

LING-UA 15: Language and Society
Course Information

Please visit our NYU Classes page to access the online version of this document, which will be updated with links throughout the semester.

1. Course logistics

Lecture time Mon/Wed 11:00am–12:15pm

Location Silver 208

Instructor Dr. Laurel MacKenzie

Contact laurel.mackenzie@nyu.edu (please allow 48 hours for a reply)

Office 10 Washington Pl., Rm. 305

Office hour Mon 2–3pm, and by appointment

TAs Natalie Povilonis de Vilchez

Contact natpv@nyu.edu

Office 10 Washington Pl., Rm. 307

Office hour Fri. 1:30–3:30pm

Recitation time Wed. 4:55–6:10pm

Location 25W4, C-13

Allison Shapp

allison.shapp@nyu.edu

10 Washington Pl., Rm. 312

Thurs. 1–3pm, and by appointment

Thurs. 9:30–10:45am

10 Washington Pl., Rm. 104

2. Required text & readings

- Van Herk, Gerard. 2012. *What is Sociolinguistics?* Wiley.
 - Available electronically through NYU Drive and NYU eBooks. Available to purchase or rent in hard copy from the NYU Bookstore.
- Supplementary readings will be made available in PDF on NYU Classes.
- You're expected to have done each reading **before** its associated lecture.

3. Overview

This course investigates the ways in which language reflects and creates the social order. We'll study how variation in language relates to social factors like gender, age, social class, and ethnicity, and we'll explore the social contexts under which languages are born, die, and change. The course will feature hands-on research, allowing you to collect and analyze data on how people use language in real life.

Through successfully completing this course, you will

- be familiar with the major social correlates of variation and change in language.
- understand the theory and methods underlying the field of sociolinguistics.
- collect, analyze, and write about real-world linguistic data.
- be able to discuss matters of sociolinguistic variation with scientific rigor and cultural sensitivity.

4. Assignments & grades

4.1. Class participation & attendance: 10%

Class participation will be assessed on the basis of your recitation attendance record and your level and quality of participation in class discussions and exercises. Don't be afraid to ask questions in class! If you are shy, come to office hours to get your questions asked and to strategize about how you can participate in class in a way that you're comfortable with.

If you know that you will miss a class due to a religious holiday or an athletic event, please let your TA know in the first two weeks of the semester.

4.2. Digital portfolio: 25%

Most Mondays, you will be given a brief assignment asking you to observe something particular in the language around you over the coming days. You will record your observations and reflections on them in a digital portfolio using the app Padlet, with entries due on Sunday evenings. There will be nine portfolio entries in total. Portfolio entries will be graded, with the lowest grade dropped, and students will share their entries in the following recitation. Each student will be expected to share at least one entry during the course of the semester (counting toward the recitation participation grade). More information on this assignment will be provided at the first lecture.

4.3. Midterm exam: 20%

The midterm exam will occur in class on Nov. 1, and will cover material from the first half of the semester. More information on the structure of the exam will be provided closer to the date of the exam.

4.4. Research project: 25%

You will carry out a short research project in the second half of the semester, due on Nov. 27. You will get to choose from a quantitative study of language variation or an ethnographic observation of language use. More information on this assignment will be provided in lecture on Oct. 30.

4.5. Final exam: 20%

The final exam will occur in class on Dec. 13, and will cover material from the entire semester. More information on the structure of the exam will be provided closer to the date of the exam.

5. Course policies

5.1. Late work and extensions

We realize that sometimes life happens. Thus, all students are entitled to a **48-hour grace period** for all deadlines on assigned work, no questions asked or permission needed. Please recognize that your grade and feedback on late work will be similarly delayed, and late portfolio entries may not be able to be shared in recitation.

This grace period **cannot be extended without explicit permission from Prof. MacKenzie**. If you are going to be more than 48 hours late in completing a portfolio entry or submitting your research project, you need to set up an in-person meeting with Prof. MacKenzie to arrange a revised deadline. Work that is more than 48 hours late will not be accepted without this in-person meeting with the professor. Missed exams similarly require an in-person meeting with Prof. MacKenzie.

5.2. Extra credit

The midterm and final exams may include some extra credit questions, and additional extra credit opportunities may be offered throughout the semester. Extra credit is an equal opportunity for everyone in the class to improve their grades, so it will not be issued to individual students upon request. If you want some grade security, we suggest completing all the portfolio entries, doing all the readings, and not missing class.

5.3. Laptops

You may take notes on your laptop during lectures, but please sit on the perimeter of the room, and avoid multitasking out of consideration for your classmates' concentration. (And note that research shows you learn better when you take notes by hand!: <http://goo.gl/5DeXtF>)

5.4. Academic honesty

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated, and may result in a zero on an assignment. **You must complete all work individually, without help from other students.** If you use any resource other than the textbook and lecture slides as you prepare your portfolio entries or research project, you must provide a scholarly citation for the resource.

5.5. Academic accommodations for students with disabilities

Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, or learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities over the phone at 212-998-4980, in person at 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, or online at www.nyu.edu/csd.

LING-UA 15: Language and Society
Syllabus

NB. Syllabus subject to change at Prof. MacKenzie's discretion. Readings may be added or changed in the second half of the semester.

	W 9/6	Lecture 1: Introduction & overview. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 1 'Introduction' (p. 1-9) Complete student info questionnaire by the end of next week.
	W-Th 9/6-7	Recitation: Exploring sociolinguistic variation. Your sociolinguistic history.
	M 9/11	Lecture 2: Defining language: Dialect, variety, standard, non-standard. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 2 'Language and Society' (p. 10-24) Portfolio entry #1 assigned, due 9/17.
Wk. 2	W 9/13	Lecture 3: Defining language & society: Language differences, social groups.
	W-Th 9/13-14	Recitation: The standard language ideology. Identifying sociolinguistic variation at different levels of language. Exploring social groups.
	M 9/18	Lecture 4: Sociolinguistic methods: Linguistic variables, data elicitation. Reading: Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015, excerpts from ch. 6 'Language variation' Portfolio entry #2 assigned, due 9/24.
Wk. 3	W 9/20	Lecture 5: Sociolinguistic methods: Data collection, data analysis.
	W-Th 9/20-21	Recitation: Sharing portfolio entry #1. Doing sociolinguistic research. Sounds and variables.
	M 9/25	Lecture 6: Language & place: Dialectology. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 3 'Place' (p. 25-46) Portfolio entry #3 assigned, due 10/1.
Wk. 4	W 9/27	Lecture 7: Language & place: History & regional dialects of American English.
	W-Th 9/27-28	Recitation: Sharing portfolio entry #2. Dialectology. American regional dialects.
	M 10/2	Lecture 8: Language & social status: Identifying groups, basic linguistic patterns. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 4 'Social Status' (p. 47-59) Reading: Labov 1966/2006 'The social stratification of (r) in New York City department stores' Portfolio entry #4 assigned, due 10/8.
Wk. 5	W 10/4	Lecture 9: Language & social status: More linguistic patterns.
	W-Th 10/2-4	Recitation: Sharing portfolio entry #3. Discussing Labov 1966. Social status.

	M 10/9	No class! Fall recess. No portfolio entry assigned this week.
Wk. 6	W 10/11	Lecture 10: Language & ethnicity. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 6 'Ethnicity' (p. 75–84) Reading: Rickford & King 2016, 'Language and linguistics on trial'
	W–Th 10/11–12	Recitation: Sharing portfolio entry #4. Discussing Rickford & King 2016. Language, ethnicity, and discrimination.
Wk. 7	M 10/16	Lecture 11: Language change. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 5 'Time' (p. 60–74) Reading: Dubois & Horvath 2000, 'When the music changes, you change too' Portfolio entry #5 assigned, due 10/22.
	W 10/18	Lecture 12: Language & age.
	W–Th 10/18–19	Recitation: Discussing Dubois & Horvath 2000. Studying language change. Generational change vs. age-grading, real vs. apparent time.
Wk. 8	M 10/23	Lecture 13: Language, gender, & sexuality. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 7 'Gender and Identity' (p. 85–103) Portfolio entry #6 assigned, due 10/29.
	W 10/25	Lecture 14: Language, gender, & sexuality, continued.
	W–Th 10/25–26	Recitation: Sharing portfolio entry #5. Language and gender. Midterm review.
Wk. 9	M 10/30	Data analysis workshop – bring a laptop! Research project assigned, due 11/27. No portfolio entry assigned this week.
	W 11/1	Midterm exam.
	W–Th 11/1–2	No recitation! We will be at the NWAV46 conference in Madison, Wisconsin.
Wk. 10	M 11/6	Lecture 16: Language & identity. Reading: Labov 1963, 'The social motivation of a sound change' Portfolio entry #7 assigned, due 11/12.
	W 11/8	Lecture 17: Language & style. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 8 'Style' (p. 104–115)
	W–Th 11/8–9	Recitation: Sharing portfolio entry #6. Discussing Labov 1963. Language, style, and social meaning.

Wk. 11	M 11/13	Lecture 18: Language & interaction. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 9 'Interaction' (p. 116–126) Portfolio entry #8 assigned, due 11/19.
	W 11/15	Lecture 19: Language & interaction, continued.
	W–Th 11/15–16	Recitation: Sharing portfolio entry #7. Language, politeness, and interaction.
Wk. 12	M 11/20	Lecture 20: Societal multilingualism. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 10 'Multilingualism' (p. 127–134) No portfolio entry assigned this week.
	W 11/22	No class! Thanksgiving break.
	W–Th 11/22–23	No recitation! Thanksgiving break.
Wk. 13	M 11/27	Lecture 21: Language contact (guest lecture by Natalie). Reading: Van Herk, ch. 11 'Language Contact' (p. 136–147) Portfolio entry #9 assigned, due 12/3. Research project due.
	W 11/29	Lecture 22: Language attitudes & ideologies. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 12 'Attitudes and Ideologies' (p. 148–160)
	W–Th 11/29–30	Recitation: Sharing portfolio entry #8. Multilingualism, language contact, language attitudes.
Wk. 14	M 12/4	Lecture 23: Language as a social entity. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 13 'Language as a Social Entity' (p. 161–174) No portfolio entry assigned this week.
	W 12/6	Lecture 24: African-American English. Reading: Van Herk, ch. 15 'What is Sociolinguistics?' (p. 189–196)
	W–Th 12/6–7	Recitation: Sharing portfolio entry #9. Final exam review.
Wk. 15	M 12/11	Lecture 25: Computer-mediated communication (guest lecture by Allison). No portfolio entry assigned this week.
	T 12/12	Note Tuesday lecture! TBD: final exam review, time to catch up if we're behind, or topics requested by the class.
	W 12/13	Final exam (in-class).
	W–Th 12/13–14	No recitation. Have a great winter break!