

## Ling 150: Sociolinguistics

**Course website:** on bcourses

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**Office:** Dwinelle 1222

**Office hours:** Mon 1p–2p, Wed 11a–12p, and by appointment

**Time/place:** TuTh 9:30a–11:00a @ Wheeler 108

### We meet on the following dates:

Week	W00	W01	W02	W03	W04	W05	W06	W07	W08	W09
Tue	—	8/29	9/5	9/12	9/19	9/26	10/3	10/10	10/17	10/24
Thurs	8/24	8/31	9/7	9/14	9/21	9/28	10/5	10/12	10/19	10/26

Week	W10	W11	W12	W13	W14
Tue	10/31	11/7	11/14	11/21	11/27
Thurs	11/2	11/9	11/16	—	11/29

Weds            12/13 ← final exam  
                  11a–2:30p

### DESCRIPTION

Language conveys meaning. But language is more than just the content to each word: speech also carries cues to speakers' social realities.

Variables like race, gender, sexual identity, power asymmetries, and regional identity affect a speaker's language use. This in turn informs how listeners categorize and make assumptions about their speech partners: your social background informs the way you speak, and the way you speak impacts how people perceive you.

In this class, we will explore the connection between **speech** and **society**. In order to study this, we must also address **linguistic variation**, **sound change**, and **identity**.

### COURSE LEARNING GOALS

After this course, you will have an understanding of:

- (1) factors that condition linguistic variation, especially phonetic variation
- (2) how variation is used by speakers to broadcast and construct their identities, including race, gender, socioeconomic class, and sexuality
- (3) how sociolinguistic variation is used by listeners to identify a speaker's identity
- (4) linguistic discrimination and language policy
- (5) the social mechanisms of historical sound change

- (6) how to “do” sociolinguistics. We’ll see the following methodologies in action:
- a. Collecting natural language data
    - i. via sociolinguistic interviews
    - ii. via rapid and anonymous surveys
    - iii. via corpora
  - b. Linguistic surveys
  - c. Mapmaking to measure attitudes
  - d. Using isoglosses to determine dialect boundaries
  - e. Perception experiments

You’ll use one (or more) of these methodologies to conduct original research in a group, which you’ll present at the end of the course.

### EXPECTATIONS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

EXPECTED TASKS	PERCENT OF GRADE
Attend class	0%
Take weekly micro-quizzes (10-15 minutes at start of class on Thursday)	15%
Do the readings and write responses / answer reading questions	25%
Submit a final group paper (and complete intermediate steps)	25%
Present your final paper as a group, and submit feedback to other groups	10%
Cumulative final exam	25%

**Attendance:** There’s no grade for attendance, but I’ll still keep track of it. Although there’s no grade, you *must* attend in order to:

- take micro-quizzes
- submit assignments
- find out the next reading or assignment
- coordinate with your group

**Micro-quizzes:** 10–15 minutes at the beginning of class (9:40a), every Thursday. Always announced in the class before, including the type of question(s) on the micro-quiz.

**Readings, responses, questions:** I expect you to read *all* of the assigned readings. Some are difficult. Some are easy. We’ll always discuss the readings in class. Sometimes, you’ll be asked to write a summary, come up with a discussion question, or answer a list of short essay questions. This is the bulk of the work in the class.

**Final group paper:** In a group of one to four students, you will conduct original sociolinguistic research, using one of the methodologies presented in class. Some class time will be provided for coordination. The plan is for everyone in the group to receive the same grade on his or her paper and presentation. There will be intermediate steps – a

paper proposal, a research plan, and a short literature review/introduction. Each of these will also make up a small part of the final paper grade.

**Final group presentation:** Each group will present a 15-20 minute presentation of the paper during the last class meeting, and classmates will submit feedback to the group members. Not everyone needs to be part of the presentation, but everyone in the group will receive the same grade, and every student should attend the presentations.

**Final exam:** The cumulative final exam is on Wednesday, 12/13/17, 11:30a–2:30p. Exam will consist of T/F questions (explain if False), short answer questions, and two essay questions.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

**Collaboration and independence:** Reviewing lecture and reading materials can be enjoyable and enriching things to do together with one's fellow students, and I recommend it. However, homework assignments should be completed independently and materials turned in as homework should be the result of one's own independent work. Some assignments, namely the final paper, are meant to be done together in a group.

**Cheating:** Anyone caught cheating on a quiz or exam will receive a failing grade and will also be reported to the University Office of Student Conduct. In order to guarantee that you are not suspected of cheating, please keep your eyes on your own materials and do not converse with others during the quizzes and exams.

**Plagiarism/Self-plagiarism:** You must be original in composing the writing assignments in this class. To copy text or ideas from another source (including your own previously, or concurrently, submitted course work) without appropriate reference is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade for your assignment and usually further disciplinary action. For additional information on plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and how to avoid it, see, for example: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html#Plagiarism>

### CLASSROOM ACCESSIBILITY

**Accommodations:** If you need disability-related accommodations in this class and have an LOA, have emergency medical information you wish to share with me, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me immediately. Please see me privately after class or at my office.

**The Disabled Students' Program (DSP):** DSP is the campus office responsible for authorizing disability-related academic accommodations, in cooperation with the students themselves, and their instructors. Students who need academic accommodations, or have questions about their eligibility, should contact DSP, located at 260 César Chávez Student Center. Students may call 642-0518 (voice), 642-6376 (TTY), or e-mail [dsp@berkeley.edu](mailto:dsp@berkeley.edu)

## PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

I'll announce in class exactly when each paper is expected to be read, and you are always welcome to read ahead. Some of these papers will require answering reading questions, writing a response, composing a question, or summarizing. Please ask if any expectations are unclear.

### **Weeks 0-1: Foundational assumptions, competence vs. performance**

Lippi-Green (2012): The linguistic facts of life (Ch 1 of *English with an Accent*)

Chomsky (1965): *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, pp. 3-15

Weinreich, Labov, & Herzog (1968): *Empirical foundations for a Theory of Language Change*, pp. 98-103

### **Weeks 1-2: Early work in sociolinguistics regarding social class and prestige**

Meyerhoff (2006): Chapter 1 (Overview of sociolinguistic variation)

Labov (1972): The social motivation of a sound change

Labov (1984): Field methods of project on linguistic change and variation

Labov (1972): The social stratification of R in New York City department stores

### **Weeks 3-5: Language change and dialects (and more on social class)**

Lippi-Green (2012): Language in Motion (Ch 2 of *English with an Accent*)

Chambers (2003): Patterns of variation including change  
(from *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*)

Ash (2003): Social Class  
(from *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*)

Labov (2001): Location of the leaders in the socioeconomic hierarchy (Ch 5)

Mallinson (2007): Social class, social status and stratification: revisiting familiar concepts in sociolinguistics

## **Week 6-7: Dialectology and language contact**

Preston (2005): Language attitudes to speech (Language in the USA, Ch. 26)

Bucholtz et al. (2012): Hella NorCal or totally SoCal: the perceptual dialectology of California

## **Weeks 8-10: Gender, sexuality, and indexicality**

Meyerhoff (2006): Chapter 10: Gender

West & Zimmerman (1983): Small insults: a study of interruptions in cross-sex conversations between unacquainted persons

Eckert (2008): Variation and the indexical field

Ochs (1991): Indexing gender

Cameron (1997): Performing gender identity: Young men's talk and the construction of heterosexual masculinity

Bucholtz (1998): Geek the girl: Language, femininity and female nerds

## **Week 10: LGBTQ speech and identity, and perception**

Cameron & Kulick (2003): Sexuality as identity: gay and lesbian language

Podesva (2011): The California vowel shift and gay identity

## **Weeks 11– 12: Race, and interactions between race, class, and gender**

Green (2005): African American English (Language in the USA, Chapter 5)

Barrett (1994): She is *not* white woman: The appropriation of white women's language by African American drag queens

Bucholtz (1999): You da man: Narrating the racial other in the production of white masculinity

## **Week 12: Stylistic variation and audience design**

Schilling-Estes (2003): Investigating stylistic variation (Ch 15 of Handbook)

Hay & Mendoza-Denton (1999): Oprah and /AY/: Lexical frequency, referee design and style

Hay (2010): Stuffed toys and speech perception

## **Weeks 13-14: Applications**

Lippi-Green (2012): Case Study 1: moral panic in Oakland  
(Chapter 16 of textbook *English with an Accent*)

Lippi-Green (2012): Case Study 2: linguistic profiling and fair housing  
(Chapter 17 of textbook *English with an Accent*)

## **Other readings if we have time:**

Podesva et al. (2015): Social Influences on the Degree of Stop Voicing in Inland California

Munson & Babel (2007): Loose lips and silver tongues, or, projecting sexual orientation through speech

Inoue (2002): Gender, language and modernity: Toward an effective history of "Japanese women's language"