

This is the syllabus from last year (spring 2024), shared to give you a general idea of what to expect. All details subject to change in 2025. The 2025 syllabus will be posted on the course Canvas when it is ready.

LING 0600: Introduction to Sociolinguistics Spring 2024

COURSE TIME	10:15 am – 11:14 am Mon & Wed	
LOCATION	Levin 111	
WEBSITE	https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1769676	
MATERIALS	No textbook: readings will be posted on Canvas	
INSTRUCTOR	Dr. Meredith Tamminga	
CONTACT	tamminga@ling.upenn.edu	
OFFICE	3401 Walnut, C Wing, Room 316C → Enter at 3417 Walnut and take the elevator to the third floor. In Suite 300C, go past the Linguistics main office to the end of the hall, then take a left, then a right. My office is Room 316C.	
OFFICE HOURS	See Canvas for times, locations, and updates	
TA/LAs	Aini Li (graduate TA)	Lauren Kim (undergrad LA)
CONTACT	liaini@sas.upenn.edu	kimlaure@sas.upenn.edu

OVERVIEW

This class is an introduction to sociolinguistics: the subfield of linguistics that is concerned with how social factors interact with language. You'll learn about how our social contexts and identities shape how we use language, which in turn influences how others perceive us. You'll also learn about how social influences on language can contribute to language change over time.

The course is a [SAIL course](#), which stands for Structured, Active, In-class Learning. Instead of only listening to lectures and taking tests, you will have opportunities to learn by engaging in the same kinds of activities that working sociolinguists do every day: reading papers, discussing case studies, collecting and analyzing data, and writing reports about what you have learned. And just like a working sociolinguist, you will do a lot of these activities collaboratively with others.

We believe strongly that sociolinguistics as a field is ideally suited to active learning. We all have experience with language in social context, and the data we need to study it more carefully is all around us!

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

Your final grade for the course will be based on the following types of assessment and evaluation. More information on grading is given below.

- Projects (x3): 50%
- In-class group work: 20%
- Written reflections (x5): 10%
- Reading comprehension activities: 10%
- Attendance: 7%
- Experiment participation or summaries: 3%

OUTLINE OF TOPICS

More detailed information about readings, assignments, and class activities will be available on Canvas.

Unit 1: Inter-speaker variation

Week 1	Introduction
Week 2	Regional accents
Week 3	Social evaluation
Week 4	Race
Week 5	Gender

Unit 2: Intra-speaker variation

Week 6	The linguistic variable
Week 7	Quantifying variation
Week 8	Style-shifting
Week 9	Code-switching

Unit 3: Language change

Week 10	Real & apparent time
Week 11	Sound change
Week 12	Meaning change
Week 13	Contact-induced change
Week 14	Project presentations

COURSE POLICIES

Grading

Here are the types of work you will do and the weight each will be given in your final grade:

- **50% Projects:** There will be three major projects. Projects 1 and 2 (20% each) are written individually and will receive individual grades. Project 3 (10%) is a group presentation that will receive a grade blending group and individual contributions. *Graded for content mastery, with feedback.*
- **30% Class Activities:** In class most days, small groups will work collaboratively on structured activities containing different kinds of activities. *Graded for good-faith effort, only general feedback.*
- **10% Sociolinguistic Reflections:** Throughout the semester, you will write short pieces reflecting on the course content and connecting it to your everyday life. *Graded for good-faith effort.*

- **10% Reading Comprehension:** To demonstrate reading completion and comprehension, you will complete Canvas assignments answering short questions about your course readings before class. *Graded for good-faith effort.*
- **7% Attendance:** Attending class is especially important for a SAIL course. *See below for attendance policy.*
- **3% Experiment Participation or Summaries:** Students will do 3 hours of participation in the Psychology Subject Pool or will summarize 2 articles about sociolinguistic experiments, as a way of understanding how sociolinguistics is an increasingly experimental discipline. *Graded for completion.*

Contact with the teaching team

- Please use email rather than Canvas messaging to contact your professor, TA, or LA.
- If you are asking questions by email, allow 24 hours for a response. (This means you need to figure out what questions you might have more than 24 hours before any deadline!)
- Before you email any questions, make sure you've read these policies, looked carefully at the relevant assignments here in Canvas, and checked for any announcements.

Attendance

- Attendance is very important in a SAIL class because participating in class activities is central to learning the material. Therefore, attendance at all class sessions, including recitations, is mandatory and part of your grade.
- You are allowed **two free unexcused absences** for the semester. Unexcused absences beyond that will hurt your Attendance grade.
- Absences may be excused **in advance** for participation in official university activities, job or grad school interviews, or participation in religious activities. Such excused absences must be approved **at least 24 hours in advance** by Prof. Tamminga (via email).
- Absences may also be excused for illness or emergencies. Please let Prof. Tamminga know as soon as possible about such situations. Approval of absences after the fact for illness or emergency will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- If you miss class for any reason, whether excused or unexcused, **you are still responsible for making up the Class Activity**. This includes classes missed by students who join the class late. You may make up work for a missed class by completing the Class Activity on your own and submitting it on Canvas. This means that if you don't make up work for a missed class, it will hurt your Class Activities grade even if the absence is excused. On the other hand, even if your absence is unexcused, you still get the opportunity to make up the content so it doesn't hurt your Class Activities grade!

Submitting Work

- All deadlines are in Eastern Standard/Daily Time.
- All coursework should normally be submitted through Canvas. ONLY in cases of technical problems with Canvas, coursework may be emailed to Prof. Tamminga.
- Part of the function of Reading Comprehension assignments is to ensure you come to class prepared. Therefore, if they are submitted late without an excused absence approved by Prof. Tamminga, you will only get half of the credit you would have otherwise earned.
- Late project submissions for Projects 1 and 2 will be penalized 5% if they are submitted within 24 hours of the deadline, 10% if submitted within 48 hours of the deadline, 25% if submitted within one week of the deadline, or 50% if submitted more than one week after the deadline. Project 3 cannot be submitted late because it is a class presentation.
- No late work will be accepted for any credit after the final day of the semester, May 11.
- If for some reason you are struggling to complete a project report by the deadline, please reach out to Prof. Tamminga in advance. **Asking for deadline extensions before you miss the deadline is a critically important professional skill.** We will discuss the possibility of a short extension to give you some breathing room.

Office Hours

- Office hours are a scheduled time each week when your professor, TA, or LA sits around and waits for students to come talk to them. Dropping in unplanned during office hours is normal and encouraged!
- If office hours are very busy, you may need to wait while we chat with another student. Please don't walk in to the room while we are meeting with another student, unless we invite you in.
- If you are feeling a little lost or confused but are not sure what to ask, that's a great reason to come to office hours. You don't need to have a specific question! We'd like to get to know you.

Course materials

- There is no textbook for this course. Readings will be posted on Canvas.
- You will need access to a spreadsheet program like Excel, Numbers, or Google Sheets.

Technology

- Please bring your laptops to class so you can access the materials for Class Activities as needed.
- If you do not have easy and continuous access to the technology you need to succeed in this class, including a laptop to bring to class, please contact Prof. Tamminga as soon as possible.

Accommodations and nondiscrimination

- We are of course happy to arrange any necessary accommodations with appropriate documentation from Student Disability Services.
- If you require accommodations, please try to discuss with Prof. Tamminga within the first week of the semester so we can get a plan put in place immediately. We want you to be able to do your best from the beginning of the course.
- We are committed to providing an inclusive learning environment free of discrimination and harassment. We expect your similar commitment.

Academic integrity

- Please refer to Penn's academic integrity guide here: <http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/>
- Violations of academic integrity will be handled on a case-by-case basis, with possible consequences including zero credit for an assignment, failure in the class, and/or reporting to the Office of Student Conduct for university-level sanctions.
- You are not allowed to use generative AI (such as tools like Chat-GPT) for your work in this class. Using such tools will be considered a violation of Penn's Code of Academic Integrity and suspected used will be reported to the Center for Community Standards and Accountability. Please contact me if you have questions about this policy.

IMPORTANT ADMINISTRATIVE DATES

Jan. 22	First day of class
Feb. 27	Last day to drop
April 2	Last day to withdraw
May 1	Last day of class