

## Sociolinguistics: Language Variation and Change

Linguistics 9706A / French 9800A  
2011-12

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Office UC126  
Course website on WebCT Owl: <http://webct.uwo.ca>  
Then click on "The University of Western Ontario"  
(Course appears in list as FRENCH 9800 – Students in LINGUIST 9706 will  
be added ASAP to the FRENCH 9800 WebCT Owl section)  
Scheduling: Mondays 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., UC 138A

### Office Hours (UC126):

My scheduled office hours are as follows (I will notify the class in advance when other commitments require me to modify these hours):

- Wednesdays: 1:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Thursdays: 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

I am also available by appointment – e-mail me and we can arrange a time to meet.

### Course Description:

This course offers students the opportunity to explore foundational research as well as some of the most recent work on language and society, with a particular focus on the theory, methodology and findings of sociolinguistic research on language variation and change.

Students will carry out an empirical analysis of a set of language data as part of their course project, or do a critical survey of the literature to argue a position on a given sociolinguistic topic. Through bibliographic research and a class presentation, they will progress incrementally in their research on their chosen topic throughout the course, and this work will culminate in a final paper.

While some "classic" work in sociolinguistics will be read and reviewed, a significant proportion of our effort in the course will be devoted to studying some of the most recent research in the field, published in the most prominent journals.

*The language of instruction will be English but students have the option of submitting written work in English, French or Spanish. Students in French Studies graduate programs are required to submit all written work in French.*

### **Weighting of Graded Assignments:**

Bibliography assignment:	20%
Abstract	10%
Oral presentation:	20%
Research paper:	50%

### **Readings:**

Textbook: ('*HLVC*' elsewhere in this syllabus) Chambers, J.K, Trudgill, P., & N. Schilling-Estes. (eds.). *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004. At UWO Bookstore.

Course Pack with articles not in *HLVC*. Available at UWO Bookstore soon. In the meantime, readings for the first weeks not in *HLVC* will be posted on the WebCT site.

There will be approximately 20 articles assigned as required reading, and some optional readings on topics studied will also be made available. Students will do readings in addition to these on a topic of their choice for the assignments in the course.

### **Assignments:**

Reference list on chosen topic (OPTIONAL, NO MARK ASSIGNED: due October 3)

You are asked to prepare short paragraph describing a sociolinguistic topic on which you plan to do research (please consult the instructor on your choice of topic), and include a list of 10-15 bibliographic references on the topic. Be sure to pay careful attention to the format of bibliographic references.

Annotated bibliography assignment (due October 17)

You are asked to prepare an annotated bibliography on your topic. Please see guidelines posted on the WebCT site.

Abstract: (due November 14)

You are asked to prepare an abstract of the research you plan to do for the presentation and the research paper. Please see guidelines posted on the WebCT site.

Presentation (December 12)

You are asked to make a presentation to the class, about 15 minutes in length (followed by 5 minutes of discussion), in which you will present the sociolinguistic issue(s) that you are studying. Please see guidelines posted on the WebCT site.

Research Paper (due date: December 23)

This assignment involves preparing a well structured research paper on a sociolinguistic topic, of about 15 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, 12-point format). Possible approaches:

- A synthesis of the research on a particular issue: establish a position (thesis) on the question and argue your position while critically reviewing the relevant research
- An empirical study of data from a linguistic corpus.

**Format for Submission of Written Assignments:**

The preferred method for submission of written work in the course is in the form of an e-mail attachment (Microsoft Word) sent to the instructor. This saves paper resources and facilitates the provision of timely and detailed feedback.

**Submission Deadlines:**

All work in graduate courses must be submitted by the deadline set by the instructor, at the latest, one month after the last class. "Incompletes" will not be permitted without medical documentation. (In order to continue to receive financial support from the Faculty of Graduate Studies, each student must demonstrate satisfactory progression in her or his program. Regulations are available upon request in the office of Chrisanthi Skalkos, Graduate Studies Secretary in the Department of French.)

**Plagiarism:**

It is expected that graduate students will be aware of the regulations regarding plagiarism and other scholastic offences to be avoided, but I include here the text that the Senate recommends we include in all course outlines: « Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>».

## SCHEDULE OF COURSE MEETINGS\*

Week	Topics	Readings to do before the class	Assignments and other work
1. Sept. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overview of course, course outline, assignments</li> <li>- Overview of sociolinguistics and its place within linguistics</li> </ul>		
2. Sept. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bibliographic resources and tools for sociolinguistic research</li> <li>- Origins and theoretical foundations of variationist sociolinguistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chambers (2004) "Studying Language Variation: An Informal Epistemology" in <i>HLVC</i></li> <li>- OPTIONAL: Koerner (1991): "Toward a History of Modern Sociolinguistics"</li> </ul>	
3. Sept. 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Methods: data gathering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Milroy &amp; Gordon (2003) Chapter 3: "Data Collection"</li> <li>- Feagin (2004) "Entering the Community: Fieldwork" in <i>HLVC</i></li> <li>- Labov (1972): "The Social Stratification of (r) in New York City Department Stores"</li> </ul>	
4. Oct. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Methods: quantitative data analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bailey (2004) "The Quantitative Paradigm" in <i>HLVC</i></li> <li>- Guy (1993): "The Quantitative Analysis of Linguistic Variation"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reference list due</li> </ul>
<i>October 10: no class due to Thanksgiving Holiday</i>			
5. Oct. 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social class and social networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ash (2004) "Social Class" in <i>HLVC</i></li> <li>- Milroy (2004) "Social Networks" in <i>HLVC</i></li> <li>- OPTIONAL: Guy (1988): "Language and Social Class"</li> <li>- OPTIONAL: Johnson (2009): "Getting off the GoldVarb Standard: Introducing Rbrul for Mixed-Effects Variable Rule Analysis"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annotated Bibliography due</li> </ul>
6. Oct. 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sex and gender in variationist sociolinguistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cheshire (2004) "Sex and Gender" in <i>HLVC</i></li> </ul>	
7. Oct. 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observing language change in progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bailey (2004) "Real and Apparent Time" in <i>HLVC</i></li> <li>- Chambers (2004) "Patterns of Variation Including Change" in <i>HLVC</i></li> </ul>	
8. Nov. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some recent studies of language variation and change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sankoff &amp; Blondeau (2007) "Language Change Across the Lifespan: /r/ in Montreal French"</li> <li>- Buchstaller &amp; D'Arcy (2009) "Localized Globalization: A Multi-Local, Multivariate Investigation of Quotative <i>be like</i>"</li> </ul>	

9. Nov. 14	- Style in language variation and change; Ethnicity	- Schilling-Estes (2004) "Investigating Stylistic Variation" in <i>HLVC</i> - Fought (2004) "Ethnicity" in <i>HLVC</i> - Hoffman & Walker (2010) "Ethnolects and the city: Ethnolinguistic orientation and linguistic variation in Toronto English"	- Abstract due
10. Nov. 21	- Sociolinguistic variation in language contact	- G. Sankoff (2004) "Linguistic Outcomes of Language Contact" in <i>HLVC</i> - OPTIONAL: Mougion & Nadasdi (1998) "Sociolinguistic Discontinuity in Minority Language Communities"	
11. Nov. 28	- A classic and a precursor in the study of language variation and change: Labov, Weinreich & Herzog (1968) and Gauchat (1905)	- Labov, Weinreich & Herzog (1968) "Empirical Foundation for a Theory of Language Change" - Chambers (2008) "Louis Gauchat, Proto-Variationist", in Chambers, Cummins & Tennant (2008) - OPTIONAL: Gauchat (1905) "L'unité phonétique dans le patois d'une commune", translation in Chambers, Cummins, Tennant (2008), or original French version	
<i>December 5: no class; instructor away on University business; Class 12 a week later</i>			
12. Dec. 12	- Student Presentations: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.		

\*More details of the work for each class will be posted on a regular basis in the "Syllabus" section of the WebCT site (the one in the "Course Tools" menu, not the one in the "Syllabus" folder). Some modifications may be made to the assigned readings as we progress in the semester.