

**COMMON COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**Murray State University**

**TSL/ENG 533-01: Language and Culture**

**Credit Hours:** 3.0

**I. TITLE:** Language and Culture

**II. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** A study of the relationship among language, society, and the individual's concept of reality. The course examines a variety of anthropological and ethnographic concepts and findings as they relate to language and language learning in its broadest context. The course will also examine socio- and comparative linguistics, the relationship between culture and language, and the implications for second language teaching.

**III. PURPOSE:** To develop students' understanding of the various ways in which language and culture intersect and function, especially for speakers of English as a second language in an American context, as well as for other linguistic minorities.

**IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES:** *(Coded for Kentucky Experienced Teacher Performance Standards, NTPS; TESOL Standards, TESOL; KERA Initiatives KERA)* By the end of the course, students in this class are expected to

- A. Be familiar with the sociolinguistic concepts which underlie the cultural dimensions of language; *(NTPS 2; TESOL 2)*
- B. Develop and enhance awareness, through linguistic and other types of knowledge, of cultural and ethnic influences regarding the nature of language and literacy; *(NTPS 2; TESOL 2)*
- C. Acquire an introduction to basic language and educational research which is culturally focused; *(NTPS 2; TESOL 1,2)*
- D. Understand theories of language and culture that will assist them in developing intercultural and pedagogical skills. *(NTPS 2,4; TESOL 1,2)*

*The EPBS Themes – Diversity, Assessment, Literacy/Reading, and Closing the Gap are explored as course topic that students discuss, research, and write literature reviews over to fully explore these topics. They investigate these themes and how they should be implemented in the language classroom. Students design materials and assessment tools that address all of these themes.*

**V. CONTENT OUTLINE:** The first part of the course will be devoted to general theoretical issues surrounding language, culture, sociolinguistics and the interaction between linguistic form and meaning. The rest of the course will involve focusing on specific issues of language and culture including, language acquisition, varieties of languages, language and gender, prestige, politeness, and power.

**Note:** This course covers essential material for the ESL Certificate Endorsement Program and for the Praxis Exam for ESL.

**VI. INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Discussions and presentations will be undertaken quite often. Student participation beyond teach-led discussions will include completing assigned readings, doing research on selected topics, presenting ideas and perspectives on selected articles and chapters, initiating class or group discussions, completing and submitting assignments, writing a discussion paper, and completing exams and a final project. The instructor will present perspectives and information on specific topics and initiate discussions by making use of students' learning, observing, and life experiences to understand, apply and critically think about topics under investigation.

**VII. FIELD, CLINICAL, AND/OR LABORATORY EXPERIENCES:** None except as it pertains to the projects/ assignments that students conduct for class.

**VIII. RESOURCES:** The MSU library, electronic resources in university databases, and the internet will be the primary sources used for this course. Public places selected for field projects will also be necessary. Students will also find and watch two films analyzing linguistic and cultural differences between the US and another culture.

**IX. GRADUATE LEVEL REQUIREMENTS:** Note that this class is designed as a graduate-level course and requires a commiserate amount of participation and analysis. Upper-level undergraduates are permitted to take this course as an upper-level undergraduate course. If you are an undergraduate taking this class, you will be expected to do all the assignments but your overall grade will be assessed as described below.

**X. GRADING PROCEDURES:**

Preparation & Class participation	15%
Discussion Leader	10%
Presentation & report of the Ethnolinguistic Observation	15%
Midterm	20 %
Final Project	20%
Final Exam	20%
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 100%

As mentioned above, upper-level undergraduates are permitted to take this course, but will be assessed on a different scale:

<b>Graduate Students</b>		<b>Undergraduate Students</b>	
A	90% & above	A	87% & above
B	80-89%	B	77-86%
C	70-79%	C	67-76%
D	60-69%	D	57-66%

E

0-59%

E

0-56%

Note that if this course is taken at the undergraduate-level, it cannot fulfill requirements for graduate coursework.

**XI. ATTENDANCE POLICY:** Students are expected to attend class and to have read and completed all assigned work prior to class. Active participation in class is highly expected from each of you. Punctuality is seriously required for each session. **Let's create a mutual respecting and mutual learning environment together for each class.** Your final grade will be lowered if you have excessive absences from the class. **More than one absence from the class will be considered excessive.**

**XII. Assignments:** Students are required to complete two projects and one Discussion Leader for this class.

**1. Ethnolinguistic Observations in a public place**

**2. Comparison of two movies selected from two different cultures. See details below.**

All assignments are required to be typed, double-spaced and printed out and due on the scheduled date. **Late assignments** will lose one letter grade for every 24 hours they are late. Special exceptions for emergencies may be made in accordance with University Policy. As in other areas of life, plan ahead and leave yourself time to deal with problems if they arise.

3. Discussion Leader (see details below)

**XIII. ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:** This policy is provided in the Murray State Student Handbook on page 30 at the following address:

<http://www.murraystate.edu/secsv/handbook/Handbook.htm>

Plagiarism or academic dishonesty (cheating on any kind of forms) will have consequences from failure of the assignment or exam to failure of the entire course. The biggest problem students often have is not attributing materials and ideas to the sources they are from. This is especially easy to do, even unintentionally, when the internet is used heavily for doing projects and writing papers. If you do use outside resources at anytime, be sure to provide full references. Another problem some students have with academic honesty is getting unauthorized help. There are times--especially on quizzes, exams, and some projects--that you are supposed to work entirely on your own without consulting anyone. Make sure you do so at those times. Please follow the APA (American Psychology Association, Publication Manual 5<sup>th</sup> ed.) format to cite all the resources you used. Information about APA style is available on Blackboard the course website.

#### **XIV. TEXT & Required Readings**

A. Bonvillain, Nancy. (2003). *Language, Culture, and Communication: The meaning of messages* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 0-13-097953-8. You can get this book from the MSU Bookstore (1-800-749-8580 or

<http://murraystatebooks.collegestoreonline.com/>, click on "textbooks") or get it from any other sources you can find.

B. Book chapters & Journal Articles

- 1.) Chase, Stuart (1986). How Language Shapes our Thoughts. In James Mackillop & Donna W. Cross (Eds): Speaking of words: A language reader. NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- 2.) Brown, Penelope & Levinson, Stephen C. (1999). Politeness: Some Universals in language usage. In A. Jawroski and N. Coupland (Eds.). *The Discourse Reader*. NY: Routledge.
- 3.) Evanoff, Richard (2000). "The concept of third culture" in intercultural ethics. *Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics*, 10 (July).
- 4.) Gee, James. (1999). "Situated meanings and cultural models" chapter 3 and "Cultural Models" chapter 4 in *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*. NY: Routledge.
- 5.) Holmes, Janet (1999). Women, men and politeness: Agreeable and disagreeable responses (pp 336-345) in A. Jawroski and N. Coupland (Eds.). *The Discourse Reader*. NY: Routledge.
- 6.) Ho, Debbie G. E. (2006). I'm not west. I'm not east. So how leh? *English Today*, 22(3), p17-24.
- 7.) Hoh, Pau-San (2005). The Linguistic Advantage of the Intellectually Gifted Child: An Empirical Study of Spontaneous Speech. *Roeper Review*, 27(3), p178-185.
- 8.) Mallozzi, Christine A, Malloy, Jacquelyn A. (2007). Second-language issues and multiculturalism. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 42(3), P430-436
- 9.) Martin-Jones, Marilyn & Romaine, Suzanne (1986). Semilingualism: A half-baked theory of communicative competence. *Applied Linguistics*, 7(1), 26-38.
- 10.) Pohl, Gabriela (2004). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure and implications for language teaching. *SLLT*, 4(2), 91-112.

**XV. PREREQUISITES:** ENG 533 has a prerequisite of 3 hours of linguistics.

## **XVI. Guidelines for completion of the assignments and projects**

### **A. . Discussion Leader:**

Each of you is required to sign up for *Discussion Leader*. To complete this assignment, you will write a one-to- two page summary and ask 3-5 questions based on the assigned reading. You're responsible for reading the summary to the class and leading the discussion based on the questions you asked. Others including the instructor and peer students could interrupt to ask questions at any time during your reading. Please make copies of your summary for each of your classmates.

- **Each graduate student** will sign up for leading the discussion of the supplementary articles and chapters, not the textbook chapters. If the day has been scheduled for two supplementary articles, you're supposed to sign up for both of them.
- **Undergraduate students** will sign up for leading the discussion of one textbook chapter.

### **B. . Project 1: Do ethnolinguistic observations**

You will (as quoted from the Bonvillain book) "try to extract communicative rules by observing the behaviors that do or do not occur in various contexts and the reactions of members of a community to each other's actions".

- 1) **Observe:** Go to a public place where language is being used by some people. You cannot be

a participant or interact with people (it will interfere with your observation). Position yourself so that you are relatively unobtrusive and can observe what people *publicly* say and do. Do not eavesdrop! Do not tape or audio-record anyone! Make notes about who is there and what you observe, try to make notes as detail as possible. Observe for 20-30 minutes. **Please repeat the procedure and do a second observation in the same public place. The second observation does not have to be the same people.**

2) **Present:** present your findings from the two observations to the class. Each presentation will be given a certain amount of time as it will be announced later in class.

3) **Submit a report of your observations, noting the following:**

**Contextual setting:** Time, date, and place of your observation. Physically describe the public place you are in. Describe the people who used the place during your observation. Now describe the knowledge/assumptions/norms that all speakers of the community share about the public place; include the discussion questions asked and feedback obtained in the presentation into your report. The report needs to be double-spaced, 6-8 pages long.

**C. Project 2: Comparison of two movies selected from two different cultures.**

1) **Write** a movie selection proposal (one page) with focus questions or assumptions that you will be expected to look at in the entire project and how you will analyze the data.

2) **Present** your findings: linguistics, culture, communication aspects etc. and analyze and try to interpret what is behind your findings.

3) **Submit** a research paper (needs literature minimum 10 to support and elaborate your analysis) about the entire project, 10-12 pages (double-spaced).

## **XVII. STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:**

Murray State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, marital status, age, or disability in employment, admission, or the provision of services, educational programs and activities, and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in all programs and activities. For information regarding nondiscrimination policies contact the Office of Equal Opportunity, 270-762-3155.