

WLLC 3020 Linguistic Landscapes in the USA

Syllabus

Instructor Information

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Description

Exploration and analysis of cultural, historical, political, and social dimensions of language use, language contact, and multilingualism in a range of linguistic landscapes in American contexts.

- Taught in English
- No prerequisites
- Advanced elective (**depending on your program and your degree plan—see an advisor**)
- CLASS Distribution Requirement – Cultural Diversity & Global Issues

Course Objectives

- 1) Evaluate and illustrate how language shapes the human condition and human experiences.
- 2) Identify key cultural references and symbols in linguistic landscapes.
- 3) Compare linguistic landscapes in similar and dissimilar contexts.
- 4) Locate and evaluate relevant information and resources.

Additional Objectives

There are three additional objectives for this course that are directly related to the Cultural Diversity and Global Issues category of the CLASS Distribution Requirement.

- 1) Cultural heritage – Students identify the origins, influences, and limits of their own cultural heritage(s).
- 2) Different perspectives and experiences – Students demonstrate the ability to learn from and empathize with perspectives and experiences different from one's own.
- 3) Ethical responsibilities – Students explain the reasoning for individual ethical responsibilities within worldwide systems.

Learning Modules

- Modules 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 focus on reading linguistic landscape research and analyzing linguistic landscapes using the instructor's corpus of linguistic landscape photos.
- Modules 4, 6, and 8 allow students to work on a linguistic landscape project in three phases. Each of these modules involves consultation with the instructor.

Module	Focus	Weeks
1	Overview of the linguistic landscape	1-2
2	Cultural diversity, languages, and multilingual spaces	3-4
3	Neighborhoods and groups (cohesion, diversity, resistance, change)	5-6
4	Project, Phase 1 – Planning and reading; consultation	7-8
5	Politics and religion in the linguistic landscape	9-10
6	Project, Phase 2 – Data collection and writing; consultation	11-12
7	Product packaging as linguistic landscape	13-14
8	Project, Phase 3 – Final phase of the project; consultation	15

Module 1 – What is the linguistic landscape?

This module serves as an introduction to the linguistic landscape as an area of exploration and inquiry. In addition to the readings listed below, we will use photos of linguistic landscape items in the USA from the instructor's corpus so that you can gain experience analyzing the linguistic landscape. **Some of the items listed below might be used as required readings.**

- Gorter, D. 2006. Introduction: The study of the linguistic landscape as a new approach to multilingualism. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 3(1), 1-6.
- Gorter, D. (2018). Methods and techniques for linguistic landscape research: About definitions, core issues and technological innovations. In M. Pütz & N. Mundt (Eds.), *Expanding the linguistic landscape: Linguistic diversity, multimodality and the use of space as a semiotic resource* (pp. 38-57). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788922166-005>
- Landry, R., & Bourhis, R. (1997). Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 16(1), 23–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X970161002>
- Shohamy, E. (2018). Linguistic landscape after a decade: An overview of themes, debates and future directions. In M. Pütz & N. Mundt (Eds.), *Expanding the linguistic landscape: Linguistic diversity, multimodality and the use of space as a semiotic resource* (pp. 25-37). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788922166-004>

Module 2 – Cultures, Languages, and Multilingual Spaces

This module provides an overview of people who live in the USA, the languages that they speak, and the range of cultural heritages that they represent. In addition to the readings and resources listed below, we will use photos of linguistic landscape items in the USA from my own corpus so that you can gain experience analyzing the linguistic landscape. **Some of the items listed below might be used as required readings.**

- American Bar Association. (no date). Celebrating Diversity [[website](#)].
- Bureau of Indian Affairs. (2023). *Native language revitalization: Literature review*. [[PDF file](#)]
- Campos, A. (2021). What's the difference between Hispanic, Latino and Latinx? On navigating identity, language and community from a scholarly and first-person perspective [[website](#)]. University of California.
- Dietrich, S., & Hernandez, E. (2012). *What languages do we speak in the United States?* [[webpage](#)]. United States Census Bureau.
- Camara, B. 2006. Appendix F: Geographic Names. In L. HaySmith, F. L. Klasner, S. H. Stephens, & G. H. Discus. *Pacific Island Network vital signs monitoring plan*. Natural Resource Report NPS/PACN/NRR—2006/003. National Park Service. Fort Collins, Colorado. [[PDF file](#)]
- Hawaiian Board on Geographic Names [[PDF file](#)]. *Guidelines for Hawaiian Geographic Names*.
- Lopez, M. H., Krogstad, J. M., & Passel, J. F. (2023). Who is Hispanic? [[website](#)]. Pew Research Center.
- National Museum of the American Indian. (2020). *Native words, native warriors* [[website](#)].
- Perley, B. (2022). Working toward language justice. *American Indian* [magazine of Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian], 23(2). [[website](#)]
- Train, R. W. (2016). Connecting visual presents to archival pasts in multilingual California: Towards historical depth in Linguistic Landscape. *Linguistic Landscape*, 2(3), 223-246.
- University of Hawaii. *Hawaiian Language Considerations* [[website](#)].

Module 3 – Neighborhoods and Groups

This module focuses on the neighborhood as a cultural construct and immigration as a geographic, political, and social phenomenon. In addition to the readings and resources listed below, we will use photos of linguistic landscape items in the USA from my own corpus so that you can gain experience analyzing the linguistic landscape. For this module, I have selected photos of linguistic landscape items in neighborhoods/spaces with residents who have (more or less) similar cultural heritages or some other type of shared interests and/or values. **Some of the items listed below might be used as required readings.**

- Alhaider, S. M. (2023). Linguistic landscape of Arabs in New York City: Application of a geosemiotics analysis. *International Journal of Geo-Information*, 12(5). [[website](#)]
- Buck, S. (2019, November 15). Overlooked no more: Mitsuye Endo, a name linked to justice for Japanese-Americans. *The New York Times*. [[website](#)]
- Carr, C., Rochelle, J., & Kim, J. Y. (2024). A framework for measuring language representation in the linguistic landscape: The case of Los Angeles Koreatown. In Prieto, C. L., & González Alba, A. (Eds.), *Digital flux, linguistic justice and minoritized languages* (pp. 173-194). De Gruyter. [[website](#)]

- Hassa, S., & Krajcik, C. (2016). "Un peso, mami!" Linguistic landscape and transnationalism discourses in Washington Heights, New York City. *Linguistic Landscape*, 2(2), 157-181. <https://doi-org.libproxy.library.unt.edu/10.1075/ll.2.2.03has>
- Lyons, K., & Rodríguez-Ordóñez, I. (2015). Public legacies: Spanish-English (in)authenticity in the linguistic landscape of Pilsen, Chicago. *Penn Working Papers in Linguistics* [University of Pennsylvania], 21(2). <https://repository.upenn.edu/entities/publication/2a1a52da-dcfc-4e8b-8e06-f64f3a21cae2>
- Lyons, K., & Rodríguez-Ordóñez, I. (2017). Quantifying the linguistic landscape: A study of Spanish-English variation in Pilsen, Chicago. *Spanish in Context*, 14(3), 329-362. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sic.14.3.01lyo>
- Public Broadcasting Service (KQED). (no date). *San Francisco Neighborhoods: Chinatown* [website]. <https://www.pbs.org/kqed/chinatown/index.html>
- Public Broadcasting Service (KQED). (no date). *San Francisco Neighborhoods: The Castro* [website]. <https://www.kqed.org/w/hood/castro/index.html>
- Public Broadcasting Service (KQED). (no date). *San Francisco Neighborhoods: The Fillmore* [website]. <https://www.pbs.org/kqed/fillmore/index.html>

Resistance and change in the linguistic landscape

This module also focuses on a range of ways in which symbols (including objects, shapes, and words) are used to demonstrate resistance and change as well as resistance to change.

In addition to the readings and resources listed below, we will use photos of linguistic landscape items in the USA from the instructor's corpus so that you can gain experience analyzing the linguistic landscape.

An article about the linguistic landscape of the Marshall Islands is included in this module because the Marshall Islands have a unique type of relationship with the US government. The Marshall Islands were under trusteeship of the USA following World War II, then they signed a Compact of Free Association with the USA in 1983, then they gained independence in 1986.¹

For the hands-on analysis in this module, we will take a close look at my fieldwork in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois (i.e., resistance to gentrification) and the River East neighborhood of Fort Worth, Texas (i.e., completed/expanding gentrification). **Some of the items listed below might be used as required readings.**

- Buchstaller, I., & Alvanides, S. (2017). Mapping the linguistic landscapes of the Marshall Islands. *Journal of Linguistic Geography*, 5(2), 67-85. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jlg.2017.4>
- Hanauer, D.I. (2015). Occupy Baltimore: A linguistic landscape analysis of participatory social contestation in an American city. In R. Rubdy, & S. B. Said (Eds.). *Conflict, exclusion and dissent in the Linguistic Landscape: Language and globalization* (pp. 207-222). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137426284_10
- Castro Font, S. I. (2023). Hipsters and drunks, tourists and locals: Value production and ideological contestation in Calle Loíza [San Juan, Puerto Rico]. *Linguistic Landscape*, 9(3), 247-267.

¹ <https://www.state.gov/countries-areas/marshall-islands/>

Module 4—Project, Phase 1 (reading and planning)

During this phase of the project, reading is the primary focus. Reading will allow you to narrow down a topic for the project. You will need to select one aspect of the linguistic landscape that you want to explore in a clearly defined area/space. You will learn how to select an area/space and how to go about doing a linguistic landscape analysis during the first three modules of this course. You will need to supplement what you learn with additional reading and consultation with the instructor. Below are some ideas for the type of area/space you can choose.

- Your current neighborhood
- A neighborhood in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex that you want to explore
- The neighborhood where you grew up
- UNT campus

Module 5 – Politics and religion in the linguistic landscape

This module focuses on two dimensions of society that can be confusing, fascinating, interesting, and strange—all at the same time. Even if these are topics that many people like to avoid in certain circumstances, politics and religion are fundamental parts of society, and the classroom is a context where these topics can be analyzed, discussed, and explored from different perspectives and in different ways. In addition to the readings listed below, we will use photos of linguistic landscape items in the USA from my own corpus so that you can gain experience analyzing the linguistic landscape. **Some of the items listed below might be used as required readings.**

- Jenks, C. (2018). Meat, guns, and God: Expressions of nationalism in rural America. *Linguistic Landscape*, 4(1), 53-71. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.17025.jen>
- Yochim, A. (2020). The changing landscape of unofficial signage in a U.S. refugee relocation city. *Linguistic Landscape*, 6(3), 237-264.

Module 6 – Project, Phase 2 (data collection)

For this phase of the project, you will need to take outdoor photos of the area/space that you have chosen for your project. In most cases, you do not need permission to take photos in public areas/spaces, but you are expected to **respect the privacy of the people who happen to be in the area/space while you are there taking photos.**

Module 7 – Product packaging as linguistic landscape

This module emphasizes hands-on analysis of photos of product packaging from the instructor's own corpus of photos. We will analyze product packaging for a wide range of beverages and foods: chocolate, coffee, dairy, fruit, meat, snacks, tea, and vegetables. There are no required readings for this module, but a list of recommended readings will be provided based on students' interests.

Module 8 – Project, phase 3 (Submit presentation)

A final consultation with the instructor is recommended before you submit your presentation.

Graded Assignments

Canvas Discussion Board 1 (30 points, 6% of course grade)	Week 1
Linguistic Landscape Report 1 (30 points, 6% of course grade)	Week 2
Linguistic Landscape Report 2 (30 points, 6% of course grade)	Week 3
Linguistic Landscape Report 3 (30 points, 6% of course grade)	Week 4
Linguistic Landscape Report 4 (30 points, 6% of course grade)	Week 5
Linguistic Landscape Report 5 (30 points, 6% of course grade)	Week 6
Linguistic Landscape Quiz 1 (30 points, 6% of course grade)	Week 7
Project Report 1 (20 points, 5% of course grade)	Week 8
Linguistic Landscape Report 6 (30 points, 6% of course grade)	Week 9
Linguistic Landscape Report 7 (30 points, 6% of course grade)	Week 10
Discussion Board 2 (30 points, 6% of course grade)	Week 11
Project Report 2 (20 points, 5% of course grade)	Week 12
Linguistic Landscape Report 8 (30 points, 6% of course grade)	Week 13
Linguistic Landscape Quiz 2 (30 points, 6% of course grade)	Week 14
Project (100 points, 20% of course grade)	Week 15

For each LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE REPORT assignment, you will write at least two full pages (double-spaced lines; 12-pt. font; 1-in. margins on all sides) or submit an audio recording of at least 4 full minutes in length. Additional instructions and an evaluation rubric are provided in Canvas.

Canvas Discussion Board assignments allow you to share materials and information with the other members of the class.

Instructions for the LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE PROJECT are provided in Canvas. This project is a way for you to demonstrate that you are able to use what you learn in this course to develop and complete a project of your own.

There is no final exam in this course.

Grading Scale

270-300 points, A

240-269 points, B

210-239 points, C

180-209 points, D

0-179 points, F

Late Work

No late work will be accepted under normal circumstances. If you have an unplanned emergency, I will work with you to determine an acceptable due date, and we will consult with the Office of the Dean of Students, if necessary.

It is your responsibility to notify me at least one week in advance if you believe you have a valid reason for needing a new due date (e.g., jury duty, military service). If you do not contact me in advance regarding an event that has been scheduled, I will not give you a new due date.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

In this course, you are encouraged to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) when you believe it is appropriate. The use of AI is not required, and the use of AI is not prohibited. If you decide that AI can/should be used for a particular task, then go ahead and use it.

When you use AI, you are required to include a statement (audio or written) in the assignment explaining how you used AI. You will not be penalized for using AI; you will not be penalized for not using AI. However, if you use AI and do not acknowledge/explain your use of AI, you will not be eligible for more than 50% of the points allotted to that assignment. That being said, I will not actively pursue cases of possible non-acknowledgment. I just want you to be aware that you should do the responsible thing and acknowledge/explain how you used AI (if you used AI).

Accommodations

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. To request accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) by completing an application for services and providing documentation to verify your eligibility each semester. Once your eligibility is confirmed, you may request your letter of accommodation. ODA will then email your faculty a letter of reasonable accommodation, initiating a private discussion about your specific needs in the course.

You can request accommodations at any time, but it's important to provide ODA notice to your faculty as early as possible in the semester to avoid delays in implementation. Keep in mind that you must obtain a new letter of accommodation for each semester and meet with each faculty member before accommodations can be implemented in each class. You are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding your accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty have the authority to ask you to discuss your letter during their designated office hours to protect your privacy. For more information and to access resources that can support your needs, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>).

Technology Requirement

This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System and [faculty member to include other required equipment or software such as a webcam, microphone, Adobe Photoshop, etc.]. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](https://online.unt.edu/learn) (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>).