ENG 408G – Sociolinguistics and Psycholinguistics

**Class Objectives:** Students will reflect upon how first and second language languages develop cognitively and socially inside and outside of the classroom, and how language varies according to ethnicity, gender, region and historical time period. This will be accomplished via homework, in-class exercises, pop quizzes, exams, and for graduate students, a final paper. Specifically, in homework assignments, students are required to analyze and reflect on how a particular aspect of language usage and development (ethnicity, gender, region, and historical time period) arises, and functions in the complex societies and subcultures in which we live. Many of these assignments require students to utilize articles, class handouts, and audio files found on the classroom Blackboard web pages. Exams require students to display an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the issues covered in reading and listening assignments, class lectures and discussions.

Graduate students will extensively treat one aspect of language use or development in a final paper using print library sources, electronic databases, and professional linguistic websites. Topics that students may select include the value of individual and societal bilingualism, how bilingualism functions at the cognitive level, the link between first and second, aspects of dialectology, and how male and female language usage differs at the cognitive and social levels. APA style must be used when citing sources.

**Required Text:** *An Introduction to Language: 8th Edition only.* by V. Fromkin, R. Rodman and N. Hymes. Earlier Editions are not acceptable. There will be additional required readings posted on Blackboard.

**The Internet:**
1) Everyone must have a WKU email address that you check every couple of days. Class announcements will be sent out via email, as well as be posted on Blackboard.

2) Some of the readings and assignments will be posted on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to do the readings and take sufficient notes to further your study. Students will be tested on the information from the readings as well as the class lectures. The readings supplement the class. If you are absent, get the notes from other students.

**Class Format:** Lectures, films, discussions. Students are required to participate in class discussions. As native speakers of a language, you have a great deal of experience with language that will be relevant to this class.

**Class Decorum:** Treat everyone with courtesy. Arrive on time. If you enter class late, do so quietly and sit in the back of the room.

**ABSOLUTELY NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES MAY BE TURNED ON DURING CLASS. THIS INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO:**

*MP3PLAYERS, CELL PHONES, BEEPERS, COMPUTERS, BLACKBERRIES*

**NO EXCEPTIONS**

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is mandatory. You are permitted 5 absences. There are no excused absences; therefore, it is your responsibility to choose them wisely. Each additional absence will earn a 3% reduction in the final course grade. The absence policy is set not as a punishment, but in recognition of the fact that if you are not in class, you are not learning. If you have a doctor’s excuse, you will be allowed to turn in assigned work at the first class after the absence; however, the absence still counts as an absence.
**Late arrivals**: 3 late arrivals constitute 1 absence. If you are more than 5 minutes late when attendance is taken, you are welcome to stay but will be considered absent. Leaving the class for any length of time mid-class is also grounds for being marked absent.

**Assignments**: Assignments are due on the date specified on the assignment. They are considered late if you are absent since you may email them or send them with a friend on the date due. All late homework assignments will be penalized 10 points a day including weekend days. If citations are required, you must properly use APA style.

**Evaluation**:

- Homework: 20%
- Pop Quizzes: 15%
- Tests (2): 15% each
- Final Paper: 15%
- Final Exam: 20%
- Participation: 15%

Grades will be given in percentages. Final grades will be based on the following scale:
- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = below 60%

**Academic theft**: Copying from other students or from other materials will not be tolerated. This includes material found on the Internet. Students will receive failing grades on any assignments with ANY plagiarized sections. If the behavior is repeated, a failing grade will be received in the course, and you may be reported to university judiciaries.

**Students with Disabilities**: In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center, A-200. The phone number is 270 745 5004.

Please DO NOT request accommodations without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

**Kentucky Teacher Standards/TESOL Standards**: This course addresses Kentucky Teacher Standards V: Reflection; VIII: Content Knowledge; and IX: Technology. It also addresses TESOL Standards I: Language: Describing Language, and Language Acquisition and Development; 2: Culture: Nature and Role of Culture, and Cultural Groups and Identity.

---

**Tentative Class Calendar**

ENG 408/Spring 2008 – Undergraduates/Graduates

*Readings and listening assignments for each day must be completed before class so that you can contribute intelligently to class discussions and pass the pop quizzes.*

**Week 1:**
- Topic: First Language Acquisition (film: Baby Talk)
- **Readings**: text: 313-322.

**Week 2:**
- Topic: FLA cont.
- **Blackboard**: 1) Language Explosion, 2) Left Hemisphere and Babbling

**Week 3:**
- Topic: Stages in First Language Acquisition, Deaf Acquisition
- **Readings**: text: 322-337; 341-342. **Blackboard**: 1) Parentese, 2) Language Acquisition
**Week 4:**
Topic: Childhood Bilingualism
**Readings:** text: 342-346, **Blackboard:** 1) Language Learning in Early Childhood, 2) Bilingualism, 3) Raising Bilingual Children
**Listening Assignment:** What does it mean to be bilingual?

Topic: Second Language Acquisition
**Readings:** text: 346-351
**Listening Assignment:** Should we teach language in the elementary school?

**Week 5:**
Topic: Second Language Acquisition cont.
**Readings:** text: 351-358, **Blackboard:** Structural Plasticity in the Bilingual Brain

First Exam.

**Week 6:**
Topic: The Brain and Language Processing
**Readings:** text: 363-378, **Blackboard:** Speech Errors

Topic: Computers and Language
**Readings:** text: 363-378, **Blackboard:** If computers are so smart?

**Week 7:**
Topic: Language Variation and Change: Dialects
**Readings:** text: 409-423, **Blackboard:** Pegged by an Accent

Topic: Appalachian and Southern White Vernacular English (film)
**Readings:** **Blackboard:** 1) Spread of y'all, 2) Wither the southern accent?

**Week 8:** **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS.**

**Week 9:**
Topic: African American Vernacular English (film)
**Readings:** text: 423-428, **Blackboard:** 1) Suite for Ebony and Phonics 2) Oakland School Board Resolution on Ebonics 3) Linguistic Society of America Resolution

Topic: Lingua Francas, Pidgins and Creoles
**Readings:** text: p. 433-437

**Week 10:**
Topic: Creole Languages
**Blackboard:** Intro to Pidgins and Creoles

March 26: Creole Languages
**Readings:** None

**Week 11:**
Topic: Chicano English and Codeswitching
**Readings:** text: 429-430, **Blackboard:** 1) Native Languages Fade, 2) Codeswitching on the Radio, 3) Chicano Name.
Exam 2.

**Week 12:**
Topic: Language and Gender

Topic: Language and Gender cont.
Readings: None

Week 13:
Topic: Language and Gender cont.
Readings: Blackboard: Tag Questions in Limonese Creole

Topic: Semantics and Pragmatics
Readings: text: 437-441

Week 14:
Topic: Speaking the Unspeakable
Readings: text: 442-447, Blackboard: Foul Language on the Rise

Topic: Language Variation and Change: History of English
Readings: text: 461-472, Blackboard: History of English

Week 15:
Topic: History of English cont. Language Extinction and Preservation
Listening Assignment: Can threatened or dying languages be revived?

Topic: Language Extinction and Preservation cont.
Readings: text: 485-497, Blackboard: 1) Language Death, 2) The politics of Kurdish