

Language Problems in a Multicultural Environment  
 English 5300-Section 1  
 Class # 354348  
 Fall 2009  
 Monday 6:30-9:20PM  
 Flowers Hall—G04

Instructor: Dr. Octavio Pimentel  
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Required Text

Leap, William L. and Tom Boellstorff, eds. *Speaking in Queer Tongues: Globalization and Gay Language*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2004.

Martinez, Glenn. *Mexican Americans and Language: Del Dicho al Hecho*. Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 2006

Smitherman, Geneva. *Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Urrieta, Luis Jr. *Working from Within: Chicana and Chicano Activist Educators in Whitestream Schools*. Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 2009.

Recommended Texts

Style manual appropriate to your major (MLA, APA, for example)  
 A writer's reference manual.

Course Description

This course addresses issues of power and diversity regarding racially minoritized groups and languages. This class takes a cultural studies approach to issues concerning language in the United States and the politics that surround them, with special attention given to the state of Texas. Students will be encouraged to use critical theories to examine and, in some cases, take social actions against current language issues that are common in the United States.

Furthermore this course provides an introduction to many of the prevalent issues in the language field. Special attention will be given to language policies, legislation, politics, and practice. This class will specifically examine language theories, philosophies of language, bilingual/multilingual politics, issues of power, the racialization of linguistic minorities, language and identity issues. This class will also look at how language is thought about, legislated, and treated in Texas communities and schools. Moreover, this course includes an ethnographic inquiry into the dynamics of language use in a linguistic minority community.

### Course Projects & Percentages

Discourse Analysis Paper	25 Points
Research Paper	50 Points
Poster Sessions	25 Points
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	100 Points Total

### Final grades will be determined in the following manner:

90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
Below 60%	F

### Brief Project Descriptions

- 1) Critical Discourse Analysis Paper—This critical review will allow you to analyze a movie of your choice. This paper will require that you examine the movies' assumptions, representations, biases, and/or stereotypes about race and language. The expectation is that you will employ some of the tools, frameworks, and historical narratives that we have discussed in the earlier sessions of this course. Generally, I want you to analyze the particular discourses in this movie and explain how they contribute to historical and ongoing discourses in other forms of media. I encourage you to view the movie and work on your analyses in groups. Every individual, however, needs to submit his or her own essay. The length should be 8 pages typed, double spaced pages. **This paper is due 10.19.09**
- 2) Research Paper—The research paper in this class is meant to develop your particular interests in the language field. This research paper will require the use of in-class readings, as well as other sources in the area of your research topic. This final paper must be an original paper that has not been submitted for another class. The length should be 8 pages typed, double spaced pages. **This paper is due 11.30.09**
- 3) Poster Session—In this presentation your group will present information regarding language minority problems in your community. How are minority languages being treated and acted upon in your community? Why is this so? For this presentation you will conduct a mini ethnography where you will collect materials that will support your claims in your poster session. **To be presented on 12.07.09**

### Course Policies

\*You must complete all projects to pass the course. Due dates are firm. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

### Attendance

\*You are expected to come to class every day. On your 2<sup>nd</sup> absent your final grade will be penalized 10%. On your 3<sup>rd</sup> absence you will automatically fail the class. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

\*I expect you to be on time for class; repeated tardies will be counted as absences. Ringing cell phones are also disruptive, so please make sure that ringers are in the "off" position before coming to class; repeated cell phone disruptions will negatively affect your class participation grade.

All projects must be word-processed and submitted in hardcopy along with all notes, rough drafts, feedback from others, and revised texts created along the way. (I may also request that you submit photocopies of any source material you use in your work.) Please keep a CD/Disk copy of all projects as a backup and for use in revision. All documents must be carefully edited and proofread to eliminate problems with grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

### Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is the use of another person's intellectual work—words, images, and ideas—without proper acknowledgment of the source. The English Department policy on plagiarism is as follows: "Any cases of verifiable plagiarism, whether deliberate or accidental, will result in a failing grade on the assignment and may result in a failing grade for first-year English." For further information about plagiarism, read pages 653-55 of *The Scott-Foresman Handbook*. Texas State also has a University-wide honor code, which appears in the University's official student handbook ([www.dos.txstate.edu/TxState-Handbook.html](http://www.dos.txstate.edu/TxState-Handbook.html)). The English Department expects all students to be familiar with the Honor Code and with the penalties for academic dishonesty at Texas State.

### Students with Special Needs

Students who require accommodations for successful completion of this course must notify both the TXSU Office of Disability Services and the instructor no later than the end of the first week of classes so that accommodations can be made. Your notification will remain confidential.

### Learning Outcomes.

The Department of English has adopted student learning outcomes for general education courses in writing and literature and for all degree programs in English. You will find these outcomes at [www.english.txstate.edu](http://www.english.txstate.edu) <<http://www.english.txstate.edu>> (under the "Student Resources" menu). Please review the outcomes for the course/program in which you are enrolled.

## Weekly Meetings

WEEK 1 (8.31.09—Labor Day)  
 Introductions. Syllabus

WEEK 2 (9.7.09)  
*No Class--LaborDay*

WEEK 3 (9.14.09)  
 Martinez (Chapters 1-4)

WEEK 4 (9.21.09)  
 Martinez (Chapters 5-7)

WEEK 5 (9.28.09)  
 Smitherman (Chapters 1-3)

WEEK 6 (10.5.09)  
 Smitherman (Chapters 4-7)  
 Pimentel and Velázquez (pgs. 1-18)

WEEK 7 (10.12.09)  
 Leap and Boellstorff (Introduction, Chapters 1-2)  
 Huckin (pgs. 1-11)

WEEK 8 (10.19.09)  
 Leap and Boellstorff (Chapters 3-4)  
 \*\*\***Discourse Paper Due**\*\*\*

WEEK 9 (10.26.09)  
 Leap and Boellstorff (Chapters 5-8)

WEEK 10 (11.2.09)  
*Conference-No Class*

WEEK 11 (11.9.09)  
 Leap and Boellstorff (Chapters 9-10)

WEEK 12 (11.16.09)  
 Urrieta (Chapters 1-2)

WEEK 13 (11.23.09)  
 Urrieta (Chapters 3-4)

WEEK 14 (11.30.09)  
 Urrieta (Chapters 5-6)  
 \*\*\***Research Paper Due**\*\*\*

WEEK 15 (12.7.09)  
 \*\*\***Poster Session Conference**\*\*\*