Course Title: Language, Mind, & Society
Course Number: LING 502, Spring 2014
Sections & Meeting Times: W 16:00-18:40, AL 104
Final Project Presentations: Wednesday, 14 May, 16:00 – 18:00

Instructor: Assistant Professor DS Bigham
Office Hours: SHW 236 :: T 3:30–5:00pm & W 1:00-2:30pm
I can also be available at additional times by appointment.
E-mail: douglas.bigham@mail.sdsu.edu

Anytime my office door is open, I’m available. Also, feel free to send professionally composed e-mail (see below). I check my e-mail frequently and I will respond, though I do NOT check e-mail on weekends. I am not responsible for e-mails read late; if I haven’t responded within 36 hours, you may send me a polite reminder. I will not discuss grades via e-mail.

DESCRIPTION: From the catalog: Child language acquisition, adult language production/comprehension and sociolinguistics. Dialects, language variation, and standardization. Bilingualism and language change.

What does that mean? In LING 502, we’ll very broadly cover the interaction of language with the mind, society, and history. You’re encouraged to use 502 as a place to explore your possible interest in subfields like psycholinguistics, linguistic variation, language change, historical linguistics, and the evolution of language. Further, because this is a broad and generalized introduction, we’re going to use 502 to explore how these aspects of linguistics can be used to engage a general audience in our research as linguists and language teachers.

Everything we do in LING 502 will relate to two questions and three themes.

Questions:
(a) How is linguistics presented to non-linguists?
(b) What is the evolutionary purpose of language?

Themes:
(1) Language is always a socially embedded enterprise.
(2) Language is always a cognitively embedded enterprise.
(3) Language is always an historically embedded enterprise.

PREREQUISITES: LING 501 or consent of instructor.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES: In this course, you will…
• Become familiarized with some of the foundational premises of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and historical linguistics.
• Recognize possible areas of linguistic interest in real-world situations.
• Develop a vocabulary for explaining linguistic concepts to non-linguists.
- Formulate a clear research question that applies your understanding of linguistics to a psychological or social arena.
- Explain how your research question builds upon the works already available.
- Conduct a social or psychological linguistic experiment.
- Analyze and evaluate your experiment and present your findings to the public.

**TEXTBOOKS & READINGS:**


*The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World.* 2007. by David W. Anthony.

Additional readings and materials will be drawn from handouts, online sources, and Blackboard. You are responsible for any material posted to Blackboard.

**POLICIES ON TECHNOLOGY & CONDUCT:** You are expected to respect your fellow students. When fellow students are talking, you should show them the same respect and attention as you show your professor. No questions are stupid. No ideas are crazy. Not everyone learns at the same pace or in the same way.

Computers, tablets, iPads, phones, etc. should be silenced (“vibrate” isn’t silent). Headphones should remain off. If you plan on multi-tasking during class, please sit towards the back corner of the room. Do not let your technology interfere with your or other students’ ability to participate or pay attention. Texting during class will eliminate your participation grade.

**E-mail:** E-mail sent to your professor and/or fellow students must contain “LING 502” in the subject line. Additionally, e-mail should be professionally composed with an opening (“Prof. Bigham,...”) an explicit body (“This is Diana Prince from your LING 502 class, I have a question about Gramkrelidze...”), and an appropriate closing (“Yours, Diana” or “-Diana”). Unprofessional and/or disrespectful e-mail will be deleted without being read. I will not discuss grades or academic standing via e-mail. I do not check e-mail after 5pm or on weekends. It is suggested that you use Blackboard’s messaging system for course-related e-mail.

**Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook, Etc.:** Do not contact your professor via Facebook or any other online social network.

You are responsible for finding a computer and printer capable of displaying/printing relevant course material. "It wouldn't download/open/print/etc." is not a sufficient excuse. The Student Computing Center is located on the 2nd Floor of the Love Library.
ATTENDANCE: Come to class. Come to class on time. If you arrive late, do not interrupt the class or professor upon entering. Since participation counts for a large portion of your grade, it is STRONGLY suggested that you attend class and participate vigorously in the discussions—in class, online, and during my office hours. If you miss class, **do not e-mail me** to explain or ask for notes. People who miss class should be prepared to get the notes from classmates. People who repeatedly miss class or come late may be excluded from grading curve benefits.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Do not cheat. Don't even do anything that might get you suspected of cheating. Be honest. If you cheat, you will be given a grade of “F” for the course and will be referred to Student Affairs. If you have questions about the definition or specifics of “cheating” or “plagiarism” you may contact me, the Linguistics Dept. Chair, or a member of the Student Discipline Office at (619) 594-3069. For further details regarding conduct, please refer to [http://csrr.sdsu.edu/](http://csrr.sdsu.edu/)

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. For more information see: [http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sds/index.html](http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sds/index.html) or call 619-594-6473.

ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING:
Solo Work:
- 15% - Participation
- 15% - Reading Responses
- 20% - Midterm
- 5% - Final Project: Personal Summary

Team Work:
- 10% - Reading Presentation & Discussion
- 10% - Class Notes Secretarial
- 25% - Final Project

Grading Scale. I use a five-point grading scale. Do NOT think of this scale as A-B-C-D-F. Here is how you should think of the scale: 4.6-5.0 **A** | 4.0-4.5 **B** | 3.5-4.0 **C** | 3.0-3.5 **D** | < 3.0 **F**

There are border cases between D/C and C/B where a score can go either way. When it comes time to assign a letter grade to your transcript, IF your overall course grade exists on a border score, then it will become relevant and we’ll discuss it. This has never actually happened.

Completeness. Not completing all work will result in a MINUS grade.
Solo Work:

Participation (preparedness and discussion), 15% - All materials should have been read before the date listed on the syllabus so that you may fully engage in class discussion. We will be using Blackboard for additional discussion. Participation is determined by (a) in-class & online discussion and (b) additional “engagement” (like coming to my office hours, participating in every discussion, creating new online discussion topics, etc.).

For a perfect participation grade, a student will have:
• Responded to in-class question prompts during nearly every class.
• Responded to most online discussion prompts.
• Suggested discussion points and well-reasoned critiques both in class and online.
•Stopped by Prof. Bigham’s office hours for additional discussion of the material.
• Acted courteously and professionally when dealing with fellow students.

Reading Responses, 15% - 5 total due, 3% each. Initial draft response due by 10am on Tuesday; revision due by 5pm on Friday. If you do not complete both an initial response AND a revision, you will not get credit. DO NOT FORGET TO PUT YOUR NAME AT THE TOP.

E-mail me a short response paper regarding ONE of the week's readings. Your response should be a mixture of summarizing what you learned from the reading AND asking questions about the reading to further your understanding. Response papers should be about 750 words in length; responses less than 600 words will not be graded. After Tuesday's class discussion, you should comment and edit your response (in blue pen color) and resubmit.

Everyone MUST complete a Readings Response for Week Two and Week Three. The remaining three responses’ due dates are determined by your Team Color.

Midterm, 20% - Week Eight. Midterm will be cumulative, a mix of short answer and essay. You will have 90 minutes to complete it. It will be administered online.

Final Project: Personal Summary, 5% – 500-word summary detailing your specific participation and describing your personal learning achievements regarding the final project.

Team Work:

Students will participate in one of four teams. Teams will be determined in class on Week Three. You are expected to work as a team on the following:

Reading Presentation & Discussion, 10% - On three separate occasions, each team will present an overview of the week’s readings to the class and be prepared to lead discussion and field questions regarding the reading.

Class Notes Secretary, 10% - Each group will serve as class secretary during three separate classes. The secretaries are in charge of taking notes, organizing those notes, and uploading the compiled notes to Blackboard. Class Notes uploads are due by 2pm every Thursday.
Final Project, 25% - Each team will be presented with a set of related linguistic myths they must show have been disproven by research in linguistics. Teams will present their findings in a professional conference poster format during Finals Week. Additional written work related to achieving this goal will be required throughout the semester.

**Poster Presentation (10%)**
To be scored using the SDSU SRS Poster Judging criteria.

**Written Portion (10%)**
Initial draft proposal (2%) | Finalized abstract/proposal (2%) | Poster outline/sketch (2%) | 1,200 Word Write Up (4%)
Teams will submit a 1200-word write-up summarizing the poster, including background, research design, and results. Each team member will also submit a separate 500-word summary detailing their specific participation and learning achievements.

**Required Team Meetings (5%)**
Teams are required to keep a log of weekly meetings; including two with Professor Bigham. Logs should include who was in attendance and a rough idea of who said/did what. Meetings need not be physical.

**Project Deadlines**
19-22 February First Team Meeting with Professor Bigham
4 March, 5pm, hardcopy Initial Project abstract/proposal due!
8 April, 5pm, hardcopy Final Project abstract/proposal due!
21-25 April Second Team Meeting with Professor Bigham!
6 May, 5pm, hardcopy Project Poster Outline and Sketch due!
1,200 word summary due!
14 May Poster Presentation Session!

**Project Descriptions**

**Team Green:** Myth 3: The Media are Ruining English
Myth 8: Children Can’t Speak or Write Properly Anymore

**Team Tan:** Myth 20: Everyone Has an Accent Except Me
Myth 21: America Is Ruining the English Language

**Team Aqua:** Myth 1: The Meanings of Words...
Myth 9: In the Appalachians They Speak like Shakespeare

**Team Pink:** Myth 2: Some Languages are Just Not Good Enough
Myth 10: Some Languages Have No Grammar
Myth 19: Aborigines Speak a Primitive Language
**SCHEDULE:** Dates & materials listed are subject to change. Author and Chapter given; additional weekly readings will be provided via PDF on Blackboard.

**WEEK ONE – 22 January**
PDF: Hocket 1960 – Origin of Speech
PDF: Watkins 2000 – IndoEuropean and the IndoEuropeans (two versions)

**WEEK TWO – 29 January**
**Responding:** Everyone  
PDF: Gumperz 1968 – The Speech Community  
Anthony – Ch. 1: The Promise and Politics of the Mother Tongue  
Anthony – Ch. 2: How to Reconstruct a Dead Language  
Deacon – Ch. 1: The Human Paradox  
Deacon – Ch. 2: A Loss For Words

**WEEK THREE – 5 February**  
**Responding:** Everyone  
PDF: Medin, Ross, & Markman 2005 – Cognitive Psychology 4th ed - Ch.1  
Anthony – Ch. 3: Language & Time, 1.  
Deacon – Ch. 3: Symbols Aren’t Simple

**WEEK FOUR – 12 February**  
**Presenting:** Tan  
**Recording:** Pink  
**Responding:** Green/Aqua  
PDF: Linguistics Encyclopedia 1991 – Rationalist Linguistics  
Anthony – Ch. 4: Language & Time, 2.  
Deacon – Ch. 4: Outside the Brain

**WEEK FIVE – 19 February**  
* First Team Meeting with Professor Bigham (Feb 18, 19, 20, 21 - available 10a–1p, 4p-5p)  
**Presenting:** Green  
**Recording:** Aqua  
**Responding:** Pink/Tan  
PDF: Linguistics Encyclopedia 1991 – Language Universals  
Anthony – Ch. 5: Language & Place  
Deacon – Ch. 5: The Size of Intelligence

**WEEK SIX – 26 February**  
**Presenting:** Pink  
**Recording:** Tan  
**Responding:** Green/Aqua  
PDF: Coupland 1998 – What Is Sociolinguistic Theory?  
Anthony – Ch. 6: The Archaeology of Language  
Deacon – Ch. 6: Growing Apart

**WEEK SEVEN – 5 March**  
* Initial Project abstract/proposal! Due Tuesday, 4 March, by 5pm, hardcopy.  
**Presenting:** Aqua  
**Recording:** Green  
**Responding:** Tan/Pink  
PDF: Eckert 2005 – Variation, Convention, and Social Meaning  
Anthony – Ch. 7: How to Reconstruct a Dead Culture  
Deacon – Ch. 7: A Darwinian Electrician  
Deacon – Ch. 8: The Talking Brain
WEEK EIGHT – 12 March :: Midterm

WEEK NINE – 19 March
Presenting with MiniPoster: Green & Tan  Recording: Pink & Aqua
PDF: Hauser, Chomsky, & Fitch 2002 – The Faculty of Language – What is it? (Green)
PDF: Pinker & Jackendoff 2005 – The Faculty of Language – What’s Special About It? (Tan)
PDF: Fitch, Hauser, & Chomsky 2005 – Response to Pinker & Jackendoff (Green)
PDF: Jackendoff & Pinker 2005 – Response to the response … (Tan)

WEEK TEN – 26 March
Presenting with MiniPoster: Pink & Aqua  Recording: Green & Tan
LINK: Karl Popper 1963 – Science as Falsification (Aqua)
PDF: Lakoff 1987 – Excerpt from Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things (Pink)
PDF: Dennett 1995 – Excerpt from Darwin’s Dangerous Idea (Aqua)

-----Spring Break-----

WEEK ELEVEN – 9 April
* Final Project abstract/proposal! Due Tuesday, 8 April, by 5pm, hardcopy.
Presenting: Green  Recording: Pink  Responding: Tan/Aqua
PDF: Diamond & Bellwood – Farmers and Their Languages
Deacon – Ch. 9: Symbol Minds
Deacon – Ch. 10: Locating Language

WEEK TWELVE – 16 April
Presenting: Tan  Recording: Aqua  Responding: Green/Pink
PDF: Gordon 2006 – Interview with William Labov
Deacon – Ch. 11: And the Word Became Flesh
Deacon – Ch. 12: Symbolic Origins

WEEK THIRTEEN – 23 April
*Second Team Meeting with Professor Bigham! (available Apr. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 – 10a-1p, 4p-5p)
Presenting: Pink  Recording: Green  Responding: Tan/Aqua
PDF: Bailey 2003 – Real and Apparent Time
PDF: Hinton et al. 1987 – California English
Deacon – Ch. 13: A Serendipitous Mind
Deacon – Ch. 14: Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made On

WEEK FOURTEEN – 30 April
Presenting: Aqua  Recording: Tan  Responding: Pink/Green
PDF: Bigham 2012 – Evolutionary Emergence Model of Language Change
PDF: Fought 1999 – A majority sound change in a minority community
PDF: Keller 1989 – Invisible Hand Theory and Language Evolution

WEEK FIFTEEN – 7 May
*Project Poster Outline and Sketch & 1,200 word summary! Due Tuesday, 6-May, 5pm, hardcopy.
Final Project Presentations: Tuesday, 14 May, 16:00 – 18:00