

Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur

Humanities and Social Sciences

ENG124AA: Language and Society

Semester: 2021-22-I (Asynchronous Semester)

Schedule: TWThF: 9:00-9:50 am

Instructor: Achla M. Raina; Tutor: Achla M. Raina

November 17, 2021

First Course Handout

Course Objective:

The course investigates the relationship between language, cognition and culture. The objective of the course is to sensitize students to the sociocultural dimension of language and language use.

Course Instruction:

1. All instruction and assessment will be in the online mode and students will attend classes remotely.
2. The course will be taught over the VC platform with 3 lectures and a tutorial.
3. Recordings of lectures will be made available on the HelloIITK platform.

Course Contents:

1. Introductory: What is language for? What do Linguists do? What does it mean to *know* a language? [3 Lectures]
2. Field of study: Different perspectives on the study of language, language structure, context of use, cognitive underpinnings of language, language history [3 Lectures]
3. Problems of definition: language as a geo-political construct, individuating a language, script as a language demarcator [4 Lectures]
4. Language variation: social and linguistic stratification, ethnic, caste, age and gender varieties in language, language variation and historical change, emergence of new languages, salvaging dying languages [4 lectures]
5. Multilingual communities: dominance and conflict, shift and attrition, language and the state, Indian multilingualism, multilingualism in the European Union, Eurasia and Africa [6 lectures]
6. Language and identity: language choice and linguistic identities, registers, group slang, sign language and other intra-group communicative behaviours, linguistic prejudice and inequality, standardization, language disadvantage in education, oralism and other modes of standardization among atypical populations [5 lectures]

7. Language, culture and cognition: cross-linguistic semantic choices, translatability across cultures, linguistic relativity [5 lectures]
8. Language and social control: language and power, gendered language, post truth social order [5 lectures]

Evaluation Components:

1. Mid Semester Term Paper : 20%
2. End Semester Term paper : 40%
3. Assignments : 30%
4. Participation : 10%

Policies

- Use of available resources without acknowledgement, and any other kinds of unfair practices including collaboration in assessments are seriously discouraged. Any violation of the **honour code** will be dealt with under guidelines from the IIT Kanpur Ordinances and/or SSAC Guidelines.

Online Platforms

- Platform for course management: <https://hello.iitk.ac.in/>
- Videoconferencing Platform for synchronous lecture delivery: Zoom (the link to be shared in due course)

How to reach me:

Email: achla@iitk.ac.in

A voluntary WhatsApp Group for instant communication; Phone: to be shared in due course

Selected Extracts from the following books:

1. Deutscher, Guy. 2010: The language glass: Why the world looks different in other languages.
2. Lakoff and Johnson. 2003: The metaphors we live by.
3. George Orwell, 1948: Nineteen Eighty Four

Supplementary Material

1. **Linguistics as a window to understanding the brain** Steven Pinker
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-B_ONJIEcE&t=2s
2. **Language Variation** Martin Hilpert:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYlyMCoIAZY>
3. **Language and Culture** Jason Bres:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qB4xsh5Y8R4>
4. **Language and Culture- Metaphors We Live By** George Lakoff:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_cexWKE7sE

5. Language and Culture- Metaphors We Live By Martin Hilpert:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROBYLpwSM6E>

6. Untranslatables across Cultures David Robson:

<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20170126-the-untranslatable-emotions-you-never-knew-you-had>

7. Language and Cognition Lera Boroditsky:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=lera+boroditsky+you+tube&docid=607986052907993772&mid=D8B30A552E621B08AF76D8B30A552E621B08AF76&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

Selected Readings from the following list:

4. R.K. Agnihotri, 2013. The stories they tell about language.
5. Emily Anthes. 2016. The glossary of happiness.
6. Carmen Brandt, 2014: Script as a potential demarcator and stabilizer of languages in South Asia
7. Lera Boroditsky, 2005: Linguistic relativity
8. Guy Deutscher, 2010: The language glass: Why the world looks different in other languages.
9. Joshua Foer, 2012: Utopian for beginners
10. Ramchandra Guha, 2005: Hindi against India
11. Ramachandra Guha, 2008: Redrawing the map
12. David R. Tarp. The bee dance

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