



Spring 2026

Instructor: Dr. Lisa Jeon (Lisa.Jeon@unt.edu)
Meeting days/times: T/Th @ 9:30 AM – 10:50 AM
Meeting place: FRLD 354
Office hours (virtual): Wednesdays @ 2 PM – 3:30 PM, by appointment

Course Objectives: This course is designed to generate interest and create awareness in the field of Linguistics. Language is changing rapidly right now, not because of migration and colonization, but from the influence of pop culture, technology, and social media. In *The Language of Now*, we will examine the relationship between these types of modern influences and diverse social factors that give rise to language variation and innovation. We will also explore the linguistic significance of new technologies such as texting, gaming, and social media. We will engage in language study by starting with what we already know; in this way, our interests will guide the class. This course will take us on a journey of linguistic discovery, zooming in on the language around us—not in a vacuum but where we live right now.

Some of the questions that we'll attempt to answer this semester:

- How is rapidly changing technology, social media, and pop culture affecting contemporary language?
- How has the language you speak now changed from 10 years ago?
- How are texting, gaming, and social media language changing the way we speak, think, and write?
- How can a word be powerful enough to make you spend money?
- Can using the wrong word cost you your job?
- Is it possible to solve crime by analyzing language clues, and if so, how?
- How do the media use language and euphemism to shape our opinions?

Course Requirements

Required texts: *Because Internet* by Gretchen McCulloch (UNT library has a digital copy of this text so you will be able to complete assigned readings without buying the text; however, this is a great book, and you might want to add it to your linguistics library). I will also assign readings throughout the semester, and there will be pop quizzes over the articles. You are required to read all assigned articles and be prepared to discuss the topics/themes in class, both generally and specifically.

Grades: Your final grade will be determined according to the following distribution.

Assessment type	# of assignments	Grade weight
Weekly homework: assignments, discussion posts, and quizzes	12	50%
Projects	3	40%
Test	1	5%
Attendance		5%

(Note: I will drop your lowest weekly homework grade at the end of the course. This will allow you to miss one quiz, assignment, or discussion with no grade penalty).

Canvas: We will use Canvas for accessing course information, schedules, online discussion groups, and project submission.

Class attendance & participation: Attendance, punctuality, and participation are required since our classroom is our laboratory. Over 4 absences may affect your final grade. I will take roll each class period. Please stay home if you are sick. Attendance and participation are 5% of your final grade. Review the UNT attendance policy [here](#).

Tests: You will have one test. It will cover the class lectures and assigned readings. It is objective and straightforward. If you attend class regularly, take notes, and read all assigned articles, you will likely do fine on the tests. The test is online, in canvas.

Projects: You will complete three projects this semester. These projects will be based on the exploratory research you conduct. I will provide you with detailed requirements and rubrics for all projects, and we'll spend some class time working on the projects. Projects will be assessed using the UNT Core rubrics for Personal Responsibility and Critical Thinking.

- **Project #1: Lexical Analysis in the Language of Now**
Objectives: Critical Thinking and Communication ([UNT core rubrics](#))

- **Project #2: Language Attitudes in the Language of Now: A Field Study**
Objective: Social Responsibility ([UNT core rubrics](#))
- **Project #3: Discourse Analysis & Language Variation in the Language of Now**
Objectives: Critical Thinking and Personal Responsibility ([UNT core rubrics](#))

Quizzes/Assignments: You will have quizzes throughout the semester. Most of them will be based on the articles you read. You will also have some short assignments. I'll provide you with details on all of these items in advance.

Discussion Posts: You will have assigned discussion forums. For these, you will follow the prompt and use the grading rubric as a guideline.

Classroom behavior (my policy): We will work in pairs, groups, and as a whole class. In order to do so harmoniously, we must be respectful of one another. Please refrain from using electronic devices (except as they pertain to our study), sleeping, working on other classes, chatting off topic, and anything else distracting to the learning environment. My goal is that we create a collective in which we can all learn from one other and flourish; respect and trust are key elements in this.

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is both "the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement" (Student Handbook). According to the Student Handbook, instances of academic dishonesty or plagiarism may result in failure of the course. Please cite all sources when quoting and paraphrasing information. As you write, keep in mind that paragraphs, phrases, data, results, and quotations copied or purchased from any site on the internet is a violation of UNT policy.

Disabilities: The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. Please contact me during the first week of class with requests or recommendations.

Acceptable Student Behavior (departmental/university policy)

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct

violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr.

Course schedule*

Week	Topic(s)	Reading	Assessment
1: Jan. 13 th & 15 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course introduction and overview Icebreaker and anonymous questionnaire What is linguistics? Defining our focus of study and objectives for the semester 	"What you can learn about job-hunting from dating apps. Really."	Quiz #1 in canvas over this week's lecture and articles Due: Friday by 11:59 PM
2: Jan 20 th & 22 nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linguistic levels: Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics 	"Why Slang is more revealing than you may realize"	Quiz #2 on article Due: Friday by 11:59 PM
3: Jan 27 th & 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semantic Shift: amelioration, pejoration, broadening, narrowing, and weakening Select topics for Project 1: Semantic Shift 	Readings in Canvas; Video: LING space & Semantic shift	Assignment #1 in Canvas Due: Friday by 11:59 PM
4: Feb. 3 rd & 5 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word formation processes 	PPT in Canvas	Discussion #1 in Canvas Due: Friday by 11:59 PM
5: Feb. 10 th & 12 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lexical categories: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs 	Materials in Canvas; Ungraded practice quiz (closes 1 min. before graded test opens)	Test #1 in Canvas Opens on Wednesday and closes on Sunday by 11:59 PM
6: Feb. 17 th & 19 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lexical analysis of LON terms (use spreadsheet) 	Readings in Canvas	Discussion #2 in Canvas Due: Friday by 11:59 PM

7: Feb. 24 th & 26 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project #1 workshop Poster presentations 	Rough drafts in class	Project #1 Due: Sunday by 11:59 PM
8: Mar. 3 rd & 5 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language variation & language attitudes Project #2 assigned 	Reading: <i>English with an Accent</i> by Rosina Lippi-	Quiz #3 Due: Friday by 11:59 PM
9: Mar. 10 th & 12 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language attitudes in the Language of Now 	Assigned readings in module	Discussion #3 Due: Friday by 11:59 PM
10: Mar. 17 th & 19 th	Spring break – No class		
11: Mar. 24 th & 26 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generational differences The rules of conversation 	Assigned readings in module	Discussion #4 Due: Friday by 11:59 PM
12: Mar. 31 st & Apr. 2 nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gricean Maxims Speech acts 	Assigned readings in module	Project #2; Discussion #5 Due: Friday by 11:59 PM
13: Apr. 7 th & 9 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memes and emojis 	Assigned readings in module	Discussion #6 Due: Friday by 11:59 PM
14: Apr. 14 th & 16 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discourse markers: punctuation, emojis, texting Project #3 assigned 	<i>Because Internet</i> by Gretchen McCulloch, Ch. 5 & 6	Discussion #7 Due: Friday by 11:59 PM
15: Apr. 21 st & 23 rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final project workshop Rough drafts 	PPT in Canvas	Discussion #8 Due: Friday by 11:59 PM
16: Apr. 28 th & 30 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final project presentations 		Final project (Project #3) Due in Canvas: Sunday by 11:59 PM

*Note: This course schedule is a living document and may be subject to change. I will inform you if changes are made.

Course Project Details

LING 2050 The Language of Now is in the core curriculum. The following are the signature assignments and corresponding rubrics:

- Signature Assignments aligned with LPC
- 4 Objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility
- Assignments will be assessed using the rubric developed by the Faculty Senate.

Project #1: Lexical Analysis in the Language of Now

Objectives: Critical Thinking and Communication ([UNT core rubrics](#))

1. Students will collect 4 samples of language from one general source, e.g., social media, online forums, gaming.
2. Students will provide contextualized samples to support their analysis.
3. Students will analyze above samples from a historical and linguistic perspective:
 - Historical: When was the first usage? How has the meaning changed and evolved over time?
 - Linguistic analysis
 - Phonological: Analyze the sounds, pattern of sounds in the lexical item or phrase
 - Morphological: Analyze the word formation process/processes
 - Syntactic: Analyze the lexical category (parts of speech: noun, verb, adjective, adverb) and include information about any change occurring in this area, e.g. "favorite" can be used as a verb, but historically, it has been a noun.
 - Semantic: Has the word undergone semantic shift? If so, what kind? Describe in detail.
 - Is this lexical item/phrase only written? If so, describe.
 - Is it written and spoken? If so, describe.
 - Has the pronunciation changed, e.g. lol can be pronounced as a word, 'lol.'
 - Include a glossary with multiple definitions of each lexical item.
 - You should have at least 3 definitions, possibly more:
 1. old meaning
 2. current meaning
 3. your meaning

4. Students will draw conclusions about the current usage of their samples as well as the change that is occurring now. Make predictions about how this lexical item might change next. Further, include discussion about what is propelling the change.
5. Students will submit their projects on Canvas. Projects can be in the following forms: PPT or Prezi presentation. You may include videos, GIFs, mp3 files, and screenshots in your project.
6. Be sure to redact names and photos.

Project #2: Language Attitudes in the Language of Now: A Field Study

Objective: Social Responsibility ([UNT core rubrics](#))

Podcast or blog: you will create a podcast or blog that confronts language attitudes in the Language of Now.

1. You will interview 4 people whose backgrounds are substantially different from your own. Do not include family members or close friends. Represent a diverse group of people, e.g. different age groups, educational and professional backgrounds, people from different regions of the country as well as international students/people.
2. To guide the questions, you will use data from the first project as well as class lectures, readings, and discussions about language attitudes in the Language of Now, e.g. the stereotype that texting and direct messaging are eroding the language.
3. You will include 8-10 open-ended questions (avoid Yes/No questions); include demographic information for each consultant.
4. After you conduct the interviews, you will analyze your results. Compare and contrast your consultants' responses, analyzing possible reasons for the similarities and differences. Try to identify bias and stereotypes, not only those from the consultants but your own as well.
5. Take your results and analysis and put them into a blog or podcast. Be sure to redact your consultants' names. We can publish these in Canvas, and we will share them with the entire class.

Project #3: Discourse Analysis & Language Variation in the Language of Now

Objectives: Critical Thinking and Personal Responsibility ([UNT core rubrics](#))

For this paper, you will draw from your knowledge and understanding of linguistic variation and how LON items work. You will identify five (4) items that you think are notable and prominent in the English language right now and examine whether or not they are in variation among speakers / users with different social backgrounds.

1. Perform a linguistic analysis of each LON item.
2. Include at least two different sources in which language variation will play a significant role in language variation and use of your LON items, e.g. Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Reddit, YouTube, television shows, news media, etc.
3. For each LON item, collect samples of posts with your LON items and analyze each sample for linguistic variation.
4. For each sample, include an analysis of the message the LON item conveys within its discourse context and how it might be taken up. What kind of social work is the speaker / user doing by using this LON item in this particular context? Is the LON item positive or solidarity-seeking? If so, what groups or individuals are involved?
5. Conclude with a summary of your findings about the current social meanings, uses, and linguistic variation of your LON items. Reflect on your attitudes toward and whether or not you use these LON items and the reasons. Make predictions with justifications for the future directions that your LON items will take. Will they continue to be relevant to society or will they be short-lived?
6. This will be 6-8 page paper.

This signature assignment will be assessed using the UNT Core rubrics for Personal Responsibility and Critical Thinking.