

LING 0600 Intro to Sociolinguistics

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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.

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!

REQUIREMENTS

The course proceeds at an intensive pace, and students should plan to attend every class meeting; attendance is required. Assessment includes group discussions, presentations, written assignments, and a final project evaluation. A semester's equivalent of material is covered in this course.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS

More detailed information about readings, assignments, and class activities will be available on the course's Canvas site that is available to enrolled students.

Unit 1: Inter-speaker variation

Regional accents

Social evaluation

Race

Gender

Unit 2: Intra-speaker variation

The linguistic variable

Quantifying variation

Style-shifting

Code-switching

Unit 3: Language change

Real & apparent time

Sound change

Meaning change

Contact-induced change

Unit 4: Project presentations