

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT of ANTHROPOLOGY  
**ANTHROPOLOGY 225 – Section 001**  
**LANGUAGE AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE**  
**Spring 2011**  
Prof. Valentina Pagliai  
**Syllabus**

Class Meeting: TF 08:30AM 09:45AM Where: HRST 205

Office Hours: MTH – 1:00-2:00pm  
TF – 9:45am-11am Office:  
F – 12:30-2:00pm Batelle T 31

E-mail: pagliai@american.edu

Teaching Assistant: Ted Samuel. E-mail: as3853a@student.american.edu  
Office hours: F 9:45-11:45 (TA area, Batelle T floor)

Web-page <http://www.aiserarchive.com/LanguageHumanExperience/>

Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/profile.php?id=100000203451385>

### Course Description:

“Language and Human Experience” is one of twenty second-level courses in Curricular Area 1, the Creative Arts, in the University General Education program. The course is part of Cluster 2: Understanding Creative Works. This course examines language and its contribution to creativity, and how knowledge of language enriches human experience. It includes imagery and metaphor building through language; the effects of topic, speaking situation, and gender on creativity in tribal, state-level, and post-colonial contexts; and ways written language recasts and redefines human imagination. Usually offered every fall. Prerequisite for General Education credit: ART-105 or COMM-105 or LIT-120 or LIT-135.

### The General Education Goals of the Course:

Language is a central part of social and professional life but is often taken for granted and assumed to be a neutral referential medium. Becoming aware of how linguistic communication shapes, and can be shaped by, culture, inter-personal and group relations, and power dynamics can be an important learning experience for students. In our increasingly globalized world, we face more opportunities and need for communication. Linguistic anthropological works serve the larger society by providing deeper understanding of its sociocultural and linguistic diversity, and of the creativity of human linguistic expressions, which in turn influence policy discussions and decisions. An important goal of this course is also to favor the development of critical thinking, and the ability to argue one’s point of view. Assignments are devised with this goal in mind, and the classes are oriented to foster active discussion and sharing of ideas.

### Course Materials:

All required readings will be made available on the course’s webpage. The course materials will also include videos, video clips and web-pages. They will be made available on the class’ Facebook page. To access the video clips and links to web-pages you must create a facebook account at <http://www.facebook.com/> and join the class’ Facebook, which is called “Pagliai Anthro Courses.” Please do not use your personal Facebook account but create a new one for the class. You can do that by using an alternative e-mail address.

### Course Format and Requirements:

The class will combine lectures, film viewing, and class or group discussion. Attendance is required and lectures will include material covered in the tests and not included in the readings. You are expected to have completed readings ahead of class. Course grades will be determined as follows:

Quiz 1	5%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Assignment #1	15%
Assignment #2	10%
Assignment #3 (Performance)	10%
Participation	20%
Total	100%

### Grade Equivalencies are:

A = 94-100; A- = 90-93.75; B+ = 87-89.75; B = 83-86.75; B- = 80-82.75;  
C+ = 77-79.75; C = 73-76.75; C- = 70-72.75; D = 60-69.75; F = 0-59

**Assignments:** are due at the beginning of the class session. They will be graded down 1 point for each day that they are late (including weekends). The first assignment will be in the form of a written dialogue or debate on a theme. The second assignment will require a study of a particular form of verbal duel. The third assignment will require a pair of students to perform a short verbal duel in class. The grade will be given individually but will take into consideration your active cooperation toward the common goal of completing the assignment.

**Exams and Quizzes:** may include true/false questions, definition questions, multiple choice questions, list questions and similar. Exams are relatively brief and take only part of the class’ time.

**Make-Up Policy:** Only students who have a legitimate reason and with official written documentation will be permitted to make up a test or exam. Proper documentation is required and, if granted permission, you must take the make-up exam on a day agreed upon with the instructor. I will not change any grades or give any make-up assignments after the end of the semester, unless we have previously agreed to an incomplete.

**Peer Groups:** The class will be divided in Peer Groups that will work together through the course. Peer groups will work together in class when required, discuss together, do assignments together, etc. Peer groups also contribute part of the participation grade (see below).

**Participation:** The grade given for participation will include the following:

- **Attendance (7 points):** attendance will be recorded by the TA. I do not accept any form of justification for absences and such justifications, when offered, will not change your attendance grade. The first day of classes will not be counted. Each student will be allowed one absence without losing points. After that, a student will lose 0.25 participation points for each absence. Note: absences during tests will require justification if the test is to be taken at a different time (see above). You are expected to be in class when lesson starts. Lateness will be recorded and will lead to eventual loss of attendance points.
- **Participation to class discussions (6 points):** this is fundamental and your contribution will be noted and appreciated. Contributions must be relevant to the topic under discussion. They should be grounded in the readings. Everybody is expected to participate actively to class discussions, and to do so in a respectful manner that allows each of your voices to be heard. Participation to discussion on the class’ Facebook page counts toward the participation grade. This may include asking questions and answering questions asked by other students, sharing information relevant to the course’s topic, including web-pages, news or video clips, proposing questions for discussion and discussing them, etc.
- **Participation to the group discussion on Metaphors in the Language of the Mass-media (2 points):** This particular discussion day will include an in-class group assignment.
- **Participation to group discussion on Global Rap and Hybrid identities (1 point):** This particular discussion day will include an in-class group assignment
- **The grade that you will receive from your Peer Group. (4 points):** During the final exam, you will be given the opportunity to grade people in your peer group.

**Readings:** should be done timely before the class where they will be discussed.

**Writing:** All the exams and assignments will require you to write and their will be graded, among other things, for the clarity of exposition and readability. If you feel that you may need help with writing, American University offers a series of workshops and other services to help you. Check out the Writing Center here: <http://www.american.edu/cas/writing/index.cfm>

**Statement of Academic Integrity:** Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course.

**Semester Outline:**

The following schedule provides information on how the semester is broken down into topic units, and provides a list of required readings for each class. You are expected to have completed reading assignments ahead of class. Any changes to the schedule will be announced in class.

**I: INTRODUCTION**

		Topics	Readings
1	1/11 T	Introduction to the Course: what is language? What is communication?	
2	1/14 F	Language as performance, action, sign, participation, argument.	Duranti: "Theoretical Concerns in Contemporary Linguistic Anthropology: pp. 14-21.

**II: LANGUAGE AS PERFORMANCE, ACTION, AND SIGN**

3	1/18 T	Performing the social structure and culture	Bauman: "The Emergent Quality of performance" pp. 37-45. Kapchan: "Performance."
4	1/21 F	- Doing things with language. - Doing being a man or a woman	Cameron: "Performing Gender Identities."
5	1/25 T	The language that points: speech communities, indexes and identities	Queen: "I Don't Speak Spritch."
6	1/28 F	- Doing things with grammar and sound: White rappers' imitation of AAVE	Cutler: "Hip-Hop, White Immigrant Youth, and African American Vernacular English: Accommodation as Identity Choice"

**III: LANGUAGE AS PARTICIPATION**

7	2/1 T	- <b>QUIZ 1</b> - How do we interact with language? TRPs and other fun things	
8	2/4 F	Greetings (in the desert)	Youssef: "Greetings in the Desert."
9	2/8 T	Politeness and Power	Holmes: "Complimenting: A Positive Politeness Strategy."
10	2/11 F	Learning to participate	Goodwin: Excerpts from "He-Said-She-Said."

11	2/15 T	Agreeing with racism	Pagliai: "Conversational Agreement and Racial Formation Processes"
12	2/18 F	- Agreeing with racism: continued - Review and discussion	

**IV: LANGUAGE CONFLICT AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

13	2/22 T	- <b>MID-TERM EXAM</b> - Argumentative language	
14	2/25 F	- Argumentative language: continued - Assignments #1 and #2 distributed and explained, Assignment #3 explained	- Excerpts from various authors (Larson, Lindstrom, Kulick, etc.)
15	3/1 T	Disagreement and insult	- Irvine: "Insult and Responsibility: Verbal Abuse in a Wolof Village."
16	3/4 F	Fighting words: language in the court of laws.	Haviland: "He Doesn't Answer."
17	3/15 T	Verbal duels and political resistance <b>Assignment #1 Due</b>	Dubuisson: "Confrontation in and through the nation in Kazakh Aitys Poetry."
18	3/18 F	<b>Assignment #1 discussed in class</b>	
19	3/22 T	Joking and identity	- Basso, excerpts from "Portraits of the Whiteman."
20	3/25 F	The veils of form in (Somali) song and theater	- Bavelaar: "The Poetics of Displacement." - Andrzejewski: excerpts from "Modern and Traditional Aspects of Somali Drama." - Legum: excerpts from "Somali Liberation Songs."
21	3/29 T	<b>Assignment #2 due and discussed in class</b>	

**V: THE LANGUAGE THAT SHAPES OUR REALITIES**

22	4/1 F	Lakoff and conceptual metaphors	Lakoff and Johnson: excerpts from "Metaphors We Live By."
23	4/5 T	Class group discussion and group assignment: metaphors in the language of the mass-media	- Santa Ana, "Like and Animal I was Treated."
24	4/8 F	Nationhood and its Invention	- Excerpts from Hobsbawm and Anderson. - Billig: "Banal Nationalism."
25	4/12 T	Naming, Storytelling and belonging	Basso: "Wisdom sits in places."
26	4/15 F	Class group discussion and group assignment: Global rap and Hybrid Identities	Pennycook & Mitchell: "Hip Hop as Dusty Foot Philosophy: Engaging the Local."
27	4/19 T	<b>Students' presentations (Assignment #3)</b>	
28	4/22 F	Conclusion & Review	
		<b>Final Exam: May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9:30-10:30am</b>	