

IBH 1AC3: Introduction to Language and Society Winter 2021 Course Outline

COURSE OBJECTIVE

By the end of the course students are expected to have acquired understanding of the basic concepts, tenets and issues of sociolinguistics.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Nikolai Penner penner@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours: Wednesdays: 1-2 p.m. by appointment. Please email me first.

Teaching Assistant: Gwenyth Lu lug@mcmaster.ca

Course website: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

All classes are conducted synchronously via Zoom (Meeting ID: 957 5524 6887. For the passcode, please check the course shell on Avenue2Learn.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

- What does the way you speak tell about you?
- Does your language influence the way we see the world?
- Do we judge the same person differently depending on which language they are speaking?
- Can someone use slang incorrectly?
- What are secret languages?
- Do the Inuit have dozens of words for snow?
- Is African American English 'incorrect English'?
- Why don't we use 'whom' anymore?
- Do languages degenerate over time?
- Why do parts of Sean Paul's, Bob Marley's or Drake's lyrics sound like gibberish to us?
- What is the difference between a promise, a warning and a threat?

These and many more questions related to language will be answered in this course. We will debunk a number of existing myths and will point out a few facts that sound like myths to most people. Ultimately, the course is exploring a connection between a language's structure, its use by speakers, and the structure of a society.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course students are expected to:

1. develop general knowledge of the relationship between variations in language form, use and socio-cultural factors;

- develop general knowledge of how language is used in a society, how power is manifested through the language, what makes effective communication, and how our perception of the world is affected by the language we speak.

COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

No textbook is required for this course. All tests, examinations and assignments are based on lectures and additional articles which will be posted on Avenue.

Required: Top Hat Subscription.

Optional:

If you would really like to see most of the material presented in this course in print, the lectures will be mostly following Ronald Wardhaugh's *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 6th Edition.

There is a 7th edition out now, in which many topics have been moved around, but the overall content remains essentially the same.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

GRADE COMPONENT	WEIGHT	DESCRIPTION
Attendance & Participation	10%	5% attending lectures 5% submitting answers to questions in Top Hat
Midterm Examination	20%	40% multiple choice tasks 20% short answer questions 20% textual analysis task
Assignment 1	10%	Instructions and specific details will be discussed in class and posted on Avenue.
Assignments 2 and 3	30%	2 x 15% each. Instructions and specific details will be discussed in class and posted on Avenue.
Final Exam	30%	Teams of ~5 hand in a written case analysis report

Attendance & Participation

We will be using a subscription-based online platform Top Hat to track attendance and participation (see TOP HAT section below for details). To receive maximum points in this category, students need to attend at least 90% of all classes. Attending a class means being present during the attendance call at the end of the class and providing answers to 90% of all questions displayed in class through Top Hat.

Your attendance/participation score will be updated on Avenue 2 Learn at the end of the semester.

Midterm

There will be a one-hour midterm examination on **Friday, February 11** during class time.

In the event of a documented absence or a valid MSAF, the midterm grade will be carried over to the final examination.

Assignments

Students will need to complete three different assignments during the term. The details will be announced and discussed in class before each due date.

All assignments must be completed and there will be no carrying over the grade to the final examination.

In the event of a documented absence or a valid MSAF, an extension of maximum 1 week will be given.

Final Exam

There will be a cumulative two-hour final exam during the April exam period. Please note that the instructor has no control over the date of this examination.

Course Policies

Missed assignments

Please note that MSAFS submitted **before the original deadline** will be accepted to justify the one-week extension for an assignment.

Missed midterm

No midterm tests will be re-written in this course. In case of a documented absence with a valid MSAF, the percentage of the missed test will be carried over to the final exam.

Communication Policies

EMAIL ADDRESSES: All emails must originate from your McMaster email address. Otherwise McMaster spam filter might not let it through and we might not receive your email.

THE SUBJECT LINE: Please include the course code (IBH 1AC3) in the Subject line of your email, otherwise we might not know which course you are in.

YOUR NAME(S): Please include your student number and ALL names you use. Remember that we cannot resolve an issue you might have if we can't find your name on Avenue.

Questions regarding assignments

No emails 24 hours AFTER you receive the assessment. The instructor and the TA(s) will not respond to emails about an assessment sent within this 24-hour period. This period of time will allow all students to consider the assessment, the answer key, their answers, and whatever issues they have fully before contacting an instruction team member with an emotional reaction. All emails sent within this 24-hour period will be deleted without response. This period applies to quizzes and exams, math errors and correctness disputes.

Questions regarding the course content

If you have questions about course content, please post them on the discussion board instead of sending us an email and we will do our best to answer them asap.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Area Administrative Assistants. All students must receive feedback regarding their progress prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default.

- *For Level 1 and Level 2 courses, this feedback must equal a minimum of 20% of the final grade.*
- *For Level 3 courses and above, this feedback must equal a minimum of 10% of the final grade.*

Instructors may solicit feedback via an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery.

REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work” and the link below;

<http://ug.degroote.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.** Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a

student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS

All researchers conducting research that involves human participants, their records or their biological material are required to receive approval from one of McMaster's Research Ethics Boards before (a) they can recruit participants and (b) collect or access their data. Failure to comply with relevant policies is a research misconduct matter. Contact these boards for further information about your requirements and the application process.

McMaster Research Ethics Board (General board): <https://reo.mcmaster.ca/>

Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board (Medical board): <http://www.hireb.ca/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your enrolment in IBH 1AC3 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.