

**FRES 1020 / Language in Society / Fall 2010**  
20-616 / Tuesday / 9:30 – 10:45 / Park Hall / Room 0225

**Professor:** Professor Chad Howe  
**Office:** 370J Gilbert  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 to 12:15, or by appointment  
**Office Telephone:** (706) 583-0792  
**Email:** Use *eLearning Commons* (or, if necessary, [chowe@uga.edu](mailto:chowe@uga.edu))  
**URL for the course:** *eLearning Commons*: <http://elc.uga.edu/>

**Course Description:**

When asked to describe language, we typically want to know what words “mean”. In this course, we will explore what words “do” and how people use words to shape and make sense of the world around them. We will engage in an exploration of how language ties us together as members of a speech community and what the rules are that govern this complex interaction. As part of the course, we will be conducting language “fieldwork”, gathering language surveys in the local community and discussing current trends in (socio)linguistic research.

**Required Reading:**

- Reading materials will be distributed via *eLearning Commons*.

**Evaluation:**

The final grade will be based on class participation, two individual projects, and a group project (all with short presentations). There are no exams.

Attendance/Participation .....	20%
Linguistic “Show-and-Tell”(x3) .....	30%
1 <sup>st</sup> Project.....	10%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Project.....	20%
Group Project .....	20%

**Participation and Course Conduct:**

Being new to college, you will quickly learn that not all courses have the same atmosphere in terms of how you (i.e. the student) are to engage with the professor/instructor and your fellow students. For this course, you are encouraged/required to participate in all in-class and out-of-class discussions. Everyone in class speaks at least one language and at least a few dialects/registers; everyone will have something interesting to contribute. Your behavior concerning all classroom participants should be **respectful at all times**. Doing so will require that you (a) attend class, (b) listen in class (**instead of using your computer or cell phone**), and (c) be considerate of other people’s observations and opinions. Offensive and/or intolerant behavior is not acceptable and will result in an immediate exit from class. We will on occasion discuss some rather ‘taboo’ topics (e.g. swearing). Keep in mind that the point of these discussions is to create a constructive dialogue about issues of language use. **Active participation in class is required. Use of electronic devices such as laptops and cell phones is strictly prohibited. Continued use of these items in class will result in deduction of participation points.**

**Attendance:**

Attendance is required to all sessions. You’re allowed **one (1)** absence (excused or otherwise). I reserve the right to withdraw students with more than two absences.

**Academic Honesty:**

The University of Georgia has rules regarding what constitutes a lack of academic honesty, and it is the responsibility of each student to read and become familiar with said rules. In this class each student's work should be the product of his/her own individual efforts unless the assignment requires group work. Please consult the section "Policy and Documents" at <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/ahpd.htm> for more information.

**Students with disabilities:**

Access will be provided for people with disabilities. Please call Diane Shimkets at the Disability Resource Center (706-542-8719, [dshimket@uga.edu](mailto:dshimket@uga.edu)) for specific requests. The University of Georgia and the Department of Romance Languages are committed to providing access for all people with disabilities and will provide accommodations if notified.

**"Extra" Credit:**

... is not available.

**Withdrawals:**

The deadline for Withdrawals is Thursday, October 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Some useful language/linguistics resources for class:**

*A Way with Words*: <http://www.waywordradio.org>

The Language Log: <http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/>

*Fry's English Delight*: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b001v1k1>

Wordnik, A Dictionary of sorts: <http://www.wordnik.com/>

Urban Dictionary: <http://www.urbandictionary.com/>

The Visual Thesaurus: <http://www.visualthesaurus.com/>

The Eggecorn Database: <http://eggcorns.lascribe.net/>

Time Corpus: <http://corpus.byu.edu/time/>

Corpus of Contemporary American English: <http://www.americancorpus.org/>

Linguistic Atlas Projects: <http://us.english.uga.edu/>

Dawg Speak: <http://www.english.uga.edu/nhilton/DawgSpeak.html>

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**Weekly Schedule**

*(subject to change)*

<b>Week 1, August 17<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Introduction and welcome
<b>Week 2, August 24<sup>th</sup>:</b>	<b>DE</b> scription vs. <b>PRE</b> scription
<b>Week 3, August 31<sup>st</sup>:</b>	Quirks, quirks and more quirks (Part I) <b>Project #1 Due</b>
<b>Week 4, September 7<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Quirks, quirks and more quirks (Part II)
<b>Week 5, September 14<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Lexicography
<b>Week 6, September 21<sup>st</sup>:</b>	Movie = <i>Do You Speak American?</i>
<b>Week 7, September 28<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Language Variation
<b>Week 8, October 5<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Speech Communities
<b>Week 9, October 12<sup>th</sup>:</b>	<b>Presentations for Project #2</b>
<b>Week 10, October 19<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Gender and Language
<b>Week 11, October 26<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Read and Discuss Labov (1972)
<b>Week 12, November 2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	Animal Communication
<b>Week 13, November 9<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Movie = <i>The Linguists</i>
<b>Week 14, November 16<sup>th</sup>:</b>	<b>Group Presentations</b>
<b>Week 14, November 23<sup>th</sup>:</b>	<i>No Class: Thanksgiving Break</i>
<b>Week 15, November 30<sup>th</sup>:</b>	<b>Group Presentations</b> <b>Project #3 Due</b>
<b>Week 16, December 7<sup>th</sup>:</b>	<i>No Class</i>

**Comments on the Evaluation:**

The assignments in this course are designed to offer a low-impact introduction to the types of issues that are of interest to linguists, especially those who work on the interaction between grammar and society. I encourage you to use these tasks as an opportunity to be creative and to explore your interests in these topics.

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Linguistic "Show-and-Tell"(x3) .....	30%
1 <sup>st</sup> Project.....	10%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Project.....	20%
Group Project .....	20%

### 1. Linguistic “Show-and-Tell” (x3)

For this assignment, you will be divided alphabetically into three groups (i.e. S&T<sub>1</sub>, S&T<sub>2</sub>, and S&T<sub>3</sub>). Each week (more or less) the individual members of a particular group will offer brief comments on an ‘example’ of some linguistic interest that he or she has uncovered during the course of the week. For example, an episode of NBC's 30 Rock featured the following exchange between Brian, a recently hired ex-Wall Street intern, and Tracy Jordan (played by Tracy Morgan):

Brian: *Hey, look, we're all going out after work and I know you like to party. We'd be honored if you'd come **with**.*

Tracy: *You shouldn't end a sentence with a preposition **at**, but, yeah, I'm in.*

You can use almost any source of spoken or written language as a resource. I've provided a few links to language resources that should help you find something of interest. At least one of your Show-and-Tells must be a review of a website, podcast, or newspaper column discussing some aspect of language. Remember, *speech happens; capture it*.

### 2. 1<sup>st</sup> Project (individual)

For this first project, you will conduct a brief survey with one of your other professors or instructors here at UGA concerning grammatical ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’ when it comes to both written and oral assignments. You will ask your professors/instructors to give you a list of (i) 3 to 5 egregious errors that students make when writing (e.g. using “ain’t”) and (ii) 3 to 5 ‘minor’ offenses that the professor or instructor simply prefers not to see. You will compile these comments into a brief summary of the main points that will then be posted on the eLC site. These projects are due on **Tuesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>**. Also, you will be expected to provide a brief presentation in class summarizing your findings.

### 3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Project (individual)

The second project will cover the topic of language change using one of the corpus sources produced by Prof. Mark Davies (<http://view.byu.edu/>). Here we'll explore how words and phrases change over time and how these changes are represented in the materials provided by Prof. Davies. Additional details on this project will be provided in class. You will report your results via eLC on **Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>**. Again, you will be expected to provide a brief presentation in class summarizing your findings.

### 4. Group Project: Rapid and Anonymous Surveys

The final project will be done in groups (size and members to be decided). Each member is expected to contribute equally to the research and the presentation. We will first read William Labov's seminal 1972 study of post-vocalic (r) (as in *fourth floor*) in different department stores in New York. In your groups, you will choose a topic/variable of interest and design a Rapid and Anonymous survey to elicit instances of your variable. Your group will then conduct the surveys and prepare both a presentation and a written report of the results (3 to 5 pages, double-space, 1-inch margins). The final written reports will be due on the last day of class, **Tuesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>**.

#### Some sample projects:

1. *sneakers* vs. *tennis shoes*
2. Those News-Stand-Box-Dispenser-Thingies
3. *excuse me* vs. *hey (you)*
4. time telling: *quarter till* vs. *quarter of*
5. [pɪn] vs. [pɛn]
6. *Atlanta* vs. *Alana*