

IBH 1AC3
Introduction to Language and Society
Winter 2024 Course Outline

COURSE OBJECTIVE

By the end of the course students are expected to have acquired understanding of the basic concepts and tenets of sociolinguistics, and be aware of the ways in which language structure (grammar), language use and cultural norms of human societies are interconnected.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Nikolai Penner pennern@mcmaster.ca
Office Hours: Tuesdays: 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Teaching Assistant: TBD
Course website: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

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;
2. 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

1. Textbooks (free):

The textbooks used in this course are:

- Wardhaugh, Ronald. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2014.
- Romaine, Suzanne. *Language in Society : An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2001. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

Both books are available to students under e-reserves free of charge. They can be accessed through Avenue2Learn.

2. Top Hat Basic Subscription (free):

To allow you to participate during lectures, this course will be using a one-term basic subscription to Top Hat, an interactive platform through which lecture slides will be presented and questions during the lectures will be asked.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to you by email in the first week of instruction.
The Course Join Code will be available on Avenue 2 Learn.

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Students are expected to learn by:

- attending the lectures;
- participating in small-group problem-solving tasks during class time;
- completing assigned readings at home;
- completing written reflections & assignments.

Lectures will be supplemented by videos, articles, guest speakers, tutorials, and workshop sessions as appropriate.

The students will have access to the lecture slides presented in class.



• **EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

GRADE COMPONENT	WEIGHT	DESCRIPTION
Midterm Examination	20%	The midterm examination will include various questions, including multiple choice, short answer and textual analysis.
Homework reflections	2 @ 5% = 10%	Instructions and specific details will be discussed in class and posted on Avenue.
Assignments	2 @ 20% = 40%	2 x 20% each. Instructions and specific details will be discussed in class and posted on Avenue.
Final Exam	30%	The final exam is cumulative and will include some of the material tested on the midterm.

Midterm

There will be a one-hour midterm examination 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.

Reflections & Assignments

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

Missed reflections/assignments

In the event of a documented absence or a valid MSAF, a 1 week extension will be given to submit reflections and assignments.

Missed midterm

In the event of a documented absence or a valid MSAF, a chance to rewrite the midterm will be given. Missed midterms must be re-written within 1 week of the original midterm date.

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.

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](#), 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.