

Ling 307 (Introduction to American Indigenous Languages)*time, place tbd***Instructor:**

Judith Tonhauser, 212 Oxley
Office hours: *tbd* and by appointment

Office phone: (614) 292-7849
Email: judith@ling.osu.edu
Mailbox: Oxley 225

Prerequisites: Eng110

GECs: Social sciences: individuals and groups; Diversity: international issues (western (non-United States))

Course objectives:

Millions of people in the Americas (the part of the world that encompasses North, Central and South America) speak languages other than the well-known European ones (e.g. English, Spanish, Portuguese). The goal of this course is to introduce you to several of the many thousand indigenous languages spoken in the Americas, and for you to come to an understanding of the history of particular language families of the Americas, to explore the socio-political situation of the people who speak such languages, and to study some of the linguistic features that distinguish these languages from the better-known European languages. The course is organized around three language families: the Tupí-Guaraní language family (Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, French Guiana), the Mayan language family (Mexico, Guatemala, Belize) and the Athapaskan language family (USA, Canada). For each of these language families, we'll explore the history of settlement of speakers of languages in the family, and then focus on particular languages within the language family to study questions such as: How do these languages differ from e.g. English?, How are these languages written? What are the speakers' attitudes about indigenous languages compared to the European languages? What is the legal situation in a particular country for speakers of indigenous languages? Are these languages taught in schools, and if not, why? By examining indigenous languages of the Americas, the course also serves as an introduction to the scientific study of language (including phonetics, writing systems, morphology, syntax, sociolinguistics, language acquisition), with the goal of helping you think about human language in a more informed way, giving you a taste of its relevance to current intellectual and social issues, and developing your ability to critically evaluate and compare information across cultures and countries.

Student learning outcomes:

By the end of this course:

1. Students have developed an understanding of linguistic properties of indigenous languages spoken in the Americas, as well as the history and socio-political status of their speakers.
2. Students are able to think in an informed way about human language and assess its relevance to current intellectual and social issues.
3. Students are able to critically evaluate and compare information across cultures and countries.

Readings: A course package will be compiled that includes the readings for the course (see topical outline of class meetings).

Evaluation: Letter grades (A-E) are used for students' evaluation:

| points | letter grade | points | letter grade | points | letter grade |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| 93 - 100 | A | 80 - 82.9 | B- | 67 - 69.9 | D+ |
| 90 - 92.9 | A- | 77 - 79.9 | C+ | 60 - 66.9 | D |
| 87 - 89.9 | B+ | 73 - 76.9 | C | below 60 | E |
| 83 - 86.9 | B | 70-72.9 | C- | | |

Evaluation breaks down into four parts:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Reactions to readings | 25% |
| Take-home midterm | 30% |
| Participation | 10% |
| Final project | 35% |
| | <hr/> |
| | 100% |

Reactions to readings: Reading assignments are due the day for which they are assigned, and we will discuss the readings during that class meeting. On the evening before a class meeting for which a reading is assigned, you will send me (via email) a reaction to the readings (before 7pm). This reaction can be

- a comment about the reading material you would like to raise during our discussion of it,
- a question about the reading that you would like to see clarified during the class meeting (cf. my comment on participation below), or
- an answer to a question I pose about the readings.

Additional details concerning the format of these reactions will be provided in class.

Midterm: The objective of the take-home midterm is to assess your understanding of the topics and techniques covered so far. The midterm will consist of 3-5 essay questions that will require you to draw on what we have discussed in the course to answer questions about linguistic properties of American indigenous languages or the socio-political status and history of their speakers. The midterm questions are handed out at the end of class 10 and are due in class 11.

Participation: Sophisticated participants in scholarly discourse display a critical stance and the willingness to struggle with hard concepts, as evidenced by clear, carefully aimed questions and comments. The art of formulating well-developed questions is also one of the keys to successful research. This is the opportunity to begin to practice. To earn full participation credit,

- you are consistently attentive in class and complete your classwork thoroughly and thoughtfully,
- you participate actively in class discussions, making thoughtful and relevant comments without monopolizing class time, and
- you listen respectfully to peers' contributions and respond appropriately.

Final project: Your final project for this course is a **comparative** study of a topic pertaining to indigenous languages of the Americas. You could, for instance, compare

- the word order properties of two (or more) indigenous languages,
- bilingual education policies in two (or more) countries,
- the writing systems of two (or more) indigenous languages,
- the history of settlement of two (or more) indigenous peoples, etc.

You are welcome to propose a topic but I am also happy to help you identify a suitable one. At least one of the languages, indigenous groups or countries you discuss must be one that is not covered in class. I will help you identify suitable resources for your project. To help you develop your project

in a timely manner, you will be required to (i) identify a potential topic by class 13 (one paragraph topic description) and (ii) hand in a draft of your paper by class 18. The final project (about 14-16 pages) is due during exam week on the day determined by the Master schedule.

Approximate class schedule: (20 class meetings)

Class 1 What is a language family? Language families in the Americas, history of indigenous settlement in the Americas; Reading: Campbell (1997:chapter 1), Bright (1984)

Class 2 Introduction to linguistic sub-disciplines, linguistic competence, language variation
Reading: Hinton (2001b), Ash et al. (2001:25-28)

End of week 1: Reactions completed for class 2 readings

The Mayan Language Family

Class 3 Introduction to the Mayan language family, history of settlement, currently spoken languages and speakers, literacy; Reading: Richards and Richards (1996)

Class 4 Phonetics and the writing system of Jacaltec
Reading: Bergmann et al. (2007:2.0-2.3), Craig (1979:3-19)

End of week 2: Reactions completed for class 3 and 4 readings

Class 5 Phonetics and writing system continued

Class 6 Mayan syntax I: word order, argument marking; Reading: Craig (1979:19-34)

End of week 3: Reactions completed for class 6 readings

Class 7 Mayan syntax continued'

Class 8 Mayan syntax II: directionals, classifiers; Reading: Craig (1979:34-51)

End of week 4: Reactions completed for class 8 readings

Class 9 Language policy and language rights in Guatemala; Reading: Maxwell (2004)

The Tupí-Guaraní Language Family

Class 10 Introduction to the Tupi-Guarani language family, history of settlement, currently spoken languages and speakers; Reading: López (1996), Jensen (1999)

End of week 5: Reactions completed for class 8 and 9 readings, midterm handed out (class 10)

Class 11 Linguistic features of Paraguayan Guaraní (word order, argument marking)

Class 12 Linguistic features of Paraguayan Guaraní continued (tense and aspect)

End of week 6: midterm due (class 11)

Class 13 Language acquisition and attitudes about Guaraní; Reading: Choi (2003)

Class 14 Paraguay: A bilingual country?; Reading: Choi (2005)

End of week 7: Reactions completed for class 13 and 14 readings, one paragraph paper topic due

Class 15 Language policy in Paraguay, Ecuador and Mexico; Reading: Baldauf and Kaplan (2007)

The Athapaskan Language Family

Class 16 Introduction to the Athapaskan language family, history of settlement, currently spoken languages and speakers; Reading: Bach (2003)

End of week 8: Reactions completed for class 15 and 16 readings

Class 17 Linguistic features of Athapaskan languages (argument marking, word order)
Reading: Jung (2000); Thompson (2000)

Class 18 Language policy in the USA, The Native American Languages Act
Reading: Hinton (2001a); Arnold (2001)

End of week 9: Reactions completed for class 17 and 18 readings, draft of final paper due

Class 19 Bilingual Navajo education; Reading: Arviso and Holm (2001)

Wrap-up: Indigenous languages across the globe: Past, present and future

Class 20 Reading: Harrison (2007:chapter 1)

End of week 10: Reactions completed for class 19 and 20 readings

Final paper due by the date determined by the Master schedule

Course policies:

1. I encourage you to come my office hours (or make an appointment) to discuss questions about the course material. I hope we'll get to know each other as the course proceeds!
2. Come to class prepared. Reading assignments are due the day for which they are assigned.
3. If you have a cell phone, please make sure it never rings during class. If I see you reading or writing text messages during class, this will affect your participation grade negatively.
4. If you have to come late to a class meeting or leave early, please let me know ahead of time, and sit near the door.
5. We will at times have discussions that venture onto controversial ground. Listen and respond respectfully to others that might have opinions and experiences that differ from yours.
6. I will often not teach directly from the assigned readings. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out **from one of your class mates** about the material we covered. Handouts will not be sent out via email but can be retrieved from the course mail box in Oxley, room 225. Exceptions are made only for documented (e.g. medical) emergencies.

Academic misconduct:

I expect all the work you do in this course to be your own, unless collaboration is explicitly requested for a particular task. Academic dishonesty will not be allowed under any circumstances. Any case of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the university committee on academic misconduct, and will be handled according to academic policy.

Special needs:

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

References

- Arnold, Robert D. 2001. "...to help assure the survival and continuing vitality of Native American languages". In L. Hinton and K. Hale, eds., *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, pages 45–48. New York: Academic Press.
- Arviso, Marie and Wayne Holm. 2001. Tséhootsooídi Ólta'gi Diné Bizaad Bíhoo'aah: A Navajo immersion program at Fort Defiance, Arizona. In L. Hinton and K. Hale, eds., *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, pages 203–215. New York: Academic Press.

- Ash, Anna, Jessie Little Doe Fermino, and Ken Hale. 2001. Diversity in local language maintenance and restoration: A reason for optimism. In L. Hinton and K. Hale, eds., *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, pages 19–35. New York: Academic Press.
- Bach, Emmon. 2003. Postcolonial linguistic fieldwork. *Massachusetts Review* XLIV(1+2):169–181.
- Baldauf, Richard B. and Robert B. Kaplan. 2007. Language policy and planning in Ecuador, Mexico and Paraguay: Some common issues. In R. B. Baldauf and R. Kaplan, eds., *Language Planning and Policy in Latin America*, pages 6–38. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Bergmann, Anouschka, Kathleen Currie Hall, and Sharon Miriam Ross, eds. 2007. *Language Files*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 10th edn.
- Bright, William. 1984. The classification of North American and Meso-American Indian languages. In W. Bright, ed., *American Indian linguistics and literature*, pages 3–29. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Campbell, Lyle. 1997. *American Indian Languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Choi, Jinny K. 2003. Language attitudes and the future of bilingualism: The case of Paraguay. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 6(2):81–94.
- Choi, Jinny K. 2005. The linguistic situation in urban Paraguay: A tendency toward Spanish-Guaraní bilingualism? *Spanish in Context* 2(2):175–201.
- Craig, Colette Grinevald. 1979. Jacaltec. In T. Shopen, ed., *Languages and Their Speakers*, pages 3–57. Cambridge, MA: Winthrop.
- Harrison, K. David. 2007. *When Languages Die: The Extinction of the World's Languages and the Erosion of Human Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hinton, Leanne. 2001a. Federal language policy and indigenous languages in the United States. In L. Hinton and K. Hale, eds., *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, pages 39–44. New York: Academic Press.
- Hinton, Leanne. 2001b. New writing systems. In L. Hinton and K. Hale, eds., *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, pages 239–250. New York: Academic Press.
- Jensen, Cheryl. 1999. Tupí-Guaraní. In R. Dixon and A. Y. Aikhenvald, eds., *Amazonian Languages*, pages 125–163. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Jung, Dagmar. 2000. Word order in Apache narratives. In T. Fernald and P. Platero, eds., *The Athapaskan Languages: Perspectives on a Native American Language Family*, pages 92–100. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- López, Luis Enrique. 1996. To Guaranize: a verb actively conjugated by the Bolivian Guaranis. In N. Hornberger, ed., *Indigenous literacies in Americas: Language Planning from the Bottom up*, pages 321–353. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Maxwell, Judith. 2004. Ownership of indigenous languages: A case study from Guatemala. In M. Riley, ed., *Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights*, pages 173–217. Walnut Creek, Calif. Altamira Press.
- Richards, Julia Becker and Michael Richards. 1996. Mayan language literacy in Guatemala: A socio-historical overview. In N. Hornberger, ed., *Indigenous literacies in Americas: Language Planning from the Bottom up*, pages 189–211. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Thompson, Chad L. 2000. Iconicity and word order in Koyukon Athapaskan. In T. Fernald and P. Platero, eds., *The Athapaskan Languages: Perspectives on a Native American Language Family*, pages 228–249. Oxford: Oxford University Press.