

English 331 English Language Variation in the US

WHITE 4281, 8:50 - 9:40 AM, MWF

General Information

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Office Hours

I will have informal office hours directly after class and official office hours on Tuesday mornings 9am to 10:30am and Thursday afternoons 2pm to 3:30pm. If none of these times work for you please email or talk to me about setting up a time that works.

Textbooks

We'll be using two textbooks for this class:

- Chambers, J. K. *Sociolinguistic Theory, 2nd ed.* Blackwell Publishing
- Wolfram, Walt. *American English, 2nd ed.* Blackwell Publishing

Both books are required and available from the UW Bookstore.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to introduce students to the variation found in English in the United States. As part of this students will:

- learn about specific grammatical variants of spoken English in the US
- learn about the social/cultural factors of different varieties of English
- learn about methods to document and investigate particular varieties of spoken English
- learn about what is unique and what is universal about the variation of English within the US

Evaluation

There are three components to the grade for this course: homework assignments, exams and a group research paper.

Homework	30%
Exams (2)	50% (25% each)
Group Research Project	20%
Total	100%

Homework Assignments 30%

There will be about 6 homework assignments during the semester. The homework assignment will be based on current topics of discussion. ALL HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TYPED AND HANDED IN ON TIME. NO HANDWRITTEN OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. We will discuss the homework in class on the day that it is due so we can make sure everyone understood the assignment. Homework assignments will be posted to the Learn@UW course site so please make sure that you can log into Learn@UW.

Exams 50% total (25% each)

There will be two take home exams. One mid-term and one end-term. The first exam will be handed out on Oct. 20th to be returned on Oct. 27th. The second exam will be handed out on Dec. 1st to be returned on Dec. 8th. Each exam will focus on one half of the course and the second exam is not cumulative.

Group Research Project 20%

The group research project will consist of a short research paper (12 pages double spaced) due on the last day of class (Dec. 15th), presentation of the research paper to the class (during the last two weeks of class) and an abstract for the project due on Friday Oct. 13th. This project should reflect some aspect of the different varieties of English present in the US. Investigation of a particular variety of English, grammatical aspects of a variety, social aspects of a variety, social justice involved with varieties of English are all welcomed projects in addition topics related to the class that you may envision. Research groups should consist of between 2 and 4 students.

Academic Misconduct

Please make sure that you are familiar with UW's Academic Misconduct Policy which you can read at:

<http://www.wisc.edu/students/conduct/uws14.htm>

NO ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT WILL BE TOLERATED.

Class Attendance

Regular class attendance is assumed to be the standard behavior. IF YOU DO NOT ATTEND CLASS YOU WILL NOT DO WELL. Please inform me as soon as possible about missing any classes so arrangements can be made for you to make up any missed materials.

Learn@UW

Additional materials will be posted to the Learn@UW course site for this course. Make sure you are able to log into Learn@UW to get these extra materials. This is your responsibility.

Course Schedule

Topics of lectures, reading and homework assignments are listed below on the date they are DUE.

C = Chambers and W = Wolfram

Week 1 Sept. 5-8

Wed Introduction and Administrative Issues

Fri Video: American Tongues

Week 2 Sept. 11-15

Language Dialect and Standards

READ: C Ch 1 pp. 1-10, W Ch 1 pp. 1-27

Fri 9/15 HOMEWORK #1 DUE

Week 3 Sept. 18-22

How and Why of Dialects

READ: W Ch 2-3 pp28-102

Week 4 Sept. 25-29

American Dialects

READ: W Ch 4-5 pp. 103-166

Fri 9/29 HOMEWORK #2 DUE

Week 5 Oct. 2-6

Variation in Language

READ: C Ch 1 pp 1-38

Week 6 Oct. 9-13

Classic Sociolinguistics

READ: C Ch 2 pp 39-115

Fri 10/13 Group Research Project Abstract DUE

Week 7 Oct. 16-20

Classic Sociolinguistics (cont.)

Fri 10/20 HOMEWORK #3 DUE

EXAM #1 HANDED OUT

Week 8 Oct. 23-27

Language and Gender

READ: W Ch 8 pp 234-265

Fri 10/27 EXAM #1 DUE

Week 9 Oct. 30-Nov. 3

Language and Gender (cont.)

READ: C Ch 3 pp 116-162

Fri 11/3 HOMEWORK #4 DUE

Week 10 Nov. 6-10

African American English

READ: W Ch 6-7 pp 190-233

Week 11 Nov. 13-17

Using Dialect Knowledge

READ: W Ch 10-11 pp 294-360

Fri 11/17 HOMEWORK #5 DUE

Week 12 Nov. 20-24

Language and Age

READ: C Ch 4 pp 163-225

Fri 11/24 Thanksgiving Break NO CLASS

Week 13 Nov. 27-Dec. 1

Diversity in Language

READ: C Ch 5 pp 226-278

Fri 12/1 HOMEWORK #6 DUE

EXAM #2 Handed Out

Week 14 Dec. 4-8

PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Fri 12/8 EXAM #2 Due

Week 15 Dec. 11-15

PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Fri 12/15 Research Paper Due