

Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2026
[Previous Value](#) [Summer 2012](#)

Course Change Information

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

We are requesting that this course be added as an option in the Lived Environments GE Theme. We have changed the course title and description to reflect updates that align the course more closely with the Theme. We have also minorly updated prerequisites/exclusions per current guidance (requiring WIL rather than ENGLISH 1110; removing references to three-digit course numbers).

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

Currently this course does not have any designation on the new GE, so we are concerned about enrollment numbers for future offerings. A GE Theme designation would help to encourage enough enrollment to offer the course regularly.

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	3501
Course Title	American Indigenous Languages in Context
Previous Value	Introduction to American Indigenous Languages
Transcript Abbreviation	American Indig Lg
Course Description	This interdisciplinary course explores Indigenous languages of the Americas and their speakers, histories, and ecologies. It engages with concepts in linguistics, anthropology, and biology in order to understand how environmental factors shape language structure and linguistic diversity, in ways that render Indigenous languages distinct from majority or colonial languages.
Previous Value	An introduction to indigenous languages of the Americas and their speakers: e.g. history of settlement, language families, linguistic properties, bilingual education, language policies and attitudes.
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

COURSE CHANGE REQUEST
3501 - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette
Chantal
08/22/2025

Credit Available by Exam	No
Admission Condition Course	No
Off Campus	Never
Campus of Offering	Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster
Previous Value	Columbus

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites	Prereq: Completion of a Writing and Information Literacy GE Foundation course
Previous Value	Prereq: English 1110.01 (110.01), 1110.02 (110.02), or 1110.03 (110.03), or equiv.
Exclusions	
Previous Value	Not open to students with credit for Linguist 307.
Electronically Enforced	Yes
Previous Value	No

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code	16.0102
Subsidy Level	Baccalaureate Course
Intended Rank	Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

Requirement/Elective Designation

General Education course:
Individual and Groups; Global Studies (International Issues successors); Lived Environments
The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

[Previous Value](#)

[General Education course:](#)
[Individual and Groups; Global Studies \(International Issues successors\)](#)
[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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will master basic linguistic concepts for categorizing languages according to their genealogical relatedness and grammatical features.• Students will gain an in-depth knowledge of Indigenous language families of the Americas and precolonial linguistic diversity.• Students will be able to identify ways that contact between different groups has had variable effects on language ideologies and language vitality.
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[Previous Value](#)

COURSE CHANGE REQUEST
3501 - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Vankeerbergen,Bernadette
Chantal
08/22/2025

Content Topic List

- Indigenous languages of the Americas
- Formal structure and analysis
- Social and historical issues

Sought Concurrence

No

Attachments

- Syllabus_3501-1.pdf: Syllabus
(Syllabus. Owner: McCullough,Elizabeth Ann)
- GE Theme Worksheet LING 3501.pdf: GE Theme worksheet
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: McCullough,Elizabeth Ann)
- LING 3501 GE Revision Cover Letter.docx: Revision cover letter
(Cover Letter. Owner: McCullough,Elizabeth Ann)
- Syllabus_3501_v2.pdf: Revised syllabus
(Syllabus. Owner: McCullough,Elizabeth Ann)

Comments

- Please see feedback email sent 5/2/25. *(by Neff,Jennifer on 05/02/2025 12:06 PM)*

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	McCullough,Elizabeth Ann	04/04/2025 04:46 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	McCullough,Elizabeth Ann	04/04/2025 04:46 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	04/18/2025 11:30 AM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Neff,Jennifer	05/02/2025 12:06 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	McCullough,Elizabeth Ann	08/22/2025 04:45 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	McCullough,Elizabeth Ann	08/22/2025 04:46 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	08/22/2025 05:17 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Hilty,Michael Neff,Jennifer Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal Steele,Rachel Lea	08/22/2025 05:17 PM	ASCCAO Approval

Dear Lived Environments GE Theme Committee:

Thank you for your helpful assessment of LING 3501 as a potential Lived Environments Theme course. I have addressed the requested contingencies and recommendations by updating the syllabus, which is enclosed. Major changes to the syllabus are highlighted in red.

I have made the following changes or added the following clarifications in line with your feedback:

- 1) I have added additional details to the descriptions of course assessments (the discussion posts/journal entries and the final project) to better demonstrate how the assignments will relate to the course ELOs. The discussion posts/journal entries now have examples of questions the students will be asked to answer to guide their critical interrogation of course concepts and information.
- 2) I have added substantially more details in the Course Schedule section to illustrate how the course concepts directly relate to the theme ELOs (3.1-4.3). The readings are described in greater detail for non-specialists and examples of the kinds of questions and comparisons students will be asked to perform are provided. (This also addresses the recommendation to include more contextual information about the readings in the schedule.)
- 3) I have also included additional readings and course materials that more directly relate to some of the ELOs (explicit readings about the relationship between language and different kinds of environment, especially the natural/climatological environment).
- 4) I have revised the explanatory paragraph in the syllabus to use the requested language about the relation of the course to the Lived Environments Theme. (This can be shortened if necessary.)
- 5) We have updated the title of the course to remove the “introductory” language. Instead, the course will now be called “American Indigenous Languages in Context” to signal that it is indeed an advanced, in-depth review of the topic.
- 6) A credit-hour expectations statement has been included on the syllabus.
- 7) Per the recommendation, multimedia content has been incorporated in the form of films and short video clips. I have also added a reading on Indigenous geography to provide the students with different cartographic illustrations of the regional environments we will be discussing.
- 8) The statements required by the University have been updated to include the recommended language for the current semester (AU 2025).
- 9) I have removed the incorrect statement that the grading scale I will use is a standard OSU scale.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Best wishes,

Jessica Kantarovich
Assistant Professor, Linguistics
kantarovich.3@osu.edu

LING 3501: **American Indigenous Languages in Context**

Spring 2026

Time TBD
Location TBD

Instructor: Jessica Kantarovich
Instructor e-mail: kantarovich.3@osu.edu
Office hours: Th 2:30-3:30 or by appointment (Oxley 322B)

Course Description

This course focuses on Indigenous languages of the Americas and their speakers, histories, and ecologies. This is an inter-disciplinary course that will engage with concepts in linguistics, anthropology, and biology in order to understand how environmental factors shape language structure and linguistic diversity, in ways that render Indigenous languages distinct from majority or colonial languages. We will explore the origins of American Indigenous languages, the pre- and post-colonial contexts in which they were (and continue to be) spoken, and how Indigenous ways of knowing and relating to the natural world shape the grammars and lexicons of Indigenous languages in the Americas and beyond. Topics to be covered include (but are not limited to): (1) Indigeneity as a category; (2) language families of the Americas; (3) linguistic relativity and the impact of culture on linguistic systems; (4) the history of American colonization; and (5) language vitality in Indigenous communities.

Credit Hour Expectations

This is a 3-credit-hour course. We will meet twice weekly for 80 minutes each meeting. There will be assigned media for you to review before each class (readings and videos) and comment on briefly on our Carmen discussion board. Course assignments will consist of 4 journal entries (with flexible submission deadlines), an in-class midterm presentation to be done in small groups, and a final project to be completed in the medium of your choice: a paper, a pre-recorded video, or a presentation and oral examination. According to Ohio State policy (go.osu.edu/credithours), students should expect around 9 hours of engagement—3 hours per week in synchronous class meetings (2x/week for 80 minutes) and 6 hours per week on other work (reading for class, working on papers, etc.)—with the class each week to receive a grade of (C) average. Actual hours spent will vary by student learning habits and the assignments each week.

Prerequisite(s)

Completion of a Writing and Information Literacy GE Foundation course. This course assumes no prior knowledge of Linguistics or Native Studies/Indigenous Studies (but students with such a background are also encouraged to enroll).

Course Objectives

In the course of this class, students will:

1. Master basic linguistic concepts for categorizing languages according to their genealogical relatedness and grammatical features.
2. Demonstrate (orally and in writing) an in-depth knowledge of Indigenous language families of the Americas and precolonial linguistic diversity.
3. Be able to identify ways that contact between different groups (both among Indigenous American tribes and with European colonial powers) has had variable effects on language ideologies and language vitality.
4. Engage with discourses around Indigeneity: what it means for languages to be Indigenous and what features of these languages stem directly from Indigenous cultures, cosmologies, and connections to place.
5. Critically compare Western vs. Indigenous approaches to language classification, language documentation, and language endangerment and revitalization.
6. And finally, situate these concepts within a critical interrogation of how environmental factors (physical/climatological, cultural, historical, and geographic) have played a fundamental role in language use and structure.

GE Theme Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes

THEME: Lived Environments

Goal 1: Successful students will 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.

- 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 (Lived Environments).

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 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.

Goal 3: Successful students will explore a range of perspectives on the interactions and impacts between humans and one or more types of environment (e.g. agricultural, built, cultural, economic, intellectual, natural) in which humans live.

- ELO 3.1: Engage with the complexity and uncertainty of human-environment interactions.
- ELO 3.2: Describe examples of human interaction with and impact on environmental change and transformation over time and across space.

Goal 4: Successful students will analyze a variety of perceptions, representations and/or discourses about environments and humans within them.

- ELO 4.1: Analyze how humans' interactions with their environments shape or have shaped attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors.
- ELO 4.2: Describe how humans perceive and represent the environments with which they interact.
- ELO 4.3: Analyze and critique conventions, theories, and ideologies that influence discourses around environments.

Relation of the course to the Lived Environments Theme

This course will give you an in-depth understanding of Indigenous languages of the Americas, their histories, and their modern ecologies, in order to consider how language is a direct product of several kinds of **lived environment**: (1) the natural environment—flora, fauna, the landscape; (2) the cultural environment—the Indigenous vs. the Eurocentric understanding of the natural world; (3) the historical environment; and (4) the political/economic environment—how language policy and ideology contribute to the (de-)valuation of certain languages and cultures. To engage with the complexity of human interactions with both natural and cultural environments, students in this course will be asked to contemplate and write about readings that cover ways that language is shaped by historical factors and aspects. Readings will emphasize that historical factors involved in language diversification (and endangerment) are oftentimes unpredictable and accidental, including the arrival of Europeans in the "New World" and the resulting colonization of the Americas. Class discussion will also prompt students to consider how environmental factors that govern language use are inherently unstable and differ across time and space: for example, Indigenous languages in the Americas existed in situations of stable multilingualism before colonization, and rapid language endangerment and loss occurred following colonization and has accelerated in the modern era of globalization and urbanization. Students will also be given a framework for explicitly considering the interaction between languages and environments through readings on language sustainability (Krupnik) and environmental linguistics (Harrison). This course will engage specifically with human behavioral responses to the natural world, both socially and linguistically. We will read about and discuss the following kinds of examples of human interaction with environment across time: Indigenous perspectives on stewardship of the

land vs. the colonial drive for resource extraction; the reciprocal relationship between language and culture/cognition; and the knowledge about the natural world and societal history that is contained in Indigenous languages and how these languages provide an oral record of environmental change.

Required Materials

Required Texts

This course will draw on readings from a variety of scholarly books, literary sources, and academic journals, across several disciplines, all of which will be made available on CarmenCanvas. We will read several excerpts from the following books if you would like to purchase them:

- *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. (2013, Milkweed Editions)
- *Words of the Inuit: A Semantic Stroll through a Northern Culture* by Louis-Jacques Dorais. (2020, University of Manitoba Press)

Required Films

We will also watch the following documentaries about Indigenous cultural reclamation in the 20th century. If you are unable to access these through streaming, I will make them available through the Library or will arrange a screening.

- *Sumé: The Sound of a Revolution*, 2014. Director: Inuk Silis Hoegh.
- *Vow of Silence: The Assassination of Annie Mae*, 2024. Director: Yvonne Russo.

Required Technology

Since assignments will be uploaded and evaluated on CarmenCanvas, this course requires access to a laptop computer (or similar device) and word-processing software. You will also need a device capable of reading PDFs for completing the weekly reading assignments. If you are having trouble accessing Carmen (or using any of the required modules) please contact me immediately.

Course Expectations

Attendance and class participation [20% of final grade]

Class meetings will include a combination of lecture and discussion, so you are expected to attend faithfully and participate. 20% of your final grade will be made up of the following:

- (a) **Attendance and active engagement.** You can miss up to 2 class meetings without penalty and without needing to inform me in advance. Any additional absences will count against your grade, except in case of extenuating circumstances or with advance permission from me. Attendance in class also entails actively engaging in the discussion: you are expected to regularly ask questions, raise suggested interpretations of the texts, and respond to your classmates or to questions posed by me. Public speaking is easier for some students than others so there is no set number of times you must speak per class or throughout the semester, but it should also be clear in other ways that you are paying attention to what is said in class and what material is introduced in lectures and presentations. Refrain from using devices in class except to aid your participation.
- (b) **Readings and videos.** There will be a text or video for you to review *ahead* of each class meeting. I expect students to come prepared to engage with the material in a critical way. This is only possible if you read the text (and think about any questions you may have) in advance.
- (c) **Discussion posts.** To facilitate thinking about the readings in advance of class, I will ask you to submit a brief (150-200 word) reflection to Carmen, **due by 10pm the night before class**. These posts will be graded on a Complete/Incomplete scale. The goal of the posts is to provide a starting point for discussion and debate about the assigned texts. I will provide some suggested questions to get you thinking, but you are free to talk about whatever you find most interesting or pressing. You can raise a new issue in the assigned reading OR relate the current text to a previous reading or class discussion. In particular, you should always be thinking about how the reading relates to the issues of Lived Environments and their influence on language and culture. For example:
- Did a particular passage shed light on how interaction with humans' environments (e.g., conquest of territory, cultivation of the land, survival in different climates) has a direct impact on language and culture? How so? What about this passage was particularly striking, in light of the discussions we've been having in class?
 - What issues in colonialism, language categorization, and/or Indigeneity were introduced by the author (or filmmaker), and how can we address them? Think specifically about the way the author structures their arguments to lead you to a particular conclusion.
 - How is the author's perspective shaped by what we can glean about their background? Why is the author writing the text, and who are they writing it for? What is the author's perspective on language and coloniality, language and place, and/or language and society?
 - Was there some aspect of the reading that was confusing—if so, don't just point it out, but take a stab at unpacking what it might mean (you might know more than you think you do)!
 - Is there another text—a reading, a film, a work of art, a song, an online video, etc.—that you think connects with the themes we're considering this week? Introduction of outside materials is highly encouraged where relevant.

If you are interrogating a particular excerpt (or even a single terminological issue), make sure you cite appropriately: give the page number where the passage occurs and be clear when you are quoting directly.

Since I (and student presenters) will need time to review the discussion posts, please note that **late posts will not receive credit**. Posts that do not demonstrate evidence of having actually read and thoughtfully considered the text will also not receive credit.

Journal entry assignments [40% of final grade]

- **4 journal entries.** Throughout the semester, you will pick 4 readings that you found particularly engaging or thought-provoking and submit a lengthier reflection about each of them, in lieu of a typical discussion post for that class meeting. That is, four of your discussion posts throughout the semester will be replaced with a journal entry of 800-1000 words in length, which will be submitted separately for a letter grade.

You have flexibility as to when these are submitted; I only ask that **journal entries 1 & 2 are submitted by Friday of Week 8**, and **entries 3 & 4 are submitted by Friday of Week 14** of the semester.

Midterm Presentation [15% of final grade]

As your midterm assessment, you will be paired with another student and asked to give a short presentation on the assigned reading, designed to stimulate class discussion that day. You will be asked to raise questions about the reading relating to the course theme of connecting Indigenous languages with historical and environmental factors, and/or engaging with different scholarly perspectives on Indigenous language and culture. You can begin with a presentation (no longer than 10 minutes) outlining the relevant details about the assigned reading, which should then be followed by a general class discussion of the issues you have identified which you and your partner are expected to facilitate. This should last for at least 10 minutes, but may blend into the larger discussion for the day. As with your discussion posts, you are encouraged to bring in outside materials and incorporate them into your presentation to situate the topic within a wider context. **You do not need to also write a discussion post if you are doing a presentation for that day.**

Final project [25% of final grade]

Your final project will be a research report on a topic (of your choice) that relates to Indigenous languages in North or South America, or elsewhere in the world. You will be expected to conduct research outside of our class and draw on outside materials.

Any disciplinary focus that makes sense within the context of the course is welcome (linguistics, geography, anthropology, sociology, history, political science, ethnobotany, etc.) as long as you ultimately **relate aspects of language to environmental factors, be**

they biological, climatological, historical, or cultural, and explicitly discuss how one has influenced the other.

You have some flexibility in the format of your report. You will choose one of the following:

- a. An academic research paper (written in an appropriate style; look to the assigned course readings for examples). Your paper should be 10-12 (double-spaced) pages in length, exclusive of references.
- b. A pre-recorded video report or podcast episode, of 25-30 minutes in length.
- c. A presentation and oral defense with the instructor. If you choose this option, we will arrange a time to meet during finals week: you will present your project (aim for a presentation 15-20 minutes in length) and I will ask some follow-up questions about what you present (for 10-15 minutes).

Sample topics include (but are not limited to):

- The history/structure of a particular Indigenous language or family
- Language ideologies in Indigenous communities
- Issues of language/educational policy that affect Indigenous language vitality
- Approaches/proposals for the revitalization of a particular Indigenous language
- Indigenous systems of information-recording that differ from Eurocentric notions of writing (e.g., the Andean *quipus*)
- Lexical or grammatical distinctions in Indigenous languages that differ markedly from colonial/European languages—or do they? (e.g., the Yupik-Inuit spatial system; the Yupik-Inuit words for snow; gender in Ojibwe; color systems; kinship systems and terminology)
- Indigenous literature or poetry
- Navajo code-talkers during WWII
- Representations of Indigenous languages in media
- Ethics around work with Indigenous communities

Grading Breakdown

Attendance and class participation:	20%
Journal entries:	40%
Midterm presentation:	15%
Final project:	25%

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following 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

Late assignment policy: Late assignments will lose 1/3 of a letter grade **per day** unless prior arrangements are made with me. Late discussion posts will not be accepted.

Class Schedule

Week 1

MM/DD (W): What is Indigeneity?

Prepare for class: Kimmerer 2013, “Becoming Indigenous to place”

MM/DD (F): Indigenous epistemologies

Prepare for class: Larsen & Johnson 2017, “Introduction: Being-together-in-place”

We will begin with an introduction to the concept of Indigeneity, and its essential link to environment: Indigenous peoples see themselves as being rooted to a particular land, and view a closeness to (and understanding of) the features of the land as an essential part of the Indigenous experience. We will also examine how the Indigenous understanding of geography and land stewardship differ from Western approaches to cartography and the notion of nation states. This will set us up to discover the ways that the Indigenous connection to place is reflected in the actual features of language.

Week 2

MM/DD (W): Linguistic epistemologies: What are languages?

Prepare for class: Haynie 2023, “Language classification”

MM/DD (F): Determining relatedness: Language reconstruction

Prepare for class: (1) Haas 1978, “American Indian languages and historical linguistics”; (2) Video: “Your Language Isn’t Extinct” (Wesley Leonard, 2012) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WHEo5S49sE>)

Continuing with our introduction to Indigenous epistemologies, we will spend this week contrasting Indigenous epistemologies of language (rooted in environment and human relationality) and Western epistemologies of language (rooted in biological metaphors, such as genetic relatedness and vitality vs. endangerment vs. extinction).

Week 3

MM/DD (W): Indigenous multilingualism: A pre-colonial norm

Prepare for class: Mithun 2021, “Language contact in North America”

MM/DD (F): The early association between language and environmental context in the study of Native American languages

Prepare for class: Boas 1911, Introduction to the *Handbook of American Indian languages*

This week, we will work with the biological metaphor of “sociolinguistic ecology” in order to map the distribution of Indigenous languages in North America. We will also examine the notion of “linguistic diversity” and the socio-historical conditions that allowed for hundreds of languages to exist in North America before the advent of colonization.

Week 4

MM/DD (W): Linguistic relativity

Prepare for class: (1) Boas 1889, “On Alternating Sounds”; (2) Lucy 1997, “Linguistic Relativity”

MM/DD (F): Introduction to our primary case study: The Inuit-Yupik languages

Prepare for class: Dorais 2014, Chapter 1, “The ~~Eskaleut~~ Aleut-Inuit-Yupik Family of Languages”; (2) Video: The Incredible Origins and History of the Inuit People (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ru8CISgY3Kk>)

This week, we will work with the notion of “linguistic relativity”: an early concept in the field of linguistics (and anthropology) which assumes that language has a deterministic effect on how we see the world around us. In this week and the following few weeks, we will look at several unique features of language that are highly correlated with culture and place and debate the best way to make sense of these connections. We will evaluate these case studies in comparison to your pre-existing knowledge about majority/colonial languages, to observe how humans’ perceptions of their environments are quite literally represented systematically in the languages they speak.

Week 5

MM/DD (W): Inuit words for the environment; spatial deictics

Prepare for class: (1) Dorais 2020, Chapter 1, “Words for speaking about the environment and land”; (2) Video: The most important thing as a Kalaaleq (Q’s Greenland), (<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/3gK8yZT8RfQ>)

MM/DD (F): Inuit words for the contemporary world

Prepare for class: Dorais 2020, Chapter 6, “Words for socializing in the contemporary world”

This week, we will discuss the Inuit languages’ representation of (and adaptation to) two distinct environments. First, we will consider the climatological environment that these languages have traditionally existed in (Arctic and sub-Arctic regions with considerable snow and ice, where navigation depended on the precise identification of wind patterns and rock/ice formations). How is the physical polar environment reflected in Inuit lexicon (distinctions in words for snow) and spatial orientation systems? Second, we will consider the ways that the Inuit languages have had to adapt to the modern world.

Week 6

MM/DD (W): Polysynthesis in Indigenous language communities

Prepare for class: (1) Dorais 2020, Appendix, “Polysynthesis”, (2) Trudgill 2011, Chapter 6, “Mature phenomena and societies of intimates”

MM/DD (F): Language and environment: Amazonian relations to plants

Prepare for class: Swanson 2009, “Singing to estranged lovers: Runa relations to plants in the Ecuadorean Amazon”

This week, we will talk about the capacity for environmental factors to influence (or be influenced by) *grammatical* facets of language. First, we will familiarize ourselves with the controversial (in linguistics) phenomenon of polysynthesis, where languages express syntactic relations morphologically, allowing them to express an entire sentence with a single long word. (For example, in the Siberian Indigenous language Chukchi, *təmejɔləwtəpəytərkən* means ‘I have a bad headache.’) We will consider a theory that argues that polysynthetic languages can only develop in the context of small close-knit societies, or “societies of intimates,” which typify many Indigenous communities. Second, we will discuss an example of how the cultural environment can impact the grammar through peculiarities of language use: the case of Amazonian people’s treatment of plants as beings that can be communicated with.

Week 7

MM/DD (W): Language and the material world: Classifier systems

Prepare for class: Denny 1976, “What are noun classifiers good for?”

MM/DD (F): Language and grammar: Animacy systems

Prepare for class: Kimmerer 2013, “The animacy of grammar”

This week we will continue discussing the notion of animacy in language: many Indigenous cultures believe in the animacy of plants and objects that Western cultures regard as inanimate (e.g., rocks, bodies of water, natural events like the Northern Lights). We will compare two case studies of the grammatical realization of Indigenous animacy beliefs: the first, a case reported from a linguistic perspective (Ojibwe interpretations of the animacy of objects and how that is reflected in the language’s gender-marking system); the second, a Potawatomi author’s reflection on how learning the grammar of Potawatomi allows Indigenous people to rediscover traditional cultural beliefs around animacy—a case where cultural environment appears to be modified by language.

Week 8

MM/DD (F): Language and time: Numerical and calendrical knowledge

Prepare for class: Harrison 2007, Chapter 3, “Many Moons Ago: Traditional Calendars and Time-Reckoning”

MM/DD (W): Language and time: The apotheosis of linguistic relativity

Prepare for class: Ted Chiang’s “Story of Your Life” or Film: *Arrival* (2016)

This week, we will again consider two different perspectives on the link between language and environment, with a focus on *time*. First, we will discuss Indigenous approaches to time-keeping (which depend on observation of the natural environment); then, we will consider an extreme literary imagining of the ability of language to affect our awareness of the natural and physical environment—that it can change our very perception of the passage of time. Does the premise of “Story of Your Life”/ *Arrival* seem so implausible, in light of the cultural and physical environmental motivations behind Indigenous calendrical and numerical knowledge?

Week 9

MM/DD (W): Challenges to linguistic relativity

Prepare for class: Pullum 1988, “The Great Eskimo Vocabulary Hoax”

MM/DD (F): Cognitive explanations for the language-environment link

Prepare for class: Li et al. 2011, “Spatial reasoning in Tenejapan Mayans”

Now that we have thoroughly analyzed several case studies in how language varies depending on the culture and society, we can critically engage with notions like “linguistic relativity.” Does language influence environment and our understanding of our environment, or does the relationship operate in the opposite direction? Given the limitless capacity for expression assumed of all languages, are differences in language significant—do they point to meaningful cognitive or cultural differences? Are linguistic systems instead a product of cognitive constraints, and not mainly driven by environmental and cultural environments?

Week 10: SPRING BREAK

Week 11

MM/DD (W): Language and colonization in North America

Prepare for class: Silverstein 1997, “Encountering language and languages of encounter in North American Ethnohistory”

MM/DD (F): Colonial language ideologies

Prepare for class: (1) Greenblatt 1990, “Learning to curse: Aspects of linguistic colonialism in the Sixteenth Century”; (2) Clip from the film adaptation of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* (2010) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFHyoZOfGRs>)

Beginning this week, we will turn to the difficult discussion of colonization and its impact on Indigenous communities and languages. How did differences in cultural environment and physical/natural environment contribute to a push for resource extraction and conquest by some groups over others? How did perceptions of language (in Europe and the New World) directly feed into narratives of colonization and produce changes to social and political environments around the world?

Week 12

MM/DD (W): Linguistic and political revolution through music in Greenland in the 20th century

Prepare for class: Documentary: *Sumé: The Sound of a Revolution*

MM/DD (F): Indigenous cultural reclamation in the US in the 20th century

Prepare for class: Documentary series: *Vow of Silence: The Assassination of Annie Mae*, Episode 1.

This week we talk about Indigenous cultural reclamation in response to the effects of colonialism, and the role that language has played in effecting change in Indigenous social and political environments.

Week 13

MM/DD (W): Language vitality and endangerment

Prepare for class: Hale et al. 1992, “Endangered Languages”

MM/DD (F): What do we lose when we lose a language?

Prepare for class: Harrison 2007, Chapter 2, “An Extinction of (Ideas About) Species”

This week, we explore the topic of “language endangerment”: another biological metaphor adopted in linguistics. What does it mean for languages to become endangered? What environmental and ecological factors lead to language endangerment? What environments (social, biological?) are themselves threatened when a language is lost?

Week 14

MM/DD (W): Critical discourses about endangerment

Prepare for class: Perley 2012, “Zombie Linguistics: Experts, endangered languages and the curse of undead voices.”

MM/DD (F): The symbiosis between linguistic and biological diversity

Prepare for class: Harrison 2013, “Environmental Linguistics”

While linguists have employed biological metaphors around dwindling “language diversity” with great enthusiasm, Indigenous authors have not been so enthusiastic (think back to the lecture by Wesley Leonard in Week 2). This week we’ll hear from another Indigenous scholar, Bernard Perley, on the damage done when we declare languages to be “extinct.” We will also consider another perspective, the notion of “environmental linguistics,” that takes the link between linguistic and biological species to be more than metaphorical, and proposes that there is an actual symbiotic relationship between cultural and ecological diversity—we can only identify diversity in our biological environments if we have the language to describe it.

Week 15

MM/DD (W): Language as a means to navigate a changing climate

Prepare for class: Krupnik 2022, “Indigenous ice dictionaries: Sharing knowledge for a changing world”

MM/DD (F): Language and stewardship of the land

Prepare for class: Kimmerer 2013, “People of Corn, People of Light”

In our last week of the course, we turn to the future: how can language serve as a means of navigating our changing environment? We will learn about how Indigenous knowledge (via language) is indispensable in cataloging features of the changing Arctic, and we will finish with a reflection from Kimmerer on how language helps us cope with environmental change.

Assignment and Exam Schedule

Keep the following due dates in mind as you plan your workload for the semester (up-to-date as of MM/DD):

Assessment	Deadline
1) Discussion Posts	Before 10PM the day before every class meeting
2) Journal Entry 1	Anytime before Friday of Week 8 (MM/DD)
3) Journal Entry 2	Anytime before Friday of Week 8 (MM/DD) <i>Note that these entries must be about two separate days' assigned material; do not leave both for the last minute.</i>
4) Midterm Presentation	In-class during Weeks 5, 6, 7, and 8 (MM/DD-MM/DD) <i>Sign-ups will take place during Week 4.</i>
5) Final Project Topic Approval	Before Friday of Week 11 (MM/DD) <i>This task will not be graded but you must confirm your final project topic with me.</i>
6) Journal Entry 3	Anytime before Friday of Week 14 (MM/DD)
7) Journal Entry 4	Anytime before Friday of Week 14 (MM/DD) <i>Note that these entries must be about two separate days' assigned material; do not leave both for the last minute.</i>
8) Final Project	Papers and video projects due Monday 05/04, oral exams to be scheduled throughout the final examination period

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Administrative Policies

Attendance Policy

Students should miss no more than **2 scheduled days** of class for the duration of the semester. In the event of an emergency or other unexpected event that requires you to miss class time, please do your best to reach out to me *before you miss any additional class days* so that we can arrange appropriate accommodations.

Intellectual Diversity

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

Religious Accommodations

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three

absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office via

<https://www.ling.ohio-state.edu/local/civilrights@osu.edu>.

(Policy: Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances, available at <https://oaa.osu.edu/religious-holidays-holy-days-and-observances>)

Weather or Other Short-term Closing Policy

Should in-person classes be canceled, I will notify you as to which alternative methods of teaching will be offered to ensure continuity of instruction for this class. Communication will be via Carmen.

Use of Technology in the Classroom

This is a discussion-based class that requires your active participation. Laptops, tablets, and other devices should only be used in ways that facilitate your participation: to access course materials, to take notes, or to look up information on topics as they come up during class. Please refrain from distracting activities such as browsing the internet, catching up on messages, streaming videos in the background, etc.

Academic Misconduct

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 (per Faculty Rule 3335-5-48.7 (B), see

<https://trustees.osu.edu/bylaws-and-rules/3335-5>). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct at <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

ChatGPT and other AI tools

There has been a significant increase in the popularity and availability of a variety of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Sudowrite and others. These tools will help shape the future of work, research, and technology but when used in the wrong way, they can stand in conflict with academic integrity at Ohio State.

To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each individual instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.

Mental Health Support

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Disability Services and Accommodations

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. 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.

If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of a viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

GE Theme course submission worksheet: Lived Environments

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 (Lived Environments)

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.

(enter text here)

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. 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: 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.

	Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs
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.	

Example responses for proposals within “Citizenship” (from Sociology 3200, Comm 2850, French 2803):

ELO 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking.	<i>This course will build skills needed to engage in critical and logical thinking about immigration and immigration related policy through: Weekly reading response papers which require the students to synthesize and critically evaluate cutting-edge scholarship on immigration; Engagement in class-based discussion and debates on immigration-related topics using evidence-based logical reasoning to evaluate policy positions; Completion of an assignment which build skills in analyzing empirical data on immigration (Assignment #1)</i>
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	<p>Completion 3 assignments which build skills in connecting individual experiences with broader population-based patterns (Assignments #1, #2, #3)</p> <p>Completion of 3 quizzes in which students demonstrate comprehension of the course readings and materials.</p>
<p>ELO 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences.</p>	<p>Students engage in advanced exploration of each module topic through a combination of lectures, readings, and discussions.</p> <p><u>Lecture</u> Course materials come from a variety of sources to help students engage in the relationship between media and citizenship at an advanced level. Each of the 12 modules has 3-4 lectures that contain information from both peer-reviewed and popular sources. Additionally, each module has at least one guest lecture from an expert in that topic to increase students' access to people with expertise in a variety of areas.</p> <p><u>Reading</u> The textbook for this course provides background information on each topic and corresponds to the lectures. Students also take some control over their own learning by choosing at least one peer-reviewed article and at least one newspaper article from outside the class materials to read and include in their weekly discussion posts.</p> <p><u>Discussions</u> Students do weekly discussions and are given flexibility in their topic choices in order to allow them to take some control over their education. They are also asked to provide information from sources they've found outside the lecture materials. In this way, they are able to explore areas of particular interest to them and practice the skills they will need to gather information about current events, analyze this information, and communicate it with others.</p> <p>Activity Example: Civility impacts citizenship behaviors in many ways. Students are asked to choose a TED talk from a provided list (or choose another speech of their interest) and summarize and evaluate what it says about the relationship between civility and citizenship. Examples of Ted Talks on the list include Steven Petrow on the difference between being polite and being civil, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's talk on how a single story can perpetuate stereotypes, and Claire Wardle's talk on how diversity can enhance citizenship.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Students will conduct research on a specific event or site in Paris not already discussed in depth in class. Students will submit a 300-word abstract of their topic and a bibliography of at least five reputable academic and mainstream sources. At the end of the semester they will submit a 5-page research paper and present their findings in a 10-minute oral and visual presentation in a small-group setting in Zoom.</p> <p>Some examples of events and sites: The Paris Commune, an 1871 socialist uprising violently squelched by conservative forces</p>

	<i>Jazz-Age Montmartre, where a small community of African-Americans—including actress and singer Josephine Baker, who was just inducted into the French Pantheon—settled and worked after World War I.</i> <i>The Vélodrome d’hiver Roundup, 16-17 July 1942, when 13,000 Jews were rounded up by Paris police before being sent to concentration camps</i> <i>The Marais, a vibrant Paris neighborhood inhabited over the centuries by aristocrats, then Jews, then the LGBTQ+ community, among other groups.</i>
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Goals and ELOs unique to Lived Environments

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 a range of perspectives on the interactions and impacts between humans and one or more types of environment (e.g. agricultural, built, cultural, economic, intellectual, natural) in which humans live.

GOAL 4: Successful students will analyze a variety of perceptions, representations and/or discourses about environments and humans within them.

	Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs
ELO 3.1 Engage with the complexity and uncertainty of human-environment interactions.	
ELO 3.2 Describe examples of human interaction with and impact on environmental change and transformation over time and across space.	
ELO 4.1 Analyze how humans’ interactions with their environments shape or have shaped attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors.	
ELO 4.2 Describe how humans perceive and represent the environments with which they interact.	
ELO 4.3 Analyze and critique conventions, theories, and ideologies that influence discourses around environments.	