

ANTH 468 -- LANGUAGE AND COGNITION

Professor: Valentina Pagliai
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M 7pm to 8:45pm

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Office Hours: MWF 2:00pm-3:00pm (Or by appointment)

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Course Description: This course traces the historical evolution of theoretical attempts to define the relationship between language and thought, moving from the classic works by Sapir and Whorf and the successive debates on them, through the work of ethnolinguists and ethnoscientists, to contemporary approaches. We will explore the legacy of the Cognitive school in linguistic anthropology from its emergence until today, examining its basic propositions and looking forward to possible applications in future studies. Finally, we will discuss more recent work on metaphors and the conceptual structures that influence our behavior and thought.

Required texts:

- 1) Whorf, Benjamin Lee 1956 *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Edited by John B. Carroll. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- 2) Lakoff, George & Mark Johnson 1980 *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 3) Robin T. Lakoff, 2000. *The Language War*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 4) Emily A. Schultz, 1990 *Dialogue at the Margins: Whorf, Bakhtin and Linguistic Relativity*. University of Wisconsin Press.
- 4) Additional Readings: Copies of the course's additional readings are in reserve and e-res in the campus Library. Exception: the readings available online on J-STOR are not or reserve.

Optional Texts:

- 1) Lakoff, George 1987 *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press.
- 2) John J. Gumperz & Stephen C. Levinson (Eds.) 1996 *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

WEEK 1 – M 2/7 -- Introduction to the course.

WEEK 2 – M 2/14 -- Sapir: Language and Culture. Unconscious patterning of behavior.

Readings:

- 1) Sapir, Edward 1949 (1985) *Selected Writings in Language, Culture, and Personality*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
 - “The Status of Linguistics as a Science” (1929) pp. 160-166.
 - “The Unconscious Patterning of Behavior in Society” (1927) pp. 544-559.
- 2) Whorf, Benjamin Lee 1956 “Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf. Edited by John B. Carroll. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
 - “Science and Linguistics” (1940) pp. 207-219
- 3) Robin T. Lakoff *The Language War*.
 - “Introduction” pp. 1-15;
- 4) John J. Gumperz & Stephen C. Levinson (Eds.) 1996 *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*.
 - “Introduction” pp. 1-15.

Suggested Readings:

Sapir, Edward 1949 (1985) *Selected Writings in Language, Culture, and Personality*. Berkeley: University of California Press

“Language” (1933) pp. 7-32.

WEEK 3 – M 2/21 -- Whorf: Linguistic Relativity.

Readings:

1) Whorf, Benjamin Lee 1956 “Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf. Edited by John B. Carroll. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

“The Punctual and Segmentative Aspects of Verbs in Hopi” (1936) pp. 51-56.

“An American Indian Model of the Universe” (1936) pp. 57-64.

“A Linguistic Consideration of Thinking in Primitive Communities” (1936) pp. 65-73.

“The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language” (1939) pp. 134-159.

2) Lee: Dorothy D. (1944) “Linguistic Reflection on Wintu Thought.” Originally published in *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 10. Pp. 130-140.

Suggested Readings:

Whorf, Benjamin L. 1956 *Language, Thought and Reality*.

“Foreword” by Stuart Chase (1955) pp.v-x.

“On the Connection of Ideas” (1927) pp. 35-39.

WEEK 4 – M 2/28 -- Followers and attempts to prove the theory. Ethnolinguists and Ethnoscience. The birth of Cognitivism.

Readings:

1) Spradley (1970) 1988 “Doing Time.” In *You Owe Yourself a Drunk: An Ethnography of Urban Nomads*. New York & London: University of America Press. pp. 193-224.

2) Casson, Ronald W. 1981 *Language, Culture and Cognition: Anthropological Perspectives*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

“Folk Classification: Relativity and Universality” pp. 75-91.

Michael Agar “Talking about Doing: Lexicon and Event” pp. 114-120.

Roger Sanjek “Cognitive Maps of the Ethnic Domain in Urban Ghana: Reflections on Variability and Change” pp. 305-328.

3) Lakoff, George 1987 *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*.

- From Wittgenstein to Rosch, pp. 24-30 (Berlin and Kay, Kay and McDaniel).

Suggested Readings:

Lakoff, George 1987 *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*. Whole of Ch. 2.

Paul Kay “Synchronic Variability and Diachronic Change in Basic Color Terms” in “Language culture and cognition” pp. 291-304.

Casson “Extended and Transferred Meaning” pp. 181-187. In “Language culture and cognition.”

WEEK 5 – M 3/7 -- Cognitive Studies: the universalist/relativist debate. Ontologies.

Diary Due for Review

Readings:

1) Lucy “The scope of linguistic relativity” pp. 37-52. In Gumperz & Levinson 1996 *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*.

2) Bowerman “The origins of children's spatial semantic categories” pp. 145-171. In Gumperz & Levinson 1996 *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*.

- 3) Imai, M. & D. Gentner 1993 "Linguistic Relativity Vs. Universal Ontology: Cross-Linguistic Studies of the Object/Substance Distinction." In K. Beals *et al.* (Eds.) *What We Mean and How We Say It*. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society. Pp. 171-186.
- 4) Levinson, Stephen C. & Penelope Brown 1994 "Immanuel Kant Among the Tenejapans: Anthropology as Empirical Philosophy." *Ethos* 22, 1: 3-37. J-STOR

Suggested Readings:

- 1) Frake, Charles O. 1985 "Cognitive Maps of Time and Tide among Medieval Seafarers" *Man* 20, 2:254-270 J-STOR
- 2) Lucy, John 1996 "The Linguistics of 'Color'." In C. Hardin & L. Maffi (Eds.) *Color Categories in Thought and Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

WEEK 6 – M 3/14 -- Developments in the study of the Relativity Hypothesis.

Readings:

- 1) In "Rethinking Linguistic Relativity:
 - Lucy "The scope of linguistic relativity" pp. 52-64.
 - Clark "Communities, Commonalities, and Communication" pp. 324-354.
 - Gumperz "The linguistic and cultural relativity of conversational inference" pp. 374-405.

Suggested Readings:

- 1) In "Rethinking Linguistic Relativity:
 - Haviland "Projections, Transpositions, and Relativity" pp. 271-323.
- 2) Levinson, Stephen C. 1994 "Language and Space." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 25:353-382. J-STOR

WEEK 7 – M 3/21 -- Lakoff: the study of conceptual systems, metaphors.

Readings:

- 1) George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, "Metaphors we Live By." University of Chicago Press. Pp. 3-19, 25-40, 115-125, 139-217.
- 2) George Lakoff "Metaphors of War" see the following sites:
 - "Metaphors in Politics" - <http://philosophy.uoregon.edu/metaphor/lakoff-1.htm>
 - "Metaphor and War, Again" - <http://www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=15414>

WEEK 8 -- SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9 – M 4/4 – Lakoff: cognitive systems and the critique of the universalist turn. Recent developments in Metaphors studies.

Readings:

- 2) Lakoff, George 1987 *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*. Ch. 18, pp. 304-317 (to "The monolithic system" included) and 327-337 (from "the objectivist critique" to end of chapter).
- 3) Becker, Gay 1994 "Metaphors in Disrupted Lives: Infertility and Cultural Constructions of Continuity." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* Vol. 8, 4:383-410. J-STOR

Optional Reading:

- 1) Lakoff, George 1987 *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*.

WEEK 10 -- M 4/11 -- Developments in the study of the Relativity Hypothesis. The study of indexicality and linguistic ideologies. The study of tropes.

Diary Due for Review

Readings:

- 1) Hill, Jane H. & Bruce Mannheim 1992 "Language and World View" Annual Review of Anthropology Vol. 21:381-406. J-STOR
- 2) Friedrich - from "The Language Parallax," pp. 1-7, 16-53, 117-160.

Suggested Readings:

Frake, Charles O. 1996 "Pleasant Places, Past Times, and Sheltered Identity in Rural East Anglia." In S. Feld & K.H. Basso (Eds.) *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

WEEK 11 -- M 4/18 -- Bakhtinian Analysis of Whorf.

Readings:

- 1) Simon Dentith 1995 *Bakhtinian Thought: An Introductory Reader*. Routledge. Ch. 1 "Voloshinov and Bakhtin on Language" pp. 22-40.
- 2) Emily A. Schultz, 1990 *Dialogue at the Margins: Whorf, Bakhtin and Linguistic Relativity*. University of Wisconsin Press. PP. 3-48.

Suggested Readings:

- 1) Whorf, Benjamin Lee 1956 "Language, Thought and Reality"
"Language, Mind and Reality" (1942) pp. 246-270.

WEEK 12 -- M 4/25 -- Bakhtinian Analysis of Whorf: continued.

Readings:

- 1) Emily A. Schultz, 1990 *Dialogue at the Margins: Whorf, Bakhtin and Linguistic Relativity*. University of Wisconsin Press. Pp. 49-55, 58-61, 63-88, 96-112, 117-123, 125-138.

WEEK 13 -- F 5/2 -- Does language influences us? Language War - An application of the study of language (as action) to understanding society.

Readings:

- 1) Robin T. Lakoff *The Language War*. University of California Press.
"Language" pp. 16-41; ch.. 2, pp. 41-85, start reading ch. 3.

WEEK 14 -- F 5/9 -- Does language influences us? Language War - continued. Final Reflections.

Readings:

- 1) Robin T. Lakoff, "The Language War." University of California Press.
ch. 3 & ch. 4 pp. 86-157, ch. 6 pp. 194-226.

FINALS' WEEK

Diary Due for Review

Deadline to turn in the final paper: THURSDAY MAY 19, 7pm

According to college policy, I cannot reschedule your final exam. In exceptional cases, the Dean of Studies, Dr. Katherine Stuart, can approve of such a rescheduling. If you think an exceptional case applies to you, please talk to her about it.

Course Policies:

Code of honor

The Oberlin College Students' Code of Honor applies to the course, please familiarize yourself with it: http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html

Readings should be completed by the day they are listed on the syllabus; this will help you follow lectures and prepare for discussion.

Summaries of the readings should be about 1-2 pages long. They are due at the beginning of the class session. All summaries should be typed. Late summaries will be graded down 1 point for each day they are late.

Diary Keep a diary as you read through the readings. In it, explore your ideas, write down comments, critiques, questions, reflections, etc. – Do not edit or polish it, but leave it as a spontaneous exercise. Do write on it every week, or more often. I will ask to see this diary twice during the semester and also in finals' week. I will not grade the content, but I want to see continual use of the diary.

Grades:

Will be based on:

Weekly Summaries	A through C
Presentation to the class	A through C
Participation	A through C
Diary	A through C
Final Paper	A through C

Final Note: Although the syllabus will be followed as much as possible, it is intended as a guideline and circumstances may require a change to the schedule. Students are responsible for any changes announced in class