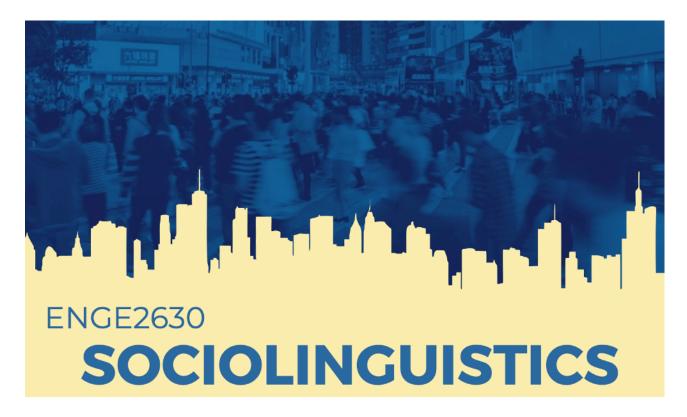Department of English
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

COURSE OUTLINE

Module code and title: ENGE2630 Sociolinguistics: Languages, Society, and Culture

Course description[1]

This course serves as a general introduction to the field of sociolinguistics. It focuses on the notion of sociolinguistic variation as a point of entry for understanding the relationship between language and society, identifying the different ways in which we use language to construct relations of sameness and difference as well as power and control. In their self-paced engagement with different learning activities at different Checkpoints, students will be introduced to basic theoretical concepts, practical insights, and research methods in sociolinguistics. We will consider multiple dimensions along which language use may vary and discuss the implications of language variation for diverse contexts ranging from micro-level interactional practices to national-level language policies. We will investigate the link between language practices and social factors such as ethnicity, gender, social class, and culture. Topics covered in this course include code-switching, language in the media, styles, identity, language

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[1] This course is largely inspired by Rebecca Lurie Starr's EL2151 Social Variation in English outline. The assessment part of the module was inspired by Robin Queen's LING370 Language and Discrimination class and Julie Boland's PSYCH445 Psychology of Language class.

attitudes, language shift/maintenance as well as language policy. Examples are drawn from a wide range of social contexts, with a focus on the English language. Learning and engagement with the course will be assessed in a "gameful" manner (Fishman and Hayward 2022). In doing so, the course will provide a safe space for students to take ownership of their learning while also providing them the agency to contribute to society through the digital humanities.

Learning objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to…

1. engage with basic theoretical discussions in sociolinguistics,
2. conduct basic data collection and analyses of sociolinguistic phenomena utilizing state-of-the-art computer tools,
3. critically reflect on at least some aspects of language and society that you encounter in daily life, and
4. identify ways to contribute to society through the digital humanities.

Class format

The main class format (lecture) will vary from session to session but will generally comprise a lecture and/or a discussion.

- 2 hrs of lecture + 1 hr tutorial based on selected reading materials

Course activities & Assessment

Component	Percentage
Concept engagement - Written discussion question responses (minimum of 2) - Participation	25%
Collaborative Inquiry - Group investigation (preparation activity, planning notes, presentation)	45%
Beyond Knowledge - Themed essay OR Article critique - In-class 2-minute multimedia reflection	30%

Details are provided here (subject to change): LINK

Course grade descriptors

Grade	Descriptor	
A	Excellent	Outstanding performance on <u>ALL</u> 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 is 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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
D+	Pass (Plus)	BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on A FEW learning outcomes. Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.
D	Pass	ALMOST BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on VERY FEW learning outcomes. Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in very few areas while responding very minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

| F | Failure | Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements. Fails to address the task and likely does not understand what the task requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point. |

Course topics and potential readings (subject to change)

Wk	Topic(s)	Readings and resources
1	Introduction to sociolinguistic variation	(Meyerhoff 2018) Ch 1, 2
2	Social factors I: Age, change in real and apparent time	(Meyerhoff 2018) Ch 7
3	Social factors II: Units of analyzing social groups	(Meyerhoff 2018) Ch 9
4	Data analysis	
5	Social factors III: Gender	(Meyerhoff 2018) Ch 10
6	Social factors IV: Region, social class, race, ethnicity	(Meyerhoff 2018) Ch 8
7	Style	(Meyerhoff 2018) Ch 3
8	Teaching Assistants' Guest Lecture: Sociolinguistics and education **Prof. Gonzales at Conference**	(Reaser and Temple Adger 2008)
9	**READING WEEK: NO CLASSES**	
10	Language attitudes and ideologies	(Meyerhoff 2018) Ch 4
11	Perception	(Campbell-Kibler 2010)
12	Language contact	(Meyerhoff 2018) Ch 11
13	**GOOD FRIDAY: NO CLASSES**	
14	Politeness Sociolinguistics and media	(Meyerhoff 2018) Ch 5 (Nycz 2019)
15	Connecting the dots	

Selected References (We will not be reading all!)

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Hansen Edwards, Jette G. 2016. The politics of language and identity: attitudes towards Hong Kong English pre and post the Umbrella Movement. *Asian Englishes* 18.157–164. doi:10.1080/13488678.2016.1139937.

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Maclagan, Margaret.; Elizabeth Gordon.; and Gillian Lewis. 1999. Women and sound change: Conservative and innovative behavior by the same speakers. *Language Variation and Change* 11.19–41.

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