

Slavic 597: The Politics of Language in Southeast Europe

5 credit hours

Sample Syllabus

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Class Time:

Class Location:

Course Information

Description: In an increasingly global world, language is a key issue in the articulation of ethnicity and the struggle for power. This course presents a case study of the social and political import of language in Southeast Europe (i.e. the Balkan countries + a few neighbors). Students will explore how linguistic histories and structures have been foundational to the formation of modern Balkan ethnic and religious identities, and how language has been and continues to be manipulated to shape political and social structures.

Objectives: Students will...

- ... develop a better understanding of the linguistic, social, religious and political histories of the Balkans, an area that has been and continues to be important to global relations.
- ... critically examine their own preconceptions and those of others regarding the relationship between language and social and political structures.
- ... conduct hands-on investigation of the social importance of language (in SE Europe) through data collection and analysis.
- ... learn about some of the goals and methods of (social science) research.
- ... synthesize and evaluate information from diverse sources, representing different disciplinary perspectives.
- ... be able to apply knowledge from this course to new domains.

Prerequisites: The course is open to students with junior or senior standing. No prior knowledge of linguistics, Balkan/Slavic languages or Balkan history is assumed or required. The class will ideally consist of students who have different disciplinary training (different majors) and backgrounds, and who come to the course with a variety of interests.

GEC Information: This course satisfies the Issues of the Contemporary World GEC requirement.

Goals: Students attain an understanding of the increasingly global nature of the contemporary world by drawing upon multiple disciplines in an enriching capstone experience.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to contemporary issues.
2. Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationships between information derived from different disciplines by interacting with students from different majors.
3. Students write about or conduct research on the contemporary world.

The readings, lectures, class discussions and written assignments in this course will fulfill these GEC expected learning outcomes by allowing students to explore the Balkan region from several disciplinary perspectives: linguistic, historical, political, religious and social psychological. By integrating these different types of information, you will develop a better understanding of the Balkans, a region that has been and continues to be important to global relations. You will also explore the social importance of language in the contemporary world more generally. The perceptual dialectology project will give you hands-on experience in conducting research on the contemporary world.

Course Website: An up-to-date course schedule, handouts, powerpoint slides and other materials will be available from Carmen (after the class in which they are distributed).

Required Texts:

1. Greenberg, Robert D. 2004. *Language and identity in the Balkans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. This book is available from the OSU Bookstore (Central Classrooms), SBX, and Long's. [Cost: \$30.60 (paperback)]
2. A course packet is available from UniPrint (at Tuttle Park Place) [Anticipated cost: \$25]

Writing manuals: You are encouraged to use a style manual when doing the writing assignments. Style manuals provide information about stylistic, grammatical, and formatting issues related to writing (how to incorporate quotations, use of punctuation, citation conventions, etc.). Even experienced writers frequently need to refer to style manuals. Two widely used manuals are the *Chicago Manual of Style* (currently in 16th ed.), and the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (currently in 7th ed.). This quarter you may use either of these, or a style manual that is specific to your discipline (but it is important that each writing assignment be stylistically consistent, not a random mixing of styles). No particular style manual is required for this course.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: Lectures and class discussions will cover material which is not necessarily in the readings and which you will be responsible for. It is therefore important that you attend every class, ask questions and participate in discussions. Class participation will be counted towards your final course grade. Note that class attendance is not the same as participation, but you can't participate if you don't attend.

Reading: There is a reading assignment for each class. You should do the readings *before* the date listed on the schedule – preferably more than once.

Discussion Questions: Some class time will be spent on discussion. To prepare for this, once a week (on the class day of your choice) you must write down and turn in two questions that you have. The questions can be about readings, or anything discussed in class, but should be suitable prompts from which we can begin discussion. Questions concerning terminology or points of information do not count but may be added separately at the bottom of the page. (Always consult a dictionary first.) *Neatly* hand-written questions are acceptable.

Discussion questions will be graded on a 1 / 0 basis. 1 = the assignment was completed in a thoughtful way. 0 = the assignment was not completed, or showed no signs of having been done thoughtfully.

Quizzes: There will be four short in-class quizzes covering material from assigned readings, lectures, and class discussion. See the Course Schedule for dates.

Blog Analysis: People from SE European countries (or even Americans with heritage in some SE European ethnicity) often have strong feelings about ‘the Balkan language question’ – what a given language should be called, what its origins are, what the ‘right’ way to say something is, or even whether the language exists in the first place. But when it is boiled down, these arguments are almost never really about language, but are instead ways for the writer to articulate some aspect of their identity, or comment on societal structure. You will analyze arguments of everyday people regarding the language question in the Balkans. Your examples should come from the internet (e.g. posting on a blog, discussion forum, Facebook page, etc.). In your analysis you should explore questions like:

- Is the argumentation valid and balanced? If not, in what ways?
- What does it reveal about the writer’s preconceptions about language and identity?
- What is the historical context for this argument?
- Why does this person care about the language question?
- Is language used in this context as a proxy for some other issue? If so, what? How? Why?

You must turn in your analysis in the form of a 1500-2000 word paper. See the handout Blog Analysis for more details. See the Course Schedule for deadlines.

Perceptual Dialectology Project: Throughout the quarter the class will work together to build a perceptual map of the Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian languages, and to compare it to existing dialect maps. In this context, a perceptual map is a visual representation of speakers’ perceptions (beliefs) about the distance between regional dialects, and their evaluation of those dialects along social dimensions (e.g. ‘correctness’, ‘pleasantness’, ‘prestige’, etc.). Perceptual dialectology thus blends the fields of social psychology and linguistics. The goal will be to determine whether and to what extent native B/C/S speakers’ perceptions of the distance between dialects of B/C/S is shaped by political and/or social boundaries, rather than by observable linguistic reality. In consultation with the instructor, class members will jointly develop the project – developing a questionnaire, recruiting respondents and administering the questionnaire, and conducting preliminary analysis of the data (including development of a perceptual map). Each student will individually write up and

discuss the results, in the form of a 2500-3500 word paper (not including any data appendices). See the handout Perceptual Dialectology Project for details. See the Course Schedule for deadlines.

Grading

Grading will be by the following criteria.

Class participation	10%	
Discussion questions	10%	(10 sets of questions, 1% each)
Quizzes	20%	(4 quizzes, 5% each)
Blog analysis	20%	
Perceptual dialectology project	<u>40%</u>	
Total	100%	

Grading Scale:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	60-66
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	E	0-59

Important Policies

Academic Integrity: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

Students with 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>.

Late Assignments: Turn in work on time. I reserve the right to not accept work that is turned in late. Assignments are late if not received at or before the beginning of the class in which they are due. If I choose to accept a late assignment, I will reduce the grade by 10 points for each class session. For example, an assignment which would have received a 90 if turned in on time will

receive an 80 if turned in after it is due, but prior to the following class. It will receive a 70 if turned in two classes (one week) late. Etc. If you have a legitimate excuse for not turning in work on time (serious illness or family emergency), you must request an extension BEFORE the assignment is due, and the earlier the better.

Classroom Etiquette: It is important to respect not only the instructor, but also your fellow classmates. In this class we will be discussing political issues of relevance to the modern world. Since personal feelings can be very strong, this may lead to intense emotional responses during discussion. You are expected to respect you classmates' rights to their opinions and beliefs. This includes not interrupting people, dominating the floor, raising your voice, insulting, threatening, etc.

Course Schedule

Disclaimer: This course schedule is subject to change with at least one week of notice. A current version of the course schedule is always available on Carmen.

All readings are in the course packet, with the exception of Greenberg (2004).

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments
WEEK 1			
day 1	Getting started Southeast Europe: A geographic orientation		
day 2	Southeast Europe: A historical, ethnic and religious orientation	syllabus Fine (1983): Intro and Ch. 2 [57 pp.]	
WEEK 2			
day 3	Southeast Europe: A linguistic orientation	Friedman (2006) [15 pp.] Kazazis (1972) [30 pp.]	
day 4	Language, nationalism, and nationalism	Buck (1916) [26 pp.] Haugen (1972) [15 pp.]	quiz 1
WEEK 3			
day 5	Language, nationalism, and nationalism	Fishman (1968) [13 pp.] Kloss (1968) [17 pp.]	
day 6	Intro to perceptual dialectology research – prep for course project	Garrett et al. (2003): Ch. 1 [17 pp.]	
WEEK 4			
day 7	Successor languages to Serbo-Croatian: A case study of ethnic nationalism	Naylor (1980) [19 pp.] Greenberg (2004): Ch. 2 [38 pp.]	
day 8	Successor languages to Serbo-Croatian: A case study of ethnic nationalism	Greenberg (2004): Chs. 3-4 [51 pp.] Naylor (1978) [13 pp.]	quiz 2
WEEK 5			
day 9	Successor languages to Serbo-Croatian: A case study of ethnic nationalism	Greenberg (2004): Ch. 5 [26 pp.] Spalatin (1975) [11 pp.] Katičić (2001) [13 pp.]	
day 10	Successor languages to Serbo-Croatian: A case study of ethnic nationalism	Greenberg (2004): Ch. 6 [25 pp.] Ford (2002) [13 pp.]	
WEEK 6			
day 11	Discussion of perceptual dialectology project Macedonian: If we speak differently, we must be separate nations (a.k.a. the purpose of a standard language)	Danforth (1995): Ch. 2 [29 pp.]	part 1 of dialectology project due
day 12	Macedonian: If we speak differently, we must be separate nations (a.k.a. the purpose of a standard language)	Danforth (1995): Ch. 3 [24 pp.]	quiz 3

WEEK 7			
day 13	Macedonian: If we speak differently, we must be separate nations (a.k.a. the purpose of a standard language)	Koneski (1980) [11 pp.] Friedman (1996) [33 pp.]	blog analysis source material due
day 14	Macedonian: If we speak differently, we must be separate nations (a.k.a. the purpose of a standard language)	Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1980): Section II (pp. 21-66) [46 pp.] Lunt (1986) [6 pp.]	
WEEK 8			
day 15	NO CLASS – miscellaneous quarterly holiday		
day 16	Albanian: Language beyond national boundaries	Hamp (1994) [3 pp.] Vermeer (1996) [10 pp.]	blog analysis due
WEEK 9			
day 17	Albanian: Language beyond national boundaries	Byron (1979) [30 pp.] Skendi (1967): Ch. 15 [18 pp.]	
day 18	Romani: A language without a state	Kovačec (1992) [14 pp.] Kolev (1994) [13 pp.]	part 2 of dialectology project due
WEEK 10			
day 19	Romani: A language without a state	Matras (2002): Chs. 1-2 [13 pp.] Puxon (1979) [8 pp.] Matras (1999) [22 pp.]	quiz 4
day 20	Discussion of perceptual dialectology project wrap-up and catch-up		
WEEK 11			
	Final write-up of perceptual dialectology project due at [DATE AND TIME]		

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