

## **Linguistics 238: Sociolinguistics**

Fall 2018

Time: MTh 11:10 – 12:20 pm

Room: Founders 207

Instructor: Dr. Sabriya Fisher

Email: [sfisher3@wellesley.edu](mailto:sfisher3@wellesley.edu)

Office Phone: 781-283-2410

Office: Green 135

Office hours: Monday, Tuesday 4:10 – 5:10 pm

\*Course website on Sakai

### **Overview**

In this course we'll investigate how language relates to social factors like gender, class, and ethnicity, and connect the variation found in everyday speech to the larger forces that drive language change over time. We will also examine other issues at the intersection of language and society (e.g., language contact, multilingualism, language attitudes, etc.). The course features a hands-on research component in the form of two field projects and culminates in a research proposal on a topic of your choice. You'll learn how to collect data on how people use language in real life and analyze the data you collect, gaining useful qualitative and quantitative skills that can be transferred to other areas. By the end of the course you should feel comfortable:

- Talking and writing about language variation and its social determinants
- Collecting sociolinguistic data in real-world settings
- Analyzing numeric data using basic quantitative tools
- Formulating and testing hypotheses about sociolinguistic topics

### **Prerequisites**

LING 114, CLSC 216/PSYC 216

### **Textbook and Materials**

- Van Herk *What is Sociolinguistics?* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (E-book available through library)
- Additional readings, videos & sound clips provided on Sakai
- Slides will be made available on Sakai following each class

### **Assessment & Evaluation** (out of 100 points total)

Class Participation	10
Sociolinguistic Autobiography	5
Field project #1	20*
Field project #2	20*
Discussion leading (1x per student)	15
Research proposal	30*

\*Total points broken down for separate sections of the project.

### Participation

Participation is 10% of your grade. Participation includes arriving to class on time, coming to class prepared and having done the readings, listening attentively, contributing to class discussions, and raising questions or comments on readings. It's also important to make sure to allow space to others to contribute to class discussions.

### Readings

To fully participate in class and engage in discussions, you are expected to do the readings by the date that they are listed on the syllabus.

### Sociolinguistic Autobiography

*Reflect on your linguistic background and experiences.*

### Field Project 1

*Circulate a written dialect survey and make dialect maps.*

### Field Project 2

*Conduct a field survey on a topic TBA.*

### Discussion Leading

*A group of students will lead a discussion on one of several topics. I will provide readings to summarize and generate questions. You will also draw on concepts and issues presented in class to frame discussion.*

### Research Proposal

*Develop your own research question and hypothesis. You will discuss what data and methods will allow you to test this hypothesis and what you expect to find based on observations or preliminary data collection.*

*The research proposal will be broken up into three separate assignments: (1) an abstract, (2) an oral presentation, (3) and a final written paper.*

## **Course Schedule**

<b>Day/Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
Thurs. Sept. 6	What is Sociolinguistics?		
Mon. Sept. 10	Language Variation	WiSL Ch. 1 & 2 Meyerhoff 2006 (Ch.2, pgs. 8-top of 11, bottom of 15-17)	Mandatory Office Hours Mon. & Tues.
Thurs. Sept. 13	Coding Speech Sounds	WiSL Ch. 3 Meyerhoff 2006 (Ch. 11, pgs. 258-260)	Sociolinguistic Autobiography due
Mon. Sept. 17	Regional Variation		
Thurs. Sept. 20	Social Stratification	WiSL Ch. 4 Labov 1966 (Ch. 3)	FP1 Data & Coding due
Mon. Sept. 24	Social Stratification & Language Change		
Thurs. Sept. 27	Age	WiSL Ch. 5 Dinkin 2018	
Mon. Oct. 1	Age & Language Change		
Thurs. Oct. 4	Ethnicity	WiSL Ch. 6 Fought 1997	FP1 Write up due
Mon. Oct. 8	No class – Fall break		
Thurs. Oct. 11	Methods	TBA	
Mon. Oct. 15	Ethnicity/African American English	Rickford 1999	
Thurs. Oct. 18	Gender	WiSL Ch. 7 Eckert 2014 Vocal Fry Readings	FP2 Data & Coding due
Mon. Oct. 22	Gender & Language Change		
Thurs. Oct. 25	Style	WiSL Ch. 8 Eckert 2004	
Mon. Oct. 29	Style & Social Meaning		
Thurs. Nov. 1	Interaction & Politeness	WiSL Ch. 9	FP2 Write up due
Mon. Nov. 5	Multilingualism	WiSL Ch. 10	Office Hours Monday/Tuesday – discuss final project
Thurs. Nov. 8	Language Contact	WiSL Ch. 11	
Mon. Nov. 12	*Student-led Discussion*	TBA	
Thurs. Nov. 15	*Student-led Discussion*	TBA	
Mon. Nov. 19	*Student-led Discussion*	TBA	
Thurs. Nov. 22	No class - Thanksgiving		
Mon. Nov. 26	Language Attitudes & Ideology	WiSL Ch. 12 Language Attitudes op-eds	
Thurs. Nov. 29	Language as a Social Entity	WiSL Ch. 13	Proposal Abstract due
Mon. Dec. 3	Language & Education/Wrap-up	WiSL Ch. 14 & 15	
Thurs. Dec. 6	Oral Presentations		
Mon. Dec. 10	Oral Presentations		
Thurs. Dec. 20			<b>Final Research Proposal due 4pm</b>

## **Course Policies**

### **Attendance**

Course attendance is mandatory. Each unexcused absence will result in a 1 point reduction of the final grade. Missing assigned office hours appointments will count as absences.

Religious holidays and documented absences (illnesses, funerals, job interviews, etc.) are considered excused absences and will not affect your final grade. However, if you have a legitimate excuse for missing a class, please inform me before you miss the class otherwise it may be counted as an unexcused absence.

In the event of an absence, you are responsible for getting any class notes or announcements that you missed from your classmates. You are also responsible for submitting any work by the due date.

### **Standards for Submitting Assignments**

Assignments will be due **Thursdays by 9 pm**. Coursework should normally be submitted through Sakai. All submitted coursework should be in MS Word or Excel. Please see me immediately if this will be a problem. All written assignments should be done in Times New Roman 12-point font, single spaced, with standard margins.

Once per semester, you may request an extension of up to 48 hours to complete any **writing** assignment except the research proposal. Once you have used your 48-hour extension, you will not be permitted another, so reserve this tool for only when absolutely necessary. Field project data cannot be accepted late.

Otherwise, late work will not be accepted. Work received after the deadline will receive a reduction in credit up to 1 point per day late until received.

Absences and technology failures do not excuse late work.

### **Cell phones and Computers in Class**

Students must turn off all cell phones, alarms, etc., and should not use or check cell phones at any point during class. You may take notes on your laptop during class, but please do not multi-task out of consideration for your classmates' concentration. I also want to encourage you to consider taking notes the old fashioned way if you are able.

Should you need the assistance of technology to accommodate a disability, please inform me immediately, in which case computers may be used for taking notes only.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to work with Jim Wice, the Director of Disability Services to arrange these accommodations. His office is located in the Pforzheimer Learning and Teaching Center in Clapp Library, room 316, x2434, [jwice@wellesley.edu](mailto:jwice@wellesley.edu). If you think you may have a learning disability and would like more information on resources, please contact Jim.

### Names and Pronouns

Class rosters list your name as it appears in college records, but I will happily honor your preferred name and pronouns and expect all members of the class to do the same.

### Academic Integrity

The **Wellesley Honor Code** states, “As a Wellesley College student, I will act with honesty, integrity, and respect. In making this commitment, I am accountable to the community and dedicate myself to a life of honor.”

You should adhere to this code in the completion of all assignments and interactions with all members of this course. Work that compromises academic honesty will receive a grade of zero. For the college’s guidelines on plagiarism, consult the following website:

<http://www.wellesley.edu/DeanStudent/plagiari.html>

### Communication Policy

Feel free to ask questions by email, but please allow 24 hours for a response. I may not be able to answer emails over weekends or during vacations, so plan accordingly if you have pressing questions or concerns. Please check the syllabus, Sakai, or with a classmate before emailing questions. Direct email is preferred over Sakai messages.

From time to time I will use email to distribute course-related materials and make announcements. Please check your email regularly enough that you will receive information in a timely manner. I will use the email address you have on file with Wellesley as your primary email address for course correspondence. If you use another email address that is not the email address I have on file, please notify me so that you may receive course information in a timely manner.

### Office Hours

The office hours listed on this syllabus are times that you may drop by my office to ask questions or discuss concerns about the course. If you cannot come to office hours, please email me to make another appointment to meet. In your email, please state the reason for wanting to make an appointment, the reason you cannot meet during regular office hours, and the days/times that you are available to meet. Please bear in mind the contact policy in expecting a response. I want to stress that making an appointment to meet or dropping by office hours is **the best way to ensure that my time is devoted to you** and your questions/concerns.

### Feedback

Midway through the semester, I will ask for your anonymous feedback on the course. Additionally, if at any time you find the material too challenging or not challenging enough, please feel free to reach out to me.

**Looking forward to a great semester with you all!**