

FALL 2026

LING 4010.002: LANGUAGE VARIATION (HONORS) T/TH 11:10-12:30 Art 226

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Office Hours: Tues. 12:30-1:30 in LANG 409G and by appointment on Zoom

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we examine language as it relates to and as it functions in society. In particular, we look at how language establishes social relationships and reflects social processes, at the purposes for which language is used, at the sources of linguistic variation, at the mechanisms of linguistic change, and at how change spreads through a population. Students will learn the methods used by variationists to gather data and the tools used to analyze linguistic variation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

****The prerequisite for this course is LING 3070 or an equivalent, approved course from another university.**

- Attendance is required. Classes will combine both lecture and discussion, and you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. If you are too ill to come to class, you must make every effort to contact the professor before class to let them know.
- All students are responsible for any missed material or announcements. If you do happen to miss a class, please get the notes and/or other materials from a classmate, then contact the professor with any questions. If you know you will need to miss several classes due to health reasons or a university approved event, please talk to your professor during the first two weeks of class to make arrangement for those days. You will need to submit a note from your physician for all health-related absences.
- All assigned work should be completed on time. If you miss class the day an assignment is due, you should submit your assignment before class. Late assignments will be graded down 10 points each day they are late.
- Focus 100% on the class and refrain from doing other work or using cell phones or other electronics. It is disruptive for the instructor and your fellow classmates.

REQUIRED TEXT

Meyerhoff, Miriam. (2018) *Introducing Sociolinguistics 3rd Edition*. London and New York: Routledge.

****Additional readings will come from articles and videos uploaded to Canvas in weekly modules. Students are expected to complete all reading and/or other materials (e.g., podcasts, videos) at the beginning of each weekly module.**

Course grades will be determined from the following:

1. ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION (10%)

Much of what you will learn this semester will come from in-class discussions and presentations. Therefore, attendance is required.

2. IN-CLASS READING QUIZZES (40%)

These are short quizzes based on reading assignments or other class assignments.

3. MIDTERM EXAM (20%)**4. SEMESTER PROJECT (15%)**

Honors students will work on a short project throughout the semester using data from recorded speech. This will include regular meetings where students will learn the process of data extraction and coding, descriptive and statistical analysis, and how to interpret results. Students will present their work to the class during the last week of the semester.

5. DEBATE AND SUMMARY (15%)

Students will be assigned to one of two groups to debate an issue covered during the semester. The debate will be during the last week of the semester, but students will need to begin preparing after midterm. Specific details on the topic and format will be provided in class.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to revision because of scheduling)

Readings are listed under the dates that they will be discussed in class. Make sure to have each reading completed for class on the date listed. Additional reading assignments may be added during the semester.

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignment
Week 1: Aug. 18 & 20	Course overview; What is Sociolinguistics?	IS Chap. 1. Start reading IS Chap. 2	Listen to “Linguistic Pride and Prejudice,” “Why Does American English Matter?” (Canvas)
Week 2: Aug. 25 & 27	Variation and Language – Dialect Geography	IS Chap. 2	
Week 3: Sept. 1 & 3	Variation and Language – Labov	IS Chap. 2	
Week 4: Sept. 8 & 10	Variation and Style	IS Chap. 3	
Week 5: Sept. 15 & 17	Variation and Style cont.		
Week 6: Sept. 22 & 24	Language Attitudes/Language Regard	IS Chap. 4; Cukor-Avila “A variationist approach to language regard”; Hall-Lew & Stephens “Country talk”	
Week 7: Sept. 29 & Oct. 1	Multilingualism and Language Choice	IS Chap. 6; Carter & D’Alessandro Meril “Spanish-influenced lexical phenomena in emerging Miami English”	
Week 8: Oct. 6 & 8	Midterm Review and Exam		
Week 9: Oct. 13 & 15	Real and Apparent Time	IS Chap. 7; Bailey & Cukor-Avila “Approaches to time in historical sociolinguistics”	

Week 10: Oct. 20 & 22	Social Class	IS Chap. 8	
Week 11: Oct. 27 & 29	Social Networks and Communities of Practice	IS Chap. 9	
Week 12: Nov. 3 & 5	Other Factors in Variation Studies	IS Chap. 10	
Week 13: Nov 10 & 12	Language Contact	IS Chap. 11	
Week 14: Nov. 17 & 19	Transmission, Diffusion, Actuation	TBD	Debate prep
Week 15: Nov. 24 & 26	No class – Thanksgiving break		Debate prep
Week 16: Dec. 1 & 3	Group Debate; Class wrap-up		

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

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 Dean of Students 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. Information about The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

Cell phone use is not allowed in class. Students must silence their phones and put them away during class time. Any student found using a phone in class for non-class related use will be asked to leave the class. If there is a reason to have your phone out during class you must clear this with the professor before the start of class.

Laptops and tablets may only be used for class-related purposes. Recent research has shown that students retain material much better if they take notes with a pen and paper and not on their computers <http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away> I encourage you to follow this practice. Students who choose to use their laptops or tablets to work on assignments for other classes, check email, social media, surf the web, send text messages, or other non-class activities will be asked to leave the class.

GENAI USE

In this course, I want you to engage deeply with the materials and develop your own critical thinking and writing skills. For this reason, the use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools e.g., Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini is **NOT** permitted for any graded assignments. While these tools can be helpful in some contexts, they do not align with our goal of fostering the development of your independent thinking. Using GenAI to complete any part of an assignment, exam, or coursework will be considered a violation of academic integrity, as it prevents the development of your own skills, and will be addressed according to the [Student Academic Integrity policy \(https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003).

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND INTEGRITY

It is your responsibility to become familiar with UNT's Policy of Academic Dishonesty. The full policy can be found [here](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>). This policy defines the following forms of academic dishonesty:

- **Cheating:** Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
- **Plagiarism:** The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgement.
- **Fabrication:** Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- **Facilitating academic dishonesty:** Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity.

If any course material is submitted that violates this policy of academic dishonesty, the assignment will receive a grade of F, and the student may receive a failing grade for the entire course; appropriate judicial action will be filed. This action includes a report of academic misconduct to the Office of Academic Integrity and possible dismissal from The University of North Texas. There are no first-offense warnings regarding plagiarism.

PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION (POLICY 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES

ODA policy – *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.*

In accordance with the terms and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, we will cooperate with the Office of Disability Accommodation to accommodate reasonably qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you will require accommodation, please advise the professor of your needs in writing no later than the end of the second week of the semester. Essential competencies for this course include the ability to:

- read and synthesize research articles.
- use an audio and/or video recorder.
- use a computer with various word processing, e-mail, transcription, and graphics software applications.
- speak in front of the class and use multimedia to support the presentation.

ADA Policy

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>).

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. UNT's Dean of Students' [website](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/dean-of-students) offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/dean-of-students>).