

Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2023

Course Change Information

What change is being proposed? (If more than one, what changes are being proposed?)

We are submitting this course for the Migration, Mobility, and Immobility GE category.

What is the rationale for the proposed change(s)?

The course fulfills the ELOs for this GE category.

What are the programmatic implications of the proposed change(s)?

(e.g. program requirements to be added or removed, changes to be made in available resources, effect on other programs that use the course)?

none

Is approval of the request contingent upon the approval of other course or curricular program request? No

Is this a request to withdraw the course? No

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area	Linguistics
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org	Linguistics - D0566
College/Academic Group	Arts and Sciences
Level/Career	Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog	3902
Course Title	Language Endangerment and Language Death
Transcript Abbreviation	Lang Endang&Death
Course Description	Examines language endangerment and language death to reach an understanding of the forces threatening the survival of over half of today's 6,000 languages.
Semester Credit Hours/Units	Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course	14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week
Flexibly Scheduled Course	Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component?	No
Grading Basis	Letter Grade
Repeatable	No
Course Components	Lecture
Grade Roster Component	Lecture
Credit Available by Exam	No
Admission Condition Course	No
Off Campus	Never
Campus of Offering	Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites

Exclusions

Electronically Enforced No

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 16.0102
Subsidy Level Baccalaureate Course
Intended Rank Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior
Previous Value *Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Masters, Doctoral*

Requirement/Elective Designation

General Education course:

Cross-Disciplinary Seminar (597 successors and new); Migration, Mobility, and Immobility

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

Previous Value

General Education course:

Cross-Disciplinary Seminar (597 successors and new)

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

Course Details

Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Students will reflect upon the reasons for expansionist colonialism and how these factors affect the use and vitality of languages used by colonized/indigenous populations.
- Students will react meaningfully to accounts of the immigrant and/or minority experience to come to an understanding of the interconnectedness of individuals, social groups, and geopolitics in shaping such experience.
- Students will recognize the ideologies underlying and informing indigenous and immigrant minority speakers' own use of their language and their attempts at language maintenance and revitalization.
- Students will react meaningfully to scholarly, literary, and cinematic renditions of themes pertaining to the immigrant and/or minority experience by way of exploring the complexities of such experience.
- Students will explore how social and/or economic immobility can lead to language endangerment and the motivations for group language choices.

Previous Value

- *Students will reflect upon the reasons for expansionist colonialism and how these factors affect the use and vitality of languages used by colonized/indigenous populations.*
- *Students will react meaningfully to accounts of the immigrant and/or minority experience to come to an understanding of the interconnectedness of individuals, social groups, and geopolitics in shaping such experience.*
- *Students will recognize the ideologies underlying and informing indigenous and immigrant minority speakers' own use of their language and their attempts at language maintenance and revitalization.*
- *Students will react meaningfully to scholarly, literary, and cinematic renditions of themes pertaining to the immigrant and/or minority experience by way of exploring the complexities of such experience.*

Content Topic List

- Globalization of language
- Language minorities
- Language extinction
- Language endangerment
- Language change

Sought Concurrence

No

Attachments

- Linguistics3902--submissionform.pdf: GE justification
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: McCullough, Elizabeth Ann)
- Linguistics3902--SyllabusMMI_8-19-22.pdf: Course syllabus
(Syllabus. Owner: McCullough, Elizabeth Ann)

Comments

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	McCullough, Elizabeth Ann	08/19/2022 10:36 AM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	McCullough, Elizabeth Ann	08/19/2022 10:37 AM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	10/14/2022 08:54 AM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Cody, Emily Kathryn Jenkins, Mary Ellen Bigler Hanlin, Deborah Kay Hilty, Michael Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal Steele, Rachel Lea	10/14/2022 08:54 AM	ASCCAO Approval

Linguistics 3902: Language Endangerment & Language Death

Syllabus

Dr. Brian D. Joseph

Class meetings: Twice a week, 80 minutes per class meeting

Office hours: xxx

(but **preferably by appointment**; meetings can be in-person or via Zoom, and note that I am available for consultation via e-mail on a regular basis)

Contact: joseph.1@osu.edu / 614-292-9446

Course Website: Carmen offers an electronic presence for the course; I expect you to check the Carmen site for the course regularly for announcements, assignments, and the like. Various course materials will be posted in the “Content” area of the Carmen site for the course.

Class description:

Of the circa 7,000 languages in the world today, more than half are seriously in danger of losing all their speakers and thus dying out altogether as living languages. In this course we will study this phenomenon of *language endangerment* (and *language death*)—and by the same token, *dialect endangerment* (and *death*). The course will focus chiefly on how language endangerment arises from (geographic, social, and economic) human migration, mobility, or immobility, and conversely, how being a speaker of a minority or endangered language (or dialect) affects the way individuals and groups experience and form identities around their history of migration or (im)mobility. The following questions are guiding foci for the course content:

- What are the social, economic, and political causes of migration and how does migration lead to language/dialect endangerment?
- What is the relationship between (im)migration, colonization, and forced migration on the one hand and the emergence of potentially fragile linguistic minorities on the other?
- How does minority status for a language/dialect shape its speakers’ identity, attitudes, beliefs, or values?
- How does contact with minority languages/dialects shape the identity, attitudes, beliefs, or values of majority-language/dialect speakers?
- Do new language forms that arise as immigrant varieties of the dominant majority language or as a result of colonization (i.e., “creoles”) serve to stem the tide of language endangerment?
- How do scholars from different disciplines (linguists, anthropologists, economists, film makers, others), as well as speakers themselves, interpret the relationship between migration, language endangerment/diversity, and identity?

- Are there meaningful parallels between language/dialect endangerment and the endangerment of biological species? Between linguistic diversity and bio-diversity?
- What effects can endangerment have on the structure of a language/dialect?
- Can language/dialect endangerment and death be reversed? Are revitalization efforts possible? Are they successful?

The course does not presuppose any knowledge of linguistics. Throughout the semester, critical principles and methods of linguistics are introduced as needed that are relevant to the study of language endangerment (e.g., the embedding of language in society, the interaction between language and culture, the relation of speakers to their language, how languages are structured, how languages change, etc.).

Course Goals: Successful students will...

1. ... reflect upon the reasons for expansionist colonialism and how these factors affect the use and vitality of languages used by colonized/indigenous populations.
2. ... react meaningfully to accounts of the immigrant and/or minority experience to come to an understanding of the interconnectedness of individuals, social groups, and geopolitics in shaping such experience.
3. ... recognize the ideologies underlying and informing indigenous and immigrant minority speakers' own use of their language and their attempts at language maintenance and revitalization.
4. ... react meaningfully to scholarly, literary, and cinematic renditions of themes pertaining to the immigrant and/or minority experience by way of exploring the complexities of such experience.
5. ... explore how social and/or economic immobility can lead to language endangerment and the motivations for group language choices.

Legacy General Education (GEL) Information

This class fulfills the Legacy General Education requirement for a **Cross-Disciplinary Seminar**.
Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes:

Learning Goals: Students demonstrate an understanding of a topic of interest through scholarly activities that draw upon multiple disciplines and through their interactions with students from different majors.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students understand the benefits and limitations of different disciplinary perspectives.
2. Students understand the benefits of synthesizing multiple disciplinary perspectives.
3. Students synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to a topic of interest.

This class will fulfill these Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes by having students examine factors in language endangerment, language loss, and threats to language viability, viewing these linguistic issues primarily through the lens of what it means to be a member of a minority and how minority status within a larger polity has an impact on language use by individuals and groups.

Students will read, analyze, and evaluate multiple disciplinary perspectives on language endangerment and language loss, and will learn to synthesize these different disciplinary perspectives through multiple assignments engaging with these ideas and simulating the experiences of minorities as well as fieldworkers and community activists battling the linguistic effects of minority life.

New General Education (GEN) Information

This course fulfills the specific requirements and expected learning outcomes for the New General Education Theme category **Migration, Mobility, and Immobility** (hereafter, MMI). Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELO):

Goals:

Successful students will..

Goal 1: ... analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the Foundations. In this context, “advanced” refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.

Goal 2: ... integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

Goal 3: ... explore and analyze a range of perspectives on migration, mobility, and immobility, including causes and effects, personal or group experiences, or artistic expression.

Goal 4: ... explain a variety of scholarly or artistic approaches to understanding mobility and immobility, and analyze how texts, perceptions, representations, discourses, or artifacts represent these concerns.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Successful students are able to...

ELO 1.1: ... engage in critical and logical thinking.

ELO 1.2: ... engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or ideas within this theme.

ELO 2.1: ... identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences.

ELO 2.2: ... demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

ELO 3.1: ... explain environmental, political, economic, social, or cultural causes of migration, mobility, and/or immobility.

ELO 3.2: ... to describe and analyze diverse experiences or portrayals of migration, mobility, or immobility (e.g. migration, incarceration, disability, or flight) and the complex effects of these phenomena on individuals, societies, institutions, and/or places.

ELO 4.1: ... discuss how migration, mobility, or immobility have shaped attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and values of individuals and/or institutions.

ELO 4.2: ... describe how people (e.g. scholars, artists, scientists, etc.) perceive or represent migration, mobility, or immobility and critique conventions, theories, and/or ideologies that influence such perceptions or representations.

This class fulfills these Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes by examining migration, mobility, and immobility as central factors in historical developments pertaining to language endangerment, language loss, and threats to language viability, viewing these linguistic issues primarily through the lens of what it means to be a speaker of a minority language and how minority status within a larger polity has an impact on language use by individuals and groups, and their beliefs, values, and identity.

Students will read, analyze, and evaluate multiple perspectives on these developments and learn to express themselves through multiple assignments engaging with these ideas and simulating the experiences of minorities as well as fieldworkers and community activists battling the linguistic effects of minority life. Through this course, students will gain a solid understanding of the impact of migration, mobility, and immobility around the world on language, as a basic human means of expression and as a basic human right.

Required readings:

1. *Language Death*, by David Crystal (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002) [required]
2. *When Languages Die. The Extinction of the World's Languages and the Erosion of Human Knowledge*, by K. David Harrison (Oxford Univ. Press, 2007) [required]
3. *Revivalistics*, by Ghilad Zuckerman (Oxford Univ. Press, 2022) [required]
4. The following articles and book chapters, mostly from linguistics journals or e-books *that are available in downloadable form through Main Library*; the nondownloadable readings will be placed on the Carmen website for the course.

Bird, Steven & Gary Simons. 2003. Seven dimensions of portability for language documentation and description. *Language* 79.557-582. [26 pp.]

- About the work of documentary linguists and fieldworkers

Dobrin, Lise. 2008. From linguistic elicitation to eliciting the linguist: Lessons in community empowerment from Melanesia. *Language* 84.2.300-324. [25 pp.]

- About the work of documentary linguists, fieldworkers, and community workers

Dorian, Nancy. 1993. A response to Ladefoged's other view of endangered languages. *Language* 69.575-579. [5 pp.]

- About minority speakers' experience within their societies

Gramley, Chuck & Christine Wilson. 2005. ASL in Central Ohio. In *Language diversity in Michigan and Ohio. Towards two state linguistic profiles* (Ed. by B. Joseph, C. Preston, & D. Preston. Caravan Books). [6 pp.]

- About minority speakers' experience within their societies

Grenoble, Lenore & Lindsay Whaley. 2005. Review article on *Language Endangerment and Language Maintenance and Language Death and Language Maintenance*. *Language* 81.4.965-974. [10 pp.]

Hale, Kenneth; Michael Krauss; Lucille Watahomigie & Akira Yamamoto; Colette Craig; La Verne Jeanne; Nora England. 1992. Endangered languages. *Language* 68.1-42. [42 pages]

- A ground-breaking article that set in motion the study of language endangerment; provides key background to the need for language documentation and to the exploration of causes of language endangerment, including social, political, and geographic mobility/immobility

Hinton, Leanne. 1994. *Flutes of Fire: Essays on California Indian Languages*. Berkeley: Heyday Books.

- The vignettes discussed deal especially with immobility, since they document the experiences of indigenous peoples of California who have lived there for millennia

Kahane, Henry & Renee Kahane. 1979. Decline and survival of Western prestige languages. *Language* 55.183-98. [16 pp.]

- Shows how attitudes even about once-dominant languages can change due to conditions of immobility (in Western Europe)

Keiser, Steven H. 2005. Pennsylvania German in Ohio. In *Language diversity in Michigan and Ohio. Towards two state linguistic profiles* (Ed. by B. Joseph, C. Preston, & D. Preston. Ann Arbor: Caravan Books). [21 pp.]

- Shows how economic factors (diversification beyond agriculture) in the context of Amish immobility have facilitated retention of the community language

Kurz, Claudia. 1998. *Prepositions, Noun Phrases, and Simplification in Contact Varieties of German*. Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University.

- Discusses how economic factors drove migration from southern Europe to Germany and the linguistic consequences for these migrants as they attempt to assimilate into German society

Ladefoged, Peter. 1992. Another view of endangered languages. *Language* 68.809-811. [3 pages]

- Paired with Dorian 1992 (above), discusses minority speakers' experience within their societies and the role of the outside linguist/scientist vis-à-vis the community

Mufwene, Salikoko. 2004. Language birth and death. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33.201-222. [22 pp.]

- Gives a picture of how colonization leads to subjugation of indigenous immobile populations and how they must react when confronted with the colonizers' language

Pappas, Panayiotis. 2005. Greek in Columbus, Ohio. In *Language diversity in Michigan and Ohio. Towards two state linguistic profiles* (Ed. by B. Joseph, C. Preston, & D. Preston. Ann Arbor: Caravan Books) [7 pp.]

- About minority speakers' experience within their societies, a sort of "peaceful coexistence through assimilation" but with some retention of ethnic identity

Ramos-Pellicia, Michelle. 2005. The pronunciation of Spanish in Lorain, Ohio. In *Language diversity in Michigan and Ohio. Towards two state linguistic profiles* (Ed. by B. Joseph, C. Preston, & D. Preston. Ann Arbor: Caravan Books). [15 pp.]

- Shows how economic factors (Puerto Ricans seeking work in the continental US) led to migration and the factors that have contributed retention or rejection of the community language in the face of needing to interact in the societally dominant language

Vigoureux, Cécile B. & Salikoko S. Mufwene, eds. 2020. *Bridging Linguistics and Economics*. Cambridge University Press.

- This is a work filled with case-studies of economically-driven mobility and migration and the consequences for speakers and communities

Wolfram, Walt & Natalie Schilling-Estes. 1995. Moribund dialects and the language endangerment canon: The case of the Ocracoke Brogue. *Language* 71.696-721. [26 pp.]

- Documents at the dialect level how an immobile population (the long-time residents of Ocracoke Island (North Carolina)) is affected by an external dominant dialect (Standard English) and culture and how the minority islanders develop an attitude of local pride in the face of the dominant dialect/culture.

Course Requirements (with percentage toward final grade):

1. Keeping up with assigned readings: 0% (but crucial to the successful completion of other requirements)
2. Regular class attendance: 5% (to be taken at each class; attendance is crucial to the successful completion of other requirements, as material covered in class is not necessarily covered in the readings yet is critical to understanding concepts)
3. Adopt-a-language project (in-class presentation and write-up; work in small groups (up to three students) is permitted with approval) 30% (see below on collaboration)
4. Field Experience Exercises (details forthcoming)
 - a. Virtual fieldwork (via internet) 10%
 - b. Live linguistic or genealogical fieldwork report: . . . 10%
5. Mini Written Assignments:
 - a. 1st assignment (on newspaper item): 5%
 - b. Questions re 1st Movie: 5%
 - c. Questions re 2nd Movie: 5%
6. Preparation for and participation in Class Debate (details forthcoming; NB: the debate serves as the final exam and is held during the final exam period): 30%

I reserve the right to alter the number of assignments – and thus the value of particular assignments – as the course progresses; however, I will **not** add assignments, but will only at most delete some (if at all).

Grading Policies

1. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: these must all be written in English that is *clear enough to allow me to be sure you know what you are talking about*. Thus, you should write in *complete sentences* and *coherent paragraphs* and make sure your writing is free from mechanical errors. Papers are graded primarily on content, but matters of style, diction, organization, and grammar count towards the grade, especially where errors and/or lapses interfere with the clear presentation of your ideas. Papers unacceptable due solely to poor writing *may be rewritten* (the two versions being averaged to yield the ultimate grade). Where possible, you should feel free to turn in preliminary drafts (well before the due date) so that I can make suggestions on your writing.

2. POINTS ASSIGNED: All assignments are given a number of points out of a total of 1000 that they are worth, commensurate with their percentage towards the final grade (thus a 5% assignment is worth 50 points, a 30% assignment is worth 300, and so on). The larger assignments have points assigned to subparts (e.g. the class presentation for the adopt-a-language assignment is worth 150 points and the written report on the assignment is worth 150). For the most part, each assignment is given with very specific guidelines spelled out regarding what needs to be done and how the accomplishment and execution of the requirements contributes to the grade for the assignment; points are assigned in each category of requirement and added up to give the total grade. The final grade is based on the total points earned, with point totals corresponding to letter grades as follows:

930 - 1000 = A	730 - 769 = C
900 - 929 = A-	700 - 729 = C-
870 - 899 = B+	670 - 699 = D+
830 - 869 = B	600 - 669 = D
800 - 829 = B-	0 - 599 = E
770 - 799 = C+	

3. FURTHER ON ASSIGNMENTS, MISCELLANEOUS:

- ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE DONE AND TURNED IN, ON TIME, via Carmen as an upload of an electronic document or as entered into a textbox; the due date and time are indicated on the assignment as given in Carmen.
- Late assignments automatically lose credit, though turning in a paper late is preferable to not turning it in at all, as a missing paper receives a zero. Papers more than two weeks late will **not** be accepted, however.
- Collaboration with classmates on individual assignments is perfectly acceptable, as far as discussing strategies and concepts is concerned -- often two (or more) can learn far more about an assignment by discussing it together. However, any work you turn in must ultimately be defensible as your own effort and yours alone. Any work suspected of not adhering to this ethical standard will be referred to appropriate University disciplinary committees. Those assignments that are designed for small groups (the debate especially but some groups are permissible for the adopt-a-language assignment) of course permit

sharing of ideas and to the extent that the final product is a group effort, the grade will reflect the overall group success but also individual contributions to the product (e.g. the individual presentations during the debate).

Academic misconduct and plagiarism:

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 all 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). See the Code of Student Conduct: <https://trustees.osu.edu/rules/code-of-student-conduct/3335-23-04.html>

Disability:

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university’s [request process](#), managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

CLASS SCHEDULE

This course is organized around 12 topics, roughly one per week for a semester but some are intended to be covered in just one class session while others require more time. These topics focus on different aspects of the various linguistic dimensions of migration, mobility, and immobility. The final week of the semester is devoted to student presentations on an endangered language that they have “adopted” and that they research as an on-going assignment throughout the semester with regard to the topics we cover week by week.

TOPIC 1: Introductory linguistic concepts

- Language and social groups, language and individual identity
- What counts as a language, the relationship between languages and dialects (and how linguists think about this distinction)
- How many languages there are in the world and why it is hard to count them

Census assignment: Language inventory of the US

TOPIC 2: Migration as a cause of endangered languages

- Distribution of speakers among languages (most languages are endangered!), who counts as a speaker of a language, and geographic distribution of languages and their speakers
- Environmental, economic, political, and social reasons for migration (with special focus on migrations within Europe and from Europe into the Americas, Africa, and parts of Asia) and the effects these movements of people have had on indigenous populations from a linguistic standpoint
- Language endangerment criteria (UNESCO, Fishman’s GIDS scale)

Endangerment criteria assignment: critically assess differences in UNESCO criteria for endangerment compared with other sets of criteria, e.g. Fishman’s GIDS scale

TOPIC 3: Language contact, part 1

- Causes of contact between speakers of different languages -- migration, colonization, conquest
- Consequences of contact between speakers of different languages -- bilingualism, borrowing, code-switching, language collision, language coexistence, language endangerment/language dormancy

Language borrowing assignment: Tolkien and writing with native Germanic words versus writing with Latinate (etc.) vocabulary (showing motivation for and results of borrowing in language contact)

TOPIC 4: More consequences of language contact

- Linguistic minority status – what does it mean to be a linguistic minority?
- Relation between minority status and migration -- minority immigrant communities. How migrations create pockets of new immigrant linguistic minorities and threats to language vitality and likely ultimate language loss
- Relation between minority status and immobility -- post-colonization indigenous minorities. How migrations create pockets of linguistic minorities from pre-existing and/or indigenous groups

TOPIC 5: Minorities in our midst, part 1

- The experience of refugees adapting to new surroundings
- Differences between relocation and forced relocation and the different linguistic outcomes that result
- How social and/or economic immobility leads to language endangerment through group shift to more economically advantageous languages
- The ideology, values, and beliefs of speakers of majority languages with regard to the use of minority languages and dialects -- is assimilation a positive goal or a destructive force? Language use as a human right?
- Language diversity in Columbus -- causes and effects

Local Follow-up to Census assignment: Language inventory in Columbus

TOPIC 6: Minorities in our midst, part 2

- American Sign Language and the Deaf community -- how contact with majority spoken language groups parallels – or not – minorities caused by forced or voluntary migrations

Deaf film assignment (“Sound and Fury: The Communication Wars of the Deaf”)

TOPIC 7: Minorities in our midst, part 3

- Indigenous minority experiences -- how contact with majority groups parallels – or not – minorities caused by forced or voluntary migrations
- American Indian languages in the USA (including languages of historical Ohio)
- Global parallels – Aboriginal languages in Australia

Aboriginal experience film (“Rabbit-proof fence”) assignment

TOPIC 8: Historical perspectives

- Language endangerment and language death through the ages

TOPIC 9: What is to be done: documentation/fieldwork and language revitalization and reclamation

- Showing of "Vanishing Voices" film (on devising literacy programs as part of revitalization efforts)
- Ways in which more sedentary populations – the Saami of the Nordic countries and the Basque of France (as opposed to Spain) – have fared with regard to language preservation

Fieldwork simulation assignment

TOPIC 10: Politics and ideology of language endangerment and linguistic minorities

- Economics of multilingualism – the EU experience and consequences of intra-EU mobility

TOPIC 11: Other consequences of migration

- Birth of new languages from language contact (esp. under colonialism) -- pidgins and creoles
- New dialects and dialect split

TOPIC 12: What we learn from endangered languages about language in general, about the relation of speech communities to their environment, about ourselves

- Review and synthesis of linguistic issues raised by mobility, migration, and immobility, as viewed through the eyes of different affected parties and different scholars (linguists, anthropologists, economists, film makers, and others)

Adopt-a-language presentations

Final exam: Debates on controversial issues pertaining to the politics, attitudes, and ideology of language endangerment (e.g. the pros and cons of assimilation, of cultural and linguistic maintenance, of ties to the homeland (if appropriate), and the like).

GE Theme course submission worksheet: Migration, Mobility, & Immobility

Course: Linguistics 3902

Overview

Courses in the GE Themes aim to provide students with opportunities to explore big picture ideas and problems within the specific practice and expertise of a discipline or department. Although many Theme courses serve within disciplinary majors or minors, by requesting inclusion in the General Education, programs are committing to the incorporation of the goals of the focal theme and the success and participation of students from outside of their program. Each category of the GE has specific learning goals and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs) that connect to the big picture goals of the program. ELOs describe the knowledge or skills students should have by the end of the course. Courses in the GE Themes must meet the ELOs common for all GE Themes and those specific to the Theme, in addition to any ELOs the instructor has developed specific to that course. All courses in the GE must indicate that they are part of the GE and include the Goals and ELOs of their GE category on their syllabus. The prompts in this form elicit information about how this course meets the expectations of the GE Themes. The form will be reviewed by a group of content experts (the Theme Advisory) and by a group of curriculum experts (the Theme Panel), with the latter having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals common to all themes (those things that make a course appropriate for the GE Themes) and the former having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals specific to the topic of this Theme.

Briefly describe how this course connects to or exemplifies the concept of this Theme (Migration, Mobility, & Immobility)

In a sentence or two, explain how this class “fits” within the focal Theme. This will help reviewers understand the intended frame of reference for the course-specific activities described below.

In this course, students examine how language endangerment arises from geographic, social, and economic migration, mobility, or immobility, and conversely, how being a speaker of a minority or endangered language affects the way individuals and groups experience and form identities around their history of migration or (im)mobility. Students will synthesize multiple scholarly interpretations made by linguists involved in community work as by scholars from other disciplines (anthropology, economics, filmmaking) who work on issues pertaining to minority languages and the sociology of language endangerment more generally. The purpose here is to gain a deeper understanding of the pressures that speakers of these languages face and to understand how scholars interpret the situations that migration, mobility, and immobility create for speech communities.

Connect this course to the Goals and ELOs shared by *all* Themes

Below are the Goals and ELOs common to all Themes. In the accompanying table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The specifics of the activities matter – listing ‘readings’ without a reference to the topic of those readings will not allow the reviewers to understand how the ELO will be met. However, the panel evaluating the fit of the course to the Theme will review this form in conjunction with the syllabus, so if readings, lecture/discussion topics, or other specifics are provided on the syllabus, it is not necessary to reiterate them within this form. The ELOs are expected to vary in their “coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

GOAL 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations.

GOAL 2: Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of- classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

ELO 1.1. Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme. Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate specific activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

Written assessments about two films (“Sound and Fury: The Communication Wars of the Deaf” and “Rabbit-proof fence”) that students will watch (**Topics 6 and 7**). In these written assessments, students will be asked explicitly to explain and comment on the relation between the content of the films and the course content . “Sound and Fury...” focuses on the Deaf community as an immobile indigenous minority whose culture is endangered by the availability of cochlear implants. “Rabbit-proof fence” chronicles the struggles faced by the relatively immobile indigenous aboriginal population of Australia, and the children portrayed in the film undertake their own migration seeking relief from oppression.

As the final exam for the course students take part in a **debate (Topic 12)** in small groups, for which they are randomly assigned to different sides of controversial issues pertaining to human migration and its relationship to the politics, attitudes, and ideology of language endangerment, e.g. the pros and cons of assimilation, of cultural and linguistic maintenance, of ties to the homeland (if appropriate), and the like. They will thus be required to view these issues from different perspectives, views that they will not necessarily hold themselves. Such an enforced dualism of approach, as well as the back-and-forth with other teams countering their positions, will strengthen their critical grasp of the issues and both exercise and test their logical thinking.

Class sessions are frequently discussion-oriented, allowing students to test their critical and logical thinking about issues related to endangered and minority languages by engaging with their classmates. Several readings challenge students to think critically and provide a basis for class discussions; in particular, [Hale et al. 1992](#), consisting of a series of brief opinion pieces focused on the theme of language endangerment, is seminal in that it launched interest in language endangerment — these “vignettes” offer students the opportunity to see and thus assess critically different perspectives on the same issue. Further, [Ladefoged 1992](#) and [Dorian 1993](#) form a point-and-counterpoint discussion in print about the role and responsibilities of fieldworkers to the endangered language communities they work in, thus clearly inviting students to critically assess different stances on a key ethical issue.

ELO 1.2 Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme. Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate specific activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

In this course, students read a range of scholarly studies, are expected to be actively involved in in-class discussions, and complete varied writing assignments that aid in the development of analytic skills that pertain to the relationship between human migration, mobility and immobility, on the one hand, and human experiences of language/dialect endangerment and its concomitant effects for people’s identity and beliefs and values within society on the other.

Students will take responsibility for learning about all aspects of an endangered language, along with its speakers, by “adopting” a language and its speech community. This major **“Adopt-a-Language” project (Topic 12)**, the most significant assigned work for the course, will require students to research the history of the endangered speech community via multiple sources (an annotated bibliography documenting their sources is part of the assignment) and to critically assess different claims they uncover in their research about the factors that brought their particular “adopted” language to its endangered status.

The readings that are oriented towards Ohio currently immobile and/or previously mobile minority communities (e.g. [Gramley & Wilson 2005](#) on Columbus Deaf, [Keiser 2005](#) on Amish and Mennonite communities in Holmes county, [Pappas 2005](#) on Greeks in Columbus, and [Ramos-Pellicia 2005](#) on the long-standing Puerto Rican community in South Lorain) provide students with a familiar point of reference that they can use as comparanda to the languages that they “adopt” for their in-depth study.

Other assignments ask students to analyze original data on minority languages and language contact outcomes (**census assignment in Topic 1, language borrowing assignment in Topic 3**), to compare and evaluate different approaches to endangered language assessment (**endangerment criteria assignment in Topic 2**), or to examine the process of language documentation work in an exploratory, hands-on way (**fieldwork simulation assignment in Topic 9**).

The **debate assignment** outlined regarding ELO 1.1 above (and see **Topic 12**) is certainly relevant here as well. Since some of the readings to be discussed offer different perspectives on

the same issue, students will be prepared by such readings to take different sides of challenging question, thus advancing their critical thinking on these matters and bringing it to a higher level of understanding.

All of these assignments engage directly or indirectly with the theme of migration, mobility, or immobility, since language endangerment, and minority languages more generally, are inextricably tied up with the ways in which geographic migration and social mobility patterns bring speakers of different languages and dialects into contact with each other. By looking at both the linguistic and social effects of that contact, students will gain an in-depth and scholarly understanding (through the lens of language) of how migration, mobility, or immobility has shaped the world and the experiences of people within it.

ELO 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme. Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate specific activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

Students are expected to actively engage with the relationship between migration and language endangerment as presented in class lectures and to draw connections with experiences outside the classroom through various specifically designed assignments, for instance, **limited elicitation work (Topic 9)** on a language they do not know in order to simulate fieldwork-based language documentation — see ELO 4.2 below for more. For students with a background in Linguistics, such elicitation work will connect to what they have learned in other Linguistics courses and will allow them to put those skills and knowledge into practice. For students with no background in Linguistics, knowledge they may have gained in other classes in the humanities and social sciences, e.g. regarding the design of surveys and questionnaires, can be brought into play in planning elicitation work and collecting relevant demographic information.

Besides the required reading that focuses on key issues each week, there are other, **media-based assignments** (e.g. viewing and commenting on films that document the experience of being a speaker of a minority language, **Topics 6 and 7**) that provide a basis for students to express in writing how different perspectives on the subject matter of the course tie together. The **debate** at the end of the semester (**Topic 12**) will require students to synthesize material from the entire semester, and apply this material to controversial issues pertaining to the politics, attitudes, and ideology of language endangerment.

Additionally, the Ohio-based readings (**Gramley & Wilson 2005, Keiser 2005, Pappas 2005, Ramos-Pellicia 2005**) offer most students the chance to draw on their own experiences and apply them.

ELO 2.2. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts. Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate specific activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

Students gain a rigorous, critical, and self-aware engagement with the realities of language endangerment, how it is rooted in human migration and (im)mobility, and the consequences of language endangerment for the human experience and society. Students also examine the ways in which language revitalization can reverse language loss and the effect of this on individuals and communities. They will be encouraged through various assignments (e.g. **interviewing parents and grandparents in the fieldwork simulation assignment (Topic 9)**) to develop an understanding of language loss — or by the same token, retention — in their own family or in their own neighborhood. They will come to understand their own roles in issues pertaining to minority life in their community and its linguistic side.

Moreover, class presentations (e.g. as part of the **“Adopt-a-Language” project**, and the **debate assignment**) offer the opportunity for students to develop and reflect on skills needed to express oneself orally in a compelling manner.

Finally, since the Ohio-based readings (**Gramley & Wilson 2005, Keiser 2005, Pappas 2005, Ramos-Pellicia 2005**) will hit home for many students and will relate to their own life experiences in Ohio, they will almost inevitably be drawn into self-reflection on immobile and previously mobile minorities in their midst.

Goals and ELOs unique to Migration, Mobility, & Immobility

Below are the Goals and ELOs specific to this Theme. As above, in the accompanying Table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The ELOs are expected to vary in their “coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

GOAL 3: Successful students will explore and analyze a range of perspectives on migration, mobility, and immobility, including causes and effects, personal or group experiences, or artistic expression.

GOAL 4: Successful students will explain a variety of scholarly or artistic approaches to understanding mobility and immobility, and analyze how texts, perceptions, representations, discourses, or artifacts represent these concerns.

ELO 3.1. Explain environmental, political, economic, social, or cultural causes of migration, mobility, and/or immobility (thereafter, MMI). Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate specific activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

In this course, students study the reasons for migration patterns, including expansionist colonization from Europe into the Americas, Africa, and parts of Asia, and the effects these movement have had on indigenous populations from a linguistic standpoint, while at the same

time creating pockets of new immigrant linguistic minorities subject to threats to language vitality and likely ultimate language loss. They examine also similar shifts of population in Europe itself and the causes behind these movements (largely economic but also involving displacements due to wars) and subsequent linguistic developments, such as the creation of new varieties of languages, like Guestworker German, with concomitant threats to home languages.

Two census-based assignments (Topics 1 and 5) examine recent language diversity both in the US and more locally in Ohio and Columbus (using analysis tools available at census.gov), with a focus at first on immigrants of particular ethnicity or national origin, e.g. Hmong from Laos in the 1970s or early 1980s, or Russian Jews in the 1980s and 1990s. Students will gain experience with identifying and describing the trends in immigration into the US and Ohio (**Topic 4**), and on how these developments correlate with political and historical events outside of the US (e.g. civil strife in Laos in the 1970s or from on-going discrimination against Jews in Russia in the Cold War era); see **Topics 3, 4, and 8**. Among the readings are several (**Kurz 1988**, and the case-studies in **Vigoureux & Mufwene 2020**) that focus specifically on the economic causes of migration. Finally, **Keiser 2005**, by offering a profile of a religious minority (the Amish and Mennonites) forced into migration by persecution in their homeland, gives insight into cultural and political causes for mobility.

ELO 3.2. Describe and analyze diverse experiences or portrayals of migration, mobility, or immobility (e.g. migration, incarceration, disability, or flight) and the complex effects of these phenomena on individuals, societies, institutions, and/or places. Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate specific activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

In this course, students study diverse linguistic experiences as a result of MMI, with particular attention to:

- The experience of refugees adapting to new surroundings;
- The differences between voluntary relocation and forced relocation and differential linguistic outcomes;
- Indigenous minority experiences -- how language contact with majority groups parallels – or not – minorities caused by forced or voluntary migrations;
- Experiences of other minorities that are co-located with majority groups, e.g. the Deaf community, and how their linguistic experience parallels – or not – minorities caused by forced or voluntary migrations; and
- The examination of linguistic minorities and language endangerment throughout history.

By watching of **two films** -- “Sound and Fury: The Communication Wars of the Deaf” (about the deaf community and controversy regarding culture loss due to the use of cochlear implants) and “Rabbit-Proof Fence” (about aboriginal and mixed-race children in Australia who were rounded up in the 1930s and relocated to “assimilation camps”) -- and doing **writing assignments** reflecting and answering critical questions on each one (see **Topics 6 and 7**), students will gain insight into the complex experiences of minorities facing culture loss and forced migration, from both a documentary-style presentation (in the case of the first film) and an artistic perspective (in the case of the second). Among the readings, several of the Ohio-based readings (**Keiser 2005**, **Pappas 2005**, **Ramos-Pellicia 2005**) offer descriptive portrayals of diverse “migration tales” and

how the factors leading to the migration these groups engaged in that students can reflect upon and that will be treated in class discussion. The vignettes in [Hinton 1994](#) offer similar portrayals with a focus on indigenous native populations of California.

ELO 4.1. Discuss how migration, mobility, or immobility have shaped attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and values of individuals and/or institutions. Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate specific activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

In this course, students discuss and analyze diverse attitudes and beliefs stemming from how migration, mobility, and immobility has created language loss, as well as a host of relevant issues, for instance, the ideology of speakers of majority languages with regard to the use of minority languages and dialects. Example questions: Is assimilation a positive goal or a destructive force? Is language use a human right? How have more sedentary populations, e.g. the Saami of the Nordic countries or the Basque of France (as opposed to Spain), fared with regard to language preservation?

Students will take responsibility for learning about all aspects of an endangered language, along with its speakers, that they “adopt”. In this major **“Adopt-a-Language” project**, which culminates in student presentations (**Topic 12**) they will be required to research the history of migration, mobility, or immobility of the endangered speech community, to explain the attitudes and behaviors (e.g. a commitment to assimilation) that led to it being in the linguistic state-of-affairs it is in, to detail the steps speakers have taken or are taking to preserve/revitalize their language (or not) and their motivation for doing so.

In addition, as the **final exam**, students in teams will engage in a **debate (Topic 12)** in which they will square off on different sides of controversial issues pertaining to the politics, attitudes, and ideology of language endangerment (e.g. the pros and cons of assimilation, of cultural and linguistic maintenance, of ties to the homeland (if appropriate), and the like).

Moreover, among the readings are [Dobrin 2008](#), which demonstrates how communities are led to their particular perspective on their lives as endangered minorities through their immobility, and the point-and-counterpoint of [Ladefoged 1992](#) and [Dorian 1993](#), in which community attitudes about their interactions with the dominant cultures and languages surrounding them are explored and subjected to critical assessments.

ELO 4.2. Describe how people (e.g. scholars, artists, scientists, etc.) perceive or represent migration, mobility, or immobility and critique conventions, theories, and/or ideologies that influence such perceptions or representations. Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate specific activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

In this course, students see the issues as viewed through the eyes of different parties affected by MMI-related language endangerment/loss and filtered through the sensibilities of different scholars, by reading, watching, and analyzing scholarly and artistic interpretations by linguists, anthropologists, economists, film makers, and others on the linguistic outcomes of MMI.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language, so students will be given **two assignments** involving **simulation of linguistic fieldwork and documentation (Topic 9)**, to experience first-hand what is involved in scholarly responses to language endangerment. They will need to work on transcribing and describing the sounds of an endangered language they hear on YouTube (there are many such samples) and they will do ethnographic interviews with family members about their family's language history or purely linguistic interviews eliciting information on the structure, sounds, and vocabulary of a language they don't know that is spoken by a friend, roommate, or neighbor. The assignment also asks students to offer some reflections on what they have learned about the practice of linguistic documentation and field encounters and about the motivation behind such practices.

Additionally, a major theme throughout the course is the range of anthropological and economic perspectives on matters of migration, mobility, immobility, and minority status in a broader societal milieu. Several of the readings, e.g. the case-studies in **Vigoureux & Mufwene 2020**, have an explicit economic focus, while others, such as **Dobrin 2008** take a more anthropological perspective. **Bird & Simon 2003** explores the specifics of scientific representation by fieldworkers of languages in need of documentation.