	50-54%
A	90-94%	B	75-79%	C	60-64%	F	0-49%
A-	85-89%	B-	70-74%	C-	55-59%		

Your final grade will be calculated using these weightings. Weightings cannot be changed for individual students. Do not even ask!

Exam Coverage:

There will be three midterms and one final exam. The first midterm covers materials from weeks 1 through 3 inclusive; the second midterm covers materials from weeks 4 through 6 inclusive; and the third midterm covers materials from weeks 7 through 9 inclusive. The final exam is cumulative, and covers all materials from the start of the course until the end. More detail on the midterms and final exam will be provided throughout the semester. The exams include materials from the required readings, the lecture notes and class discussions. In the exams, you will get to solve either multiple choice questions or provide short answers to descriptive/analytical questions.

Exam Policy

There is no make-up exam for a missed midterm. A missed test (midterm or final) equals 0% unless:

1. You are ill on the day of the exam.
2. You have told me so before the exam (via e-mail).
3. You subsequently provide me with a medical note justifying your absence. **The only medical form I accept is the SFU Certificate of Illness**, downloadable from the SFU website (<https://www.sfu.ca/mbb/Ugrd/documents/healthcare-statement-general.pdf>). If you need it, print it out and have your doctor complete it.

Students will not be allowed to use the washroom during exams. On midterm days, we will have class after we write the midterm exams.

Grade Appeals:

If a student wishes to contest the marking of a graded course item, the instructor can agree to remark his/her entire exam at the instructor's convenience and not in front of the student. A grade reconsideration may raise the grade, lower the grade, or leave the grade unchanged, as stated in Policy T20.01, clause IV.2.

Grade appeals must be made in writing.

The only reason a grade change will be made is if there is an arithmetic error, or if it has been determined that the graded item deserves a lower grade or a higher grade after it has been remarked.

The following **are not reasons for reconsideration of a grade**: (a) The student is on probation; (b) the student wants to get into Business or any other program; (c) the student worked hard, and thinks this should be a factor; (d) the student does not like the grade scale; or (e) the student's score is x% below the next grade, and would like the instructor to ignore the difference.

Contact Policies:

Students are encouraged to communicate with the instructor about their progress in the course and other course-related matters. Students are welcome to:

- bring up questions in lecture
- post questions on the Canvas discussion board
- visit the instructor during the assigned office hours
- set up an appointment for a time that is convenient both to them and the instructor
- contact the instructor by phone during office hours

Students can also communicate with the instructor through email. I can only respond to questions that can be answered in a sentence or two. Questions requiring longer replies should be asked in class or during office hours.

If you are sick and need to miss an exam, please do send me an e-mail message. If you email me, please follow these guidelines **or I will not respond**:

- **Put LING 160 in the subject line (title)**
- **Provide your full name and student number**
- **Edit your message for tone and clarity**

Please don't expect an instant response. It may take a few days to receive a response. Please also contact me if you have an extended period of illness which requires you to miss more than one week of class.

Other Policies:

1. Students are expected **to attend all classes and to arrive on time** so that classes may begin promptly. Announcements will be made at the beginning and end of classes regarding the assigned readings and the expectations for exams.
2. Students are expected to have **read all assigned readings before class**. Because many students will be learning about a new field of study in this class, some of the materials and concepts may seem fairly complex. Therefore, students should read assigned readings, and go over the lecture notes **multiple times** (several times before and after class).
3. Students will be responsible for all materials covered in the assigned readings and lectures. Students are expected to **bring the lecture notes to class**.
4. Students will be respectful of other students and the instructor. In particular, **students will not talk while the instructor or another student is contributing to the class**. Please **turn off cell phones and other noisy devices** (alarms, laptop speakers, etc.) that will cause a disruption in the class. In the event that disruptive behaviour occurs in the class, appropriate penalties will be imposed.

Students should familiarize themselves with the **Linguistics Department's Standards** on Class Management and Student Responsibilities at:

http://www.sfu.ca/linguistics/undergraduate/student-resources/department-standards.html#main_content_text

5. **Academic dishonesty** in all forms violates the basic principles of integrity, and thus impedes learning. More specifically, academic dishonesty is a form of misconduct that is subject to disciplinary action, and includes the following: cheating, fabrication, fraud, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. For more information on academic honesty and student conduct, please visit the SFU website (try here: <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/student.html>). Please **complete the library's plagiarism tutorials** on the SFU website (try here: <http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/tutorials/plagiarism-tutorial>).

If a student is found guilty of plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty on a graded course component (e.g., class paper, assignment, exam), an academic dishonesty report will be written for that student. This report is filed in the department. The student receives a grade of zero for that course component. A grade of "FD" may be assigned as a penalty for academic dishonesty.

6. Students requiring accommodations as a result of a **disability** must contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (778-782-3112 or csdo@sfu.ca).