Course overview:
The way that we speak says a lot about us. Our backgrounds and social identities are encoded in our linguistic utterances on every level, from the sounds we use to the words made up of those sounds and the sentences made up of those words. This course presupposes that students are familiar with basic linguistic analysis of language at these various levels, and instead offers an introduction to sociolinguistics: the study of linguistic variation across circumstances, individuals, and groups. Topics will include regional and ethnic dialects, language and gender, style and performance, language attitudes and ideologies, code-switching, and language choice in multilingual speech communities.

Required texts:
There is no textbook for this class. Instead there will be regularly assigned readings, all of which can be accessed on the course website on UBlearns. Students are required to complete each reading prior to the date listed for it on the syllabus. Coming to class prepared to discuss the day’s reading(s) is a vital component of the attendance / participation aspect of your course grade.

Student learning outcomes:
Successful completion of this course will require students to master certain skills and knowledge bases relating to sociolinguistics. These learning outcomes are listed below along with the class activities which will measure the students’ success in these areas.

1. Develop an understanding of the key themes, methodologies, and research subjects of modern sociolinguistics.
2. Become familiar with certain seminal works and researchers within sociolinguistics, including their influence on the field.
3. Design and carry out a small-scale sociolinguistic research project.
4. Independently research the established sociolinguistic literature to help contextualize a developing research project.
5. Think critically about the limitations of published sociolinguistic articles by situating them in their proper context.
6. Apply new knowledge of sociolinguistic theories, facts, and methods to real-life situations of language in society.
**Evaluation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News article presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm essays</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1, 2, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading a class discussion (undergrad students)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1, 2, 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article critique (graduate students)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1, 2, 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final research paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>3, 4, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research paper progress report</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3, 4, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance / participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
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**Assignments:**

- **News article presentation (15%):** Each student will give a 5-10 minute presentation to the class on an original sociolinguistic analysis of a current news item. This will involve the presenter discussing one or more linguistic variables and the meaning behind this variation in a social context. On the day that you present your analysis to the class, you will also hand in a two-page summary of your presentation including a link to the news item in question. **Note:** graduate students will be graded solely on the written portion of this assignment, although the class presentation portion is still required.

- **Midterm essays (25%):** The midterm exam will be a series of essay questions relating to topics from the assigned class readings. This exam is a take-home assignment that students are expected to complete individually without consulting one another.

- **Leading a class discussion (15%):** Undergraduate students will work in small groups to present an assigned reading to the class and facilitate class discussion during / after the presentation. Each group will also submit a small supplemental reading such as a news article or blog post that relates to the day’s topic for the class to read beforehand. Students are welcome (although not required) to use any digital technologies to aid in their presentation, including video clips or sound files. **Note:** graduate students will not participate in this assignment.

- **Article critique (15%):** Each graduate student will select one assigned reading from the semester and write a five-page critique / response regarding its methodologies, assumptions, and conclusions. The goal is to explain to an educated audience of linguists why the points made in the reading are less than entirely convincing. Outside research for this assignment may be beneficial, but is not required. **Note:** undergraduate students will not participate in this assignment.

- **Final research paper (25%):** Each student will work with the instructor over the course of the semester to develop a 10-page original research paper on a topic related to the social use of language. This paper will include the following sections:
○ Literature review (10%): This section will include 4-6 scholarly sources relating to your chosen topic. The literature review represents a summary of other scholars’ work that informs your own approach to the subject. You may model your own work on these other studies, or not, but your literature review should explain what you see as as their relevance, importance, and limitations. Your grade for this section will also depend on the inclusion of a properly-formatted Works Cited page at the end of the paper for all outside research that your paper references. (The Works Cited page does not count towards your 10 pages for the paper.)

○ Analysis (10%): This section will present an original argument that you have developed based on linguistic data. The data can come from class readings, other scholarly articles, language in the media (TV shows, movies, novels, advertisements, etc.), conversational recordings, or any other source approved by the instructor. You will develop your own analysis of some sociolinguistic variable(s) present in the data, offering insight into the relationship between language and social meaning that this variation represents.

○ Conclusions (5%): This section will discuss the theoretical and/or practical implications of your analysis and how it relates to the studies in your literature review. Are your results surprising, given the work of other scholars you have read on the subject? Why or why not?

● Research paper progress report (10%): Prior to the completion of the actual final research paper, each student will submit a two-page report laying out their research question, intended data source, and methodology. This progress report will also include descriptions of at least two scholarly sources that the student has read, with an explanation of how these studies relate to the current project. Any initial analyses may also be included in this report, although students will not be penalized if their projects are not far enough along at this stage for any actual findings / conclusions.

● Attendance / participation (10%): Every student is expected to complete all assigned readings before class and attend every class session ready and willing to participate in the day’s discussion. Occasional quizzes or homework tasks may be assigned to ensure that students are coming to class prepared.

Grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
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Late work:
Students are expected to complete and turn in every assignment by its assigned due date. Any work submitted late will be graded at half-off for a period of one week following the due date. Work submitted more than one week late will be given a grade of 0 for the assignment.

Academic integrity:
All students are expected to follow UB’s policies for academic integrity, refraining from any form of cheating, plagiarism, or any other sort of academic dishonesty. We will discuss plagiarism and proper attribution of sources in class when the final research paper is officially assigned. Full details of the University’s policies on academic integrity can be accessed here: http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml

Accessibility resources:
UB is dedicated to providing accommodations so that every student can fully participate in all University programs, services, and activities. Students requiring such accommodations should contact the University’s Office of Accessibility Resources in 25 Capen Hall or at http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/ods/

Course schedule:
The schedule below is subject to change; any announcements to that effect will be made in class and via email. All assigned readings should be read prior to the date they are listed. All homework assignments are due on the date they are listed.

- **Tuesday, January 27th**
  - The Sociolinguistic Variable

- **Thursday, January 29th**
  - Intro to Sociolinguistics
    - Reading: Quantitative Reasoning in Linguistics (Labov)
    - Reading: A Brief History of American Sociolinguistics (Shuy)
  - Assignment: Sign up for news article presentations

- **Tuesday, February 3rd**
  - Regional Dialects
    - Reading: Language and Region (Kretzchmar)

- **Thursday, February 5th**
  - Regional Dialects
    - Reading: One Foot in the Grave? (Britain)
  - Assignment: News presentations 1-3
Tuesday, February 10th Language and Class
Reading: The Social Stratification of (r) (Labov)
Reading: Dialect in Society (Wolfram)
Assignment: Research paper assigned

Thursday, February 12th Language and Age
Reading: Well Weird, Right Dodgy (Ito/Tagliamonte)
Reading: Emerging Adulthood in Sociolinguistics (Bigham)
Assignment: News presentations 4-6

Tuesday, February 17th Language Contact (Guest Lecture by Dr. Wolck)
Reading: Attitudes toward Spanish and Quechua in Bilingual Peru (Wolck)
Reading: Attitudinal Contrasts b/w Minority and Majority Languages (Wolck)

Thursday, February 19th Bilingualism
Reading: Inclusive / Exclusive Functions of the ‘Other’ Language (Ogiermann)
Reading: Legitimate Language in a Multilingual School (Heller)
Assignment: News presentations 7-9

Tuesday, February 24th Code-Switching
Reading: Code-Switching in Norway (Blom & Gumperz)
Reading: Towards a Typology of Code-Switching (Poplack)

Thursday, February 26th Research Topics Workshop

Tuesday, March 3rd Language and Ethnicity
Reading: Demythologizing Sociolinguistics (Cameron)
Reading: Language, Ethnicity, & Racism (Fishman)

Thursday, March 5th Language and Ethnicity
Reading: A Chinese Yuppie in Beijing (Zhang)
Reading: Constructing Ethnicity in Interaction (Schilling-Estes)
Assignment: News article presentations 10-12
Assignment: Midterm assigned

Tuesday, March 10th African-American English
Reading: White Teens, Hip Hop, & AAE (Cutler)
Reading: Black English from a Black Perspective (Smitherman)
Assignment: Midterm due

Thursday, March 12th African-American English
Reading: Mediating Ebonics (Coleman and Daniel)
Assignment: News presentations 13-15
Tuesday, March 17th  
Spring Break -- No Class

Thursday, March 19th  
Spring Break -- No Class

Tuesday, March 24th  
**Works Cited / Literature Review Workshop**

Thursday, March 26th  
Communities of Practice  
Reading: Why Be Normal? (Bucholtz)  
Reading: Social Structure and the Spread of Linguistic Change (Eckert)  
**Assignment: News article presentations 16-19**

Tuesday, March 31st  
Language and Gender  
Reading & Gender as Community- Based Practice (Eckert/McConnell-Ginet)  
Reading: Age, Race, Class, Sex (Lorde)

Thursday, April 2nd  
Language and Gender  
Reading: Doing Femininity at Work (Holmes & Schnurff)  
Reading: Lip Service on the Fantasy Lines (Hall)

Tuesday, April 7th  
Language and Sexuality  
Reading: Pitch Properties in the Speech of Gay and Straight Men (Gaudio)  
Reading: Taking Queer Linguistics Further (Motschenbacher)  
**Assignment: Progress reports due**

Thursday, April 9th  
Language Ideologies  
Reading: Plagiarism and Ideology (Scollon)  
Reading: Language Ideologies in Practice (Jaffe)  
**Assignment: Sign up for group presentations**  
**Assignment: Grad student article critiques assigned**

Tuesday, April 14th  
Language Policies  
Reading: Language Rights (May)  
Reading: Multilingualism and Education (Farr/Song)

Thursday, April 16th  
Speech Acts  
Reading: The Sociolinguistic Significance of Guyanese Speech Acts (Edwards)  
Reading: Rules for Ritual Insults (Labov)

Tuesday, April 21st  
**Data Analysis Workshop**
Thursday, April 23th  
**Politeness**  
Reading: Class Ethos and Politeness (Kleiner)  
**Assignment: Student-led discussion group 1**

Tuesday, April 28th  
**Style**  
Reading: Context, Politics, and Motivation in Gay Israeli Speech (Levon)  
**Assignment: Student-led discussion group 2**  
**Assignment: Grad student article critiques due**

Thursday, April 30th  
**Style**  
Reading: Crossing, Ethnicity and Code-Switching (Rampton)  
**Assignment: Student-led discussion group 3**

Tuesday, May 5th  
**Ideolects**  
Reading: Phonetic Convergence in College Roommates (Pardo et al.)  
**Assignment: Student-led discussion group 4**

Thursday, May 7th  
**Ideolects**  
Reading: Linguistic Variation in a Small Speech Community (Goddard)  
**Assignment: Student-led discussion group 5**

Monday, May 11th  
**Assignment: Final papers due by 5pm**