

**Language Arts Seminar: Linguistics**  
**COMM 5340.01**

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2-3 credits, limit 20 Home: 961-8475  
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1. DESCRIPTION:

This course presents some of the various divisions of the field of linguistics from language origins and acquisition through the history of English, including the study of dialect. Films, lectures, readings, and class presentations and projects form the basis of an academic treatment of these aspects of the study of linguistics and pedagogical applications of them to classroom situations. Certainly, teachers should be knowledgeable and current concerning the language of our daily discourse and should be aware of the facts as well as the issues surrounding the study of language. Through various readings, activities, writings, and discussion, the students will become more aware of language and more informed about its history, its character, and its power. Students will also design instructional activities to make their own students more aware and more proficient in the use of language.

2. OBJECTIVES:

1. To present the history of language in general and of English in particular, helping students to understand that language is acquired quite naturally and is always changing.
2. To familiarize students with some of the basic linguistic terms, procedures, and areas of study.
3. To study the concept of speech communities and the major dialects of Modern American English and bring up the central issues surrounding the use of those dialects and of Standard English.
4. To help students become active observers of language and respecters of the languages of all people.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

The student will

1. Trace a brief history of a word.
2. Keep cards of observations about language.
3. Participate in various inductive linguistic activities.

4. Complete investigations of several linguistic problems or phenomena.
5. Make a tape of an interesting speaker and use it to design a lesson in language awareness.
6. Create instructional activities to teach students about language and help them gain proficiency.

**COMM 5340.01 Linguistics**

**Barbara Osburg, Ph.D.**

**Thursdays 5-9 pm**

**WH 327**

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\* INDICATES CHOICES OF ASSIGNMENTS (SEE GRADE BREAKDOWN SHEET)

Week 1: --**THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF HUMAN LANGUAGE**

Introduction to course/affective and cognitive goals/9 ideas

What is language?

Language of animals--sign at the center

Human language--symbol at the center

Definitions

Properties of Human Language

Birth of Language (30 min.) video

**Homework:** Clark et al., 6th ed. Parts 2, 9, & 10

Cleary & Linn, Section V (TESL)

Original myth on the origin of language

5 Observation Cards

Week 2: --**THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN LANGUAGE**

Clark et al. ,6th ed. Parts 2, 9, & 10 **due**

Cleary & Linn, Section V (TESL) **due**

Myths **due**

Five Observation Cards **due**

Language acquisition theories

Chomsky & Skinner: a kind of skill

Ong and Whorf: a kind of mind

theory) Origin of Language video (20 min. Basque and Nostratic

NOVA: Language Acquisition video (60 min.)

The Mind video(20 min. Brain and Whorf)

**Homework:** Clark, et al., 6th ed. Parts 3 (14), 7 & 11  
Cleary & Linn, Sections I (Pederson & Dykema) &

IIIC

Week 3:--**HISTORY OF WRITING: HOW DID WE GET HERE?**

Clark, et al., 6th ed. Parts 3 (14), 7 & 11 **due**  
Cleary & Linn, Sections I (Pederson & Dykema) & IIIC

**due**

Lecture on History of Writing

**Homework:** \*Read and abstract an article on writing or  
reading

development/improvement/remediation  
(must be published since 1995 and

bibliographic

information must be in APA style)

\*Design instructional activity on writing or

reading

improvement/remediation

Week 4: -- **HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: HOW DID WE  
GET HERE?**

\*Abstract and instructional activities for vocab/reading

**due**

Lecture on History of English

**Homework:** \_\_\_\_\_ Mini-etymology

\*Find and abstract an article on the history of

English or

the psychology of writing  
(must be published since 1995 and

bibliographic

information must be in APA style)

\*Prepare an assignment the History of English OR

the

Psychology of Writing (from speech to

writing

community) and an evaluation tool to assess it

(may be narrative)

Work on tape of unusual speaker

Clark et al. , 6th ed. Parts 1, 5, & 6

Cleary & Linn, Sections IIB, IIIA & B, & IVC

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Week 5: -- **SPEECH COMMUNITIES:**

**THE FABRIC OF OUR COMMUNICATION NETWORK**

Clark et al. , 6th ed. Parts 1, 5, & 6 **due**

Cleary & Linn, Sections IIB, IIIA & B, & IVC **due**

Mini-Etymology **due**

\*Abstract & assignments on the history of English or the psychology of writing **due**

(must be published since 1995 and

bibliographic

information must be in APA style)

Lecture on Symbolic Comm./Kinesics/Paralanguage

**Homework:** \_\_\_\_\_ Observe a speech community and be prepared to discuss it

Exercises on dialect

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WEEK 6: -- **DIALECTS: THE SOCIOLOGY**

**OF OUR COMMUNICATION NETWORK--**

**DELIGHTING IN AND UNDERSTANDING**

**DIFFERENCES**

\_\_\_\_\_ Reports on speech communities **due**

Differences in patterns of pronunciation, vocabulary,

and

grammar among various groups based on gender,

geography,

age, ethnicity, occupation, education, and values.

American Tongues (60 min.)

Exercises on dialect

**Homework:** \_\_\_\_\_ Create an audio tape relevant for an assignment on dialect

American (can include the grapholect of Network English)  
Create an assignment on dialect to make use of the tape

Week 7: -- **DIALECTS: THE SOCIOLOGY OF OUR COMMUNICATION NETWORK-- DELIGHTING IN AND UNDERSTANDING**

**DIFFERENCES** cont.

\*Relevant audio tape & assignment on dialect **due**  
Discussion on teaching practices and issues in dialect

**Homework:**

Study for objective final exam & essay

\*Complete 3 credit project

Bring snacks

Think about the future of teaching language in

the new orality

Week 8: -- **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? EVALUATION AND THE FUTURE**

Final objective exam **taken in class**

**Course evaluation** in class

\*3 credit projects presented

**Grade Breakdown** (See attached descriptions for clarification)

**A number of shorter written assignments will include**

Language observations (5 per week for 2 weeks) 10%

Myth on the origin of language 10%

\*Abstract & Instructional Activity on Reading/Writing **OR** 25%

\*Abstract & Assignment on History of English or Psych of Writing + assessment instrument **OR**

\*Tape of and lesson using tape of interesting speaker

Mini-Etymology 10%

Exercises from text and handouts 10%

Objective Final Exam 25%

Participation and attendance are required.

Class work should demonstrate reflection and

contributions should be frequent, articulate, and informed. Special voluntary assignments play a part in this grade, as do enthusiasm, extra reading, and verbal contributions and active listening. 10%

For those seeking 3 credits, a course project will be required (see attached Course Project sheet).

#### 4. BASIC TEXTS:

Clark, et.al (1998) *Language: Introductory readings*. 6th ed. St. Martin's Press.

Cleary, L, & Linn, M. (1993). *Linguistics for teachers*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

ISBN 0-07-037946-7

Packet

Professional journals concerning linguistic topics

5.

6. See attached sheets

7b. See attached sheet on course project

8. Self-addressed stamped envelope

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#### **Assignments**

##### Language Observations

For two weeks of class, students must write up 5 observations made concerning the content of the course. These should be typed or printed very neatly on 4" X 6" index cards (the back of the card may be used). They may be responses to articles from the text or to other articles on linguistics. They may be observations of situational linguistics. They may be a series of questions probing a given topic. They should stand alone--that is, the stimulus of the response should be clear to any reader, as should the occasion or setting of the observation.

##### \*Unusual Language Sample Tape and Lesson Using Making Use of It

Students must tape record an interesting and unusual variety of language on audio cassettes so that classmates may hear them. Students may choose to use video cassettes. The tape will serve as raw material for a

lesson designed to increase student awareness and appreciation of differences in speech. (Clark et al., 6th ed. Parts 1 & 5/ Cleary & Linn, Section IIB)

### Mini-Etymology

After researching a word of their choice in the available sources (including the Oxford English Dictionary and other dictionaries), students must write a brief (no more than two pages double-spaced) summary of the history of the word from its first entry into English to the present day. This exercise will reinforce the history of our language and guarantee at least a passing familiarity with the O.E.D. (Clark, 6th ed. 7.30-7.32; Cleary & Linn, Sections I & IIC).

### \*Instructional Activity for Teaching Vocabulary Development or Reading Improvement/Remediation + Abstract

Students are asked to research one of these topics (vocabulary or reading), read and abstract an article dated since 1995, and then design an instructional activity for students designed to improve these area (Cleary & Linn, Sections IIA & B & IVC--Coomber & Grugaugh).

### \*Assignment in History of English or Psychology of Writing + Assessment Instrument

Students are asked to research one of these topics (history of English or psychology of writing), read and abstract an article dated since 1995, and then design an assignment for students designed focus on these areas. Students should also design and assessment tool to evaluate the assignment (Clark et al., 6th ed. Part 7; Cleary & Linn, Sections I--Pederson & Dykema & IIC).

### Objective Final Exam

Students will take a final exam covering the material of this course. A study guide is available in the packet.

### Participation and Presentation

Students will be asked to prepare for classes by leading discussion, by posing key questions, and by generating informed responses. They will also complete linguistics exercises which will be used in class discussion. Student papers may furnish the material for class discussion, and students should be prepared to share these assignments openly and willingly.

### \*Position Paper--Three Hour Credit Project

Students will research (including citation of at least one article dated since 1995) one of the following topics and write a brief (no more than 3 typed pages) position paper on the teaching of this area of language: Dialects & language diversity/reading/vocabulary development/language acquisition (first or second language).