

ENGE 3690:
Language and Gender
Prof. Rowan Mackay

Course Description:

Identity influences our language and vice-versa, language influences our identity. Whether we like it or not, gender is a fundamental part of our identity formation. This course explores the relationship between gender and language from historical and theoretical perspectives, whilst highlighting the topical relevance of the gender/language dynamic at every turn, whether that is the #MeToo movement, the LGBTQ+ challenges to the linguistic status quo, the problem of toxic masculinity, or the intersecting role of gender in the BLM movement. Participants will be asked to reflect on their own knowledge and experiences to inform their study.

Learning Outcomes:

This course will require you to:

- Demonstrate your understanding of (1) the major approaches to gender and language; (2) various ways people develop and use language differently, depending on their gender identities, and (3) importance of the relationship between linguistic and social variables in the study of gender and language;
- Use and explain key concepts and terms appropriately;
- Identify, describe/explain, and apply key sociolinguistic theories, approaches, and researchers;
- Apply sociolinguistic and discourse analysis knowledge to analyse same-sex and mixed-sex verbal and non-verbal behaviours on such areas as “women’s” language, taboo language, or politeness;
- Recognize, understand, and communicate to others how gender and language may influence language use in different situations and among different speakers (e.g., public and private discourse, interpersonal vs. group discourse, dominant-subordinate discourse at home or in the workplace, couple talk, children at play interaction, mixed talk in female/male dominated professions, etc.) around you, especially in Hong Kong.

Learning Activities: A variety of learning activities will be employed in this course. Lectures will be a combination of presentation of course content, interactive tasks (individual, pair, or group) and discussions.

Assessment (tbc):

1. Attendance* (lectures and tutorials) 10%
2. Mid-term paper 30%
3. Presentation of a selected article 20%
4. Term paper 40%

* Low attendance in tutorials and lectures will negatively affect your overall coursework grade.

Required Materials:

TBC

Course Grade Descriptors:

Grade A / Excellent: Outstanding performance on ALL learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study. The 'A' grade should be reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students and are expected to be achieved only by a small minority.

Grade A- / Very Good: Generally outstanding performance on ALMOST ALL learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations at this level and occasionally reaches standards that may be common at higher levels of study.

Grade B+ / Good (Plus): HIGH performance on all learning outcomes, OR HIGH performance on some learning outcomes which compensates WELL for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply WELL the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level WELL.

Grade B / Good: SUBSTANTIAL performance on all learning outcomes, OR SUBSTANTIAL performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a MORE COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade B- / Good (Minus): GOOD performance on all learning outcomes, OR GOOD performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade C+ / Adequate (Plus): VERY ADEQUATE performance on the majority of learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a SOMEWHAT SUSTAINED manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C / Adequate: ADEQUATE performance on the majority of learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C- / Adequate (Minus): SOMEWHAT ADEQUATE performance on A NUMBER OF learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to SOMEWHAT apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the BARE basic requirement at this level.

