LING 3040 – POLITICS OF LANGUAGE
FALL 2020
ZOOM 11:00-12:20

Dr. Patricia Cukor-Avila
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Hours: Zoom by appointment

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Course Overview
This course will explore language rights and relate them to human rights in general, surveying language conflicts worldwide between those trying to secure and those trying to deny language rights. An understanding of linguistic conflict and competition requires a basic understanding of linguistics, and by using linguistics to understand the systematicity and value of language, we can identify how popular ideas about language are often not merely misinformed but also misleading – a reflection of ideological interests rather than scientifically based claims. Accordingly, the course will cover:

- a non-technical introduction to language structure and the mechanics of linguistic conflict
- the role of language in the formation of personal, cultural, and national identity
- an overview of theories of ethnicity and theories of ethnic conflict
- an informal typology of language conflicts
- discussions of language vitality, revival, planning, policy, and rights

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain how language is a key symbol of identity and resource for cultural maintenance
- Discuss how linguistic differences can result in political and personal conflict
- Identify different cultural and moral values that underlie debates about language conflicts and rights
- Discover sources of information about these ideological conflicts and evaluate them for credibility, reliability, bias, and currency
- Discuss language rights struggles in the larger context of human rights issues across the world
- Apply linguistic concepts to analyses of language rights cases

Course Requirements
Course grades will be determined from the following:

1. **Class Participation/Required Discussion Posts on Canvas (25%)**
   Class Participation: Much of what you will learn in this class will come from class interactions, discussions, and presentations. Therefore, attendance is required. If you know of any circumstance that will cause you to miss class please let me know in advance so we can make any arrangements necessary. If you are too ill to come to class,
you must contact either Kristy or me before class to let us know. For more information, please refer to the full Attendance Policy below.

**Discussion posts:** You are required to submit a question or comment (minimum 200 words) each week PRIOR to the lecture, based on the readings for that day. Your comments should make insightful points or critiques or raise thought-provoking questions. I may select some of your comments/questions to include in our class discussion. You must post your comments/questions to Canvas by 9:00pm on the day before the lecture. Posts that are fewer than 200 words or that are late will receive 50% credit. Posts that are more than 24 hrs. late will receive no credit.

2. **Journal Assignments (20%)**
   These are 2-3 page observations on some aspect of language related to our readings and class discussions. Your **FIRST** journal assignment should be introspective. You should reflect upon your own experiences, recent or past, and report what you remember and what you learned from them. Your **SECOND** journal assignment will be outwardly focused. You will observe linguistic interactions between yourself and others, between those around you, or from your observations of radio, television, and newspapers, and you will report what you observe.

   In writing your observations, you should reflect on the cultural and moral values that underlie the situations and issues that you are reporting and reflecting on. You will need to articulate why and in what ways community values, ethics, and notions of social responsibility matter to the issue at hand, and you should consider how values shape personal and community ethics and decision-making.

3. **Data Mining Assignments (20%)**
   You will complete two data mining assignments to help you prepare for your Case Study Project and Presentation. These assignments will teach you to find sources of information appropriate to an issue, to evaluate information and information sources on the basis of credibility, reliability, bias, and currency, and to effectively report on information collected and evaluated in this manner.

   For each of these two assignments, you will need to find two articles relevant to your topic. One article should be “objective” (e.g., news articles, academic journal articles, etc.) and one should be polemical (e.g., advocacy websites, opinion columns, official government websites, etc.). For instance, if your topic is the language conflict between Slovakia and that country’s Hungarian minority, you might find a news story about the imposition of Slovak as an official language upon the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, and also find an official Hungarian government reaction to this situation.

   Each assignment should be a 2-3 page report on what you have found. The report should include the following information for each article:

   - a summary of the content (250-500 words each)
   - an evaluation of the source (250 words giving information about the author; e.g., what is their background and expertise, what is their agenda, how current is the information presented, what sources do they cite, how much of the piece
is presented as fact and how much is presented as opinion, who is the intended audience, etc.)

- proper citation: title, author, source, and date
- a working URL (must be a URL that will allow anyone to click through to the article itself)

4. **Semester Project in lieu of final exam (35%)**
   This is a case study about a language conflict. Each project will involve completing a Language Conflict Project template (available on Canvas) as part of your written report and a 10-15 minute PowerPoint presentation of your project.

   You will also upload your PowerPoint presentations to the Discussion board so that others in the class can learn about your research. You will have the opportunity to make comments and ask questions about the research.

5. **Extra Credit (5%)**
   Students who choose to complete this assignment will research and report on the origins and meanings of their own given and family names, and on the origins and meanings of their parents’ given and family names. **The report should be at least two pages, and not more than three.**

All completed assignments should be uploaded to Canvas

**Required Text and Other Reading**

All other course readings and podcast and video links will be uploaded to Canvas. Podcast and video URLs are also available on the course syllabus.

**Course and Reading Schedule**
The schedule for all readings and assignments will be available on Canvas.

**Assignment Submission and Grading Academic Dishonesty and Integrity**
It is your responsibility to become familiar with UNT’s Policy of Academic Dishonesty. The full policy can be found at [http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf](http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf)

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.**

**Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all synchronous Zoom meetings listed on the course syllabus and to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Log in to the class on time for the duration of the class (unless previously arranged with me or your TA).
- Make every effort to get to log in to the class on time. It is important that you don’t arrive late or leave early.
- Focus 100% on the class and refrain from doing other work or using cell phones or other electronics during Zoom meetings. It is disruptive for the instructor and your fellow classmates!
- The synchronous Zoom meetings are substituting for face-to-face interaction, so this means that students are expected to keep their video on (unmuted) unless they have made prior arrangements (due to special circumstances) with me or your TA.

**COVID-19 Impact on Attendance**

While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me or your TA if you are unable to attend Zoom meetings because you are ill, or unable to attend due to a related issue regarding COVID-19. It is important that you communicate with me or your TA prior to being absent so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.

If you are experiencing any [symptoms of COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892 or COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

**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 are using their laptops or tablets to check email, Facebook, surf the web, send text messages, or other non-class activities will be asked to leave the class.

**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.
- interact with subjects in a professional and ethical manner.
- 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.

**Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, and Assault**

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 offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT’s Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students’ office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.