

## COM4706 Language & Power

Fall 2021

Section: 36G8

Syllabus

---

**Instructor:** Dr. Emily Rine Butler  
**Meeting Time:** MWF 5 (11:45-12:35)  
**Classroom:** Rolfs 207  
**Office:** Rolfs 402  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 2-4pm, and by appointment (Zoom: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/8300868113>)  
**Office Phone:** 352-273-2743  
**E-mail:** [erbutler@ufl.edu](mailto:erbutler@ufl.edu) (email preferred)

---

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course explores the role of language in articulating, maintaining, and subverting power relations in society. Drawing from Communication Studies and Applied Linguistics, the course provides students with the tools to uncover, describe, and critically analyze the various (strategic) biases in language that create and reinforce power asymmetries in society.

The objective of this course is to explore the role of language in articulating, maintaining, and subverting power relations in society. We will consider the interplay between linguistics and extra-linguistic factors such as race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, as well as what linguistic factors index power relationships in specific types of discourse, such as media discourse, political discourse, and institutional discourse. Additionally, this course aims to provide students with the meta-language and analytical tools to describe, analyze, and uncover the various (strategic) biases in language, as well as articulate how these biases reflect, maintain, and create power relationships among individual speakers and in society.

### **COURSE PREREQUISITES:**

COM1000 or SPC2300 for Comm. Studies Minor students, or with permission by the instructor; none for Linguistics students, although LIN 3010 and/or LIN 4600 are recommended; (Note: Students do not need to be doing Comm. Studies or Linguistics to take this course)

### **GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

This course is a Social and Behavioral Sciences (S) subject area course and a (D) Diversity course in the UF General Education Program.

Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

In Diversity courses, students examine the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing social and cultural differences within the United States. Students engage with diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and (dis)abilities. Students critically analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities and constraints across the US population. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate their own and other people's understandings of themselves and an increasingly diverse U.S. society.

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication, and critical thinking:

SUBJECT AREA	CONTENT	COMMUNICATION	CRITICAL THINKING
	STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES		
<b>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</b>	<p>Identify, describe, and explain key themes, principles, &amp; terminology; the history, theory and/or methodologies used; and social institutions, structures and processes.</p> <p>Identify the extra-linguistic (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender) and linguistic factors indexing power relationships in specific types of discourse, such as media discourse, political discourse, and institutional discourse</p> <p>Mooney &amp; Evans Chapters 1-10</p>	<p>Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.</p> <p>Articulate how these biases reflect, maintain, and create power relationships among individual speakers and in society</p>	<p>Apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis effectively to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions. Assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.</p> <p>Describe, analyze, and uncover the various (strategic) biases in language using various linguistic techniques</p> <p>Mooney &amp; Evans Chapters 2-10</p>
<b>Assessment of Social Science SLOs</b>	<p>Exam 1 (Ch. 1-5) Exam 2 (Ch. 6-10) Reaction papers 1-3 Symbolic capital HW Language &amp; Ethnicity HW Language &amp; Aging HW Linguistic Landscapes HW</p>	<p>Discussion Leader Classroom discussions Reaction papers 1-3</p>	<p>Exam 1 (Ch. 1-5) Exam 2 (Ch. 6-10) Analyzing political speeches HW Symbolic capital HW Language &amp; Ethnicity HW Language &amp; Aging HW Linguistic Landscapes HW</p>
<b>Diversity</b>	<p>Identify, describe and explain the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability.</p> <p>Identify the intersection between linguistic markers and extra-linguistic features such as race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, as well as how these linguistic factors index power relationships in specific types of discourse</p> <p>Mooney &amp; Evans Ch. 2, 6-10</p>	<p>The diversity designation is always in conjunctions with another category. Communication outcomes are listed in those subject areas.</p>	<p>Analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities and constraints of different groups in the United States. Analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate understandings of an increasingly diverse US society.</p> <p>Provide students with analytical tools to uncover the various (strategic) biases in language, as well as how those biases reflect, maintain, and create power relationships in American society, especially regarding issues of race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, age, native language(s), and sexual orientation</p> <p>Mooney &amp; Evans Ch. 2, 6-10</p>
<b>Assessment of Diversity SLOs</b>	<p>Exam 1 (Ch. 1-5) Exam 2 (Ch. 6-10) Reaction papers 1-3 Analyzing political speeches HW Symbolic capital HW Language &amp; Ethnicity HW Language &amp; Aging HW</p>		<p>Exam 1 (Ch. 1-5) Exam 2 (Ch. 6-10) Analyzing political speeches HW Symbolic capital HW Language &amp; Ethnicity HW Language &amp; Aging HW</p>

**TEXTBOOK & COURSE MATERIALS:**

Mooney, A., and Evans, B. (2019). *Language, Society & Power: An Introduction* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). NY: Routledge.  
A copy of this textbook will be put on reserve in [Library West](#).

All other supplementary materials will be available on the class *Canvas* site under “Pages”. You will select from among these readings to complete your reactions papers and homework assignments.

**Selection of supplementary articles****Chapter 2: Language, thought, and representation**

Pullum, G. (1989). The Great Eskimo Vocabulary Hoax. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 7, p. 275-281.  
Moss, L. (2014, June 9). [Does the language you speak influence how you think?](#) *Mother Nature Network*.

**Chapter 3: Language & Politics**

Rosenberg, P. (2011) [The economy is a ‘machine’, not a ‘body’  
Mass Shooting or Terrorist Attack? It depends on your party](#)

**Chapter 4: Language & the Media**

[Conservatives accuse Facebook of Trending Bias](#)  
[How to Fake a Feminist Hashtag](#)

**Chapter 5: Linguistic Landscapes**

[The Story behind Banksy](#)

**Chapter 6: Language & Gender**

[Talking to boys the way we talk to girls](#)  
[I’m not mad; that’s just my RBF](#)  
[Students see male professors as brilliant geniuses, female professors as bossy and annoying](#)  
[Sure, these women are winning Olympic medals, but are they single?](#)

**Chapter 7: Language & Ethnicity**

[Declaring ‘That’s me’ and empowering Latinas](#)  
[Coding “white trash” in Academia](#)  
[How Iggy Azalea Mastered Her ‘Blaccent’](#)

**Chapter 8: Language & Age**

[Does digital, by default, exclude older people?](#)  
[The cruelty of calling older adults ‘sweetie’ or ‘honey’](#)  
[This is what ‘adulthood’ means](#)

**Chapter 9: Language & Symbolic Capital**

[Potato chips and class](#)  
[Amazon’s takeover of Whole Foods is a fascinating study in class identity](#)

**Chapter 10: Global Englishes**

[Indian Officials ordered to ditch English for Hindi](#)  
[Brexit and an Anglosphere prison](#)

**ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:**

Your attendance and participation in class is significant to your success in the class. Attendance will be taken daily. If you come to class unprepared, you may be asked to leave and counted as absent for that class period.

NOTE: In the rare case of class being canceled, you will likely be given an assignment to do instead. In order to receive credit for your attendance/participation grade for that day, you must submit that assignment by Midnight on Canvas on the day it is due. Always check your email before class for updates from me.

**How absences affect your grade:**

A student is allowed to miss **three hours** of class material without incurring a penalty. There are not 'excused' and 'unexcused' days. You can use your 3 hours for any reason, but after that, penalties start to accrue. If all of your absences are due to documented emergencies and exceed two, you should communicate with me in a timely manner.

For **each** hour missed beyond the 3 allowed hours, a total of **20 points** will be deducted (i.e. 4 hours absent= -20pts; 5 hours absent= -40pts). If the penalty exceeds the 100 participation points, the 20 points per absence will then come off the total grade out of 600 in the class.

If a student misses more than **6 'unexcused' hours** during a semester, they will fail the entire course. The Dial Center exempts from this policy **only** those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor **prior** to the date that will be missed.

**How tardiness affects your grade:**

If students are not on present at the start of class, this disrupts the entire class, and students will be considered late. If a student leaves class early, this will also be considered as a 'tardy.' Three instances of tardiness count as one absence. If a student is only in attendance for under 40 of the 50 minutes of class, the student will be counted as 'absent' and not just 'tardy.'

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

**GRADING POLICIES:**

**"No Name"**: Any and all assignments that do not have your full name on each document will receive an automatic 2-point penalty.

**Late Assignments**: You are permitted to submit **1** late assignment during the semester without penalty (to be turned in no later than 24 hours after the due date in order to receive credit). Except for this one-time allowance, no assignments or make-up exams will not be accepted (*even for partial credit*) without a University-approved absence.

**"Re-Do" Assignments**: I do not allow students to "re-do" an assignment once it has been graded or to do an additional assignment in place of another assignment (e.g. homework).

**CLASS RECORDINGS:**

While this is a face-to-face course, some of our sessions will occur over Zoom, around campus, or will be in the form of a pre-taped lecture for you to watch. The dates for these lectures are indicated on the day-by-day part of the syllabus.

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including

but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT:**

The Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication strives for a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. Students are expected to behave according to the UF student code of conduct in their classes. This means treating their instructors and fellow classmates with respect. To ensure a positive learning environment, students should not: make complaints publicly (in front of other students); attack the instructor verbally, physically, or in written form; or express reactions in the classroom that would bring harm to other students. Failure to meet the UF code of conduct can impact a student's class participation grade or result in referral to the UF judicial office. Class atmosphere can be made or broken by the approach that students take to the challenges of the course. Students that support others, show good humor in the face of obstacles, show dedication in the face of setbacks, and show grace when others are not doing as well will help to create a positive communication climate.

In a communication class, it is especially important for each of us to:

- Display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students;
- Pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities;
- Avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom;
- Avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.).

### **ACCOMMODATIONS:**

Please inform me if I can do anything to make sure physical circumstances don't get in the way of your work. UF's official statement on ADA issues includes: " Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) ) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester." I'd appreciate your paperwork the first week of class.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

### **U MATTER, WE CARE:**

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

### **HONOR CODE:**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.' Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult the instructor for this class." For more information, refer to UF's Student Conduct & Honor Code, <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>

**COURSE EVALUATIONS:**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

**COMMUNICATION STUDIES MINOR:**

The Dial Center offers a minor in Communication Studies (CMS). Our CMS minor is consistently one of the largest minors within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Employers increasingly want to see oral communication skills, and students find the minor pairs well with any major or even fulfills their requirement for an outside concentration. The total minor is just 18 credit hours. Your Public Speaking course counts as one of the core courses for the minor. You can find more information at [https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/colleges-schools/UGLAS/CMS\\_UMN/](https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/colleges-schools/UGLAS/CMS_UMN/).

**GRADING SCALE: (TOTAL: 600 PTS)**

<u>Scale for Final Grades:</u>
A=558-600
A-=535-557
B+=522-534
B=498-521
B-=480-497
C+=462-479
C=438-461
C-=420-437
D+=402-419
D=378-401
D-=360-377
E=0-359

<u>Scale for Final Grades:</u>
A=93-100%
A-=90-92%
B+=87-89%
B=83-86%
B-=80-82%
C+=77-79%
C=73-76%
C-=70-72%
D+=67-69%
D=63-66%
D-=60-62%
E=0-59%

**COURSE HOMEPAGE:**

The course homepage on *Canvas* (<http://lss.at.ufl.edu>) will be central to the class. You will be able to access readings, worksheets, and the class discussion boards through the homepage. I will update it regularly with news and syllabus changes. Although I will make announcements in class and/or send e-mails regarding the assignments and schedule, it is your responsibility to check the homepage for updates.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**\*All assignments due by midnight on Canvas unless otherwise noted**

Date		TOPIC	Mtg	In-class Activities	HW Prep	HW <u>due</u> today
Week 1 8/23- 8/27	M	Welcome		Syllabus		
	W	1.1 What is language?		1.1.1 Prescriptivism vs. descriptivism		
	F	-----				
Week 2 8/30- 9/3	M	1.2 How are language & power related?		1.2.1 PC Language		1.2.1 DBST: Examples of "PC" language
	W	2.1 Language as a System				
	F	2.2 Signs, Structures, & Metaphors	TAPED LECTURE	2.2.1 Color lists		Arrival analysis due Sun
Week 3 9/6- 9/10	M	<b>NO CLASSES - LABOR DAY</b>				
	W	-----		2.2.2 Trans. patterns		2.1.1 DBST: Everyday Metaphors
	F	3.1 Politics & Ideology				
Week 4 9/13- 9/17	M	-----			Read Lakoff <i>Moral Politics</i> (Ch. 2)	
	W	3.2 Metaphors & Politics				
	F	-----			Read "Student as customer"	Reaction paper 1 due Sun
Week 5 9/20- 9/24	M	4.1 MOC & Semantic Unity		3.2.1: RMP		
	W	-----				
	F	4.2 News Values		4.1.1: Headlines		
Week 6 9/27- 10/1	M	-----		4.2.1: News values		
	W	5.1 Where is language?				
	F	-----	Around campus	5.1.1: Find the signs activity		
Week 7 10/4- 10/8	M	5.2 Kinds of Signs				
	W	-----		5.2.1: Multiling. & Signs		Linguistic Landscapes HW

	F	<b>NO CLASS – Homecoming</b>				*Extra credit Qs (opt.)
Week 8 10/11- 10/15	M	5.3 Online Landscapes				5.3.1 DBST: Rules of memes
	W	Exam Prep (opt)				
	F	<b>EXAM 1</b>				
Week 9 10/18- 10/22	M	6.1 Lexical inequality		6.1.1: Ordering of binomials		
	W	6.2 Gender & Gossip		6.2.1: Men’s Gossip		
	F	-----				
Week 10 10/25- 10/29	M	6.3 Gender & Power				
	W	7.1 Race vs. Ethnicity		7.1.1: Construct the ‘Other’		
	F	7.2 Reclaiming & Ethnolects;				Reaction Paper 2
Week 11 11/1- 11/5	M	7.3 Discourses of Authenticity				
	W	-----		7.3.1: Claims of authenticity		7.3.1 DBST: Cultural approp/stereotyping
	F	8.1 Early life stage		8.1.1: Stages & expectations		Lang & Ethnicity HW
Week 12 11/8- 11/12	M	-----				
	W	<b>NO CLASS – VETERAN’S DAY</b>				
	F	8.2 Adolescence				8.2.1 DBST: Teen Speak
Week 13 11/15- 11/19	M	8.3 Middle & Later Life Stages		8.3.1: Self-reps of older people		
	W	-----				
	F	9.1 Attitudes to class & linguistic variation	<b>ZOOM</b>	9.1.1: Coding for ‘white trash’		Language & Age HW
Week 14 11/22- 11/26	M	-----	<b>ZOOM</b>	9.1.2: Analyzing for class		Reaction paper 3
	W	<b>NO CLASS –</b>				
	F	<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>				



Week 15 11/29- 12/3	M	9.2 Social networks & symbolic capital				
	W	10.1 Learning English Globally				Symbolic Capital HW; 10.1.1 DBST: Lingua Franca
	F	-----				*Extra credit Qs (opt.)
Week 16 12/6- 12/10	M	Exam prep (opt.)				
	W	EXAM 2				

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS:**

Class attendance/participation (100 pts)

- Attendance
- Syllabus welcome quiz
- In-class activities & discussions

Homework (Complete **3** of 5 assignments x 50 pts each) (150 pts)

- Language & Politics
- Linguistic Landscapes
- Language & Ethnicity
- Language & Age
- Symbolic Capital

*Arrival* Analysis paper (30 pts)

Reaction papers (30 pts x 3) (90 pts)

Discussion Board “Special Topics” (Complete **3** of 6 posts x 10 pts) (30 pts)

Exam 1 (100 points)

Exam 2 (100 points)

**TOTAL: 600 Pts**

Extra Credit: 15 pts. possible

**Discussion Board “Special Topics”**

Over the course of the semester, I will have several discussion boards to extend our in-class discussions of the texts. You are required to participate in **3** of the 6 discussion boards during the semester for credit. In order to receive full credit for participating in each DB, you need to make at least 1 post (7 pts) and make 1 substantive comment on someone else’s post (3 pts).

**Arrival Analysis Paper**

You will write an analysis and reaction paper after watching the movie *Arrival*. Reaction papers should be approximately 2-4 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-pt, Times New Roman font, 1” margins).

This paper has specific questions on the movie themes that you will answer. In addition, you will briefly summarize the movie (2-4 paragraphs) before explaining what you liked and/or didn’t like about it and why. You will be expected to utilize the terminology from Chapter 2 in your paper. Papers are always due by midnight and will be submitted to CANVAS on the due date listed on the schedule.

## **Exams**

Exam 1 will cover material from the first 5 chapters of the book (Ch. 1-5). Exam 2 will cover material from the last 5 chapters of the book (Ch. 6-10). Both exams will be composed of definitions, T/F, multiple-choice questions, and 1-2 short essays. All exams will be taken in person during class time in the classroom.

## **Extra Credit**

I will use some of the questions for the exams based on questions you have submitted. For extra credit, create 20 questions & answers for **one** of our two exams. Use multiple choice (4 choices) or T/F types of questions **ONLY**. Indicate the answers below each question and make sure multiple-choice questions have 4 possible answers each. (Note: Separate and label questions by Chapter.)

You must submit the Extra Credit on CANVAS by midnight (see schedule). Plan ahead. This set of questions is worth up to 10 points added to your total point score (out of 600) for the course. Note: you will **not** receive extra points for questions to both exams.

Additionally, I am always looking for real-world examples of language use in articles, video clips, etc. to use in class to demonstrate a particular theme. You may email me examples that you find that you think will be interesting to the rest of the class, and if I like it, you will receive 5 extra credit points.