LING 4120 Migration and Language Contact

*Topic: Gypsy Language and Culture*

**Instructor:** Dr. Sadaf Munshi (Email: sadaf.munshi@unt.edu)
**Class meets:** T/Th 12.30-1.50pm in ENV 391
**Office Hours:** By appointment.

**Course Description**
The Roma, more popularly known as “Gypsies”, have often been described as “peripatetics” (i.e., nomads and travelers) in the western civilization. Usually associated with stereotypical images such as fortune-telling, black-magic, theft and robbery, these “Gypsies” have been treated as the lowest and most stigmatized part of the social stratum in Europe. The aim of this course is to present the historical, linguistic, and cultural origins of the Roma people. Based on the social and linguistic evidence available to us, we will discuss various theories relating to their migration from the Indian subcontinent and the subsequent migrations into Europe. We will also examine the five and a half centuries of slavery, the Gypsy Holocaust (“Porrajmos”), their migration into and out of Europe, and their current struggle for civil and political rights. The two main components of the Romani studies to be dealt with in this course are: the socio-cultural construction of the “Gypsies”, and the historical development of the Romani language. The course will present a discussion of the different events and theories relating to the Roma exodus out of India in the 11th century and familiarize the students with their past and present situation in the world. We will examine various aspects of the sociology of this diaspora population - the Indian roots of their language and culture, their cuisine and their occupation, external linguistic and cultural influences, and their interaction with the non-Gypsy (“gadže”) world.

**Course Requirements and Grading Policy**
The course requirements are divided into three main components:

(a) Assignments (20%)
We will be watching a series of documentary films in class. After each documentary screening, students will write a one-page summary/critique of the film. Four such summaries/critiques will be mandatory.

(b) Quizzes/Exercises (20%)
Students will be graded for 4 in-class quizzes/exercises based on assigned topics covered in the class.

(c) Paper (50%)
Students will work on a research topic of their choice. Instructions and a list of suggested/possible topics will be posted on Canvas.

(d) Attendance and Participation (10%)
Your attendance and participation in class activities and discussions is very important. Participation includes attending meetings/events related to the course.
as recommended by the instructor. Regular and consistent attendance is **required** to earn full credit for the course. DO NOT miss a class unless you have a genuine excuse to do so. Unexcused absences will be penalized. If you have 3-7 unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered by one letter grade. If you have 8 or more unexcused absences, you will receive an F. I generally notice students who come to class and nap, surf the web, play video games in class, chat with their friends on cell phones, and so forth. Your grades will be affected by your attendance and how you conduct yourself when you attend. Students who have few absences, come to class prepared, and contribute regularly to discussion and in-class problem solving will be awarded full credit. Please switch off your cell phone or other electronic devices before class starts.

**Readings**

*Required*


*Other readings:*


Fraser, Angus. 1992. *The Gypsies*. Oxford (UK) & Cambridge (USA): Blackwell (Chapter 1, 2, and 3)


**Note:** Matras Yaron is available online at UNT’s Netlibrary.

**COURSE SCHEDULE** (Tentative)

**Week 1 & Week 2: Aug 28-30, Sept 4-6**

Introduction and Overview: History & theories of Origin

*Required readings:* Hancock (2003), Introduction (Pp. xvii-xxii) and Chapter 1

*Optional readings:* Fraser, Angus (1992): Chapter 1

*Video:* “Latcho Dromi”

**Week 3: Sept 11-13**

Language reconstruction and language classification: Overview

*Useful weblinks:*
Comparative method: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparative_method
Internal reconstruction: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internal_reconstruction

**Week 4: Sept 18-20**
Emigration and movements
   * Required readings: Hancock (2003): Chapter 2 and 3
   * Optional readings: Fraser Chapter 2 and 3

**Week 5 & 6: Sept 25-27, Oct. 2-4**
Language Contact: Basic concepts
   * Required readings: TBD

**Week 7: Oct. 9-11**
Topic: Reconstructing Romani history though language

**Week 8 & 9: Oct.16-18, Oct. 23-25**
Antigypsyism and Holocaust
   * **Video** “Porraimos: Europe’s Gypsies in the Holocaust”

**Week 10: Oct. 30-Nov. 1**
*Rromanija* and aspects of the “Gypsy Image”
   * Required readings: Hancock (2003): Chapter 6 – 11
   * **Video** “American Gypsy”

**Week 11 & 12: Nov. 6-8, Nov. 13-15**
Linguistic outcomes of contact
   * Reading: Matras, Chapter 8 and 9

**Week 13: Nov. 20** (THANKSGIVING WEEK)
   * **Video** Suspino ‘A cry for Roma’

**Week 14: Nov. 27-29**
Romani political struggle and their situation in the modern world
   * Reading: Hancock Chapter 12
   * **Video** “We have no war songs”
**Week 15: Dec. 4-6** (PRE-FINALS WEEK)
Course summary and wind up.

* Week 16: Final paper due