**SYLLABUS**

**ENGL 343–1**

**Sociolinguistics: Languages and Dialects of the US**

**Spring 2016**

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**Instructor:** James A. Berry, Ph.D. **Email:** jberry@uwsp.edu

**Office:** CCC 426 **Office phone:** 715-346-2385

**Office hours:** Mon/Wed 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Tue/Thu 10:00–11:00 a.m.

and by appointment

**Class meets:** Tue/Thu **Classroom:** CCC 206

12:35–1:50 p.m.

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**Course description**

This course is a broad introduction to the major topics in the field of sociolinguistics, which consists of areas where language intersects with speakers and society. One goal of the class is for you to understand that language use and our attitudes towards language are a part of everyday social practice. We will look at the varieties of speech patterns among language users in the U.S. and how they relate to issues of location, history, social expectations, and identity. We will also consider how users alter their language for different social purposes.

As we examine the language situation in the U.S., we will also consider some of the subfields of sociolinguistics, including dialects, language variation and change, contact, pidgins and creoles, styles and registers, ethnography, politeness, language policy and planning, and gender issues.

**GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course is designed to meet the requirements of the Social Sciences and U.S. Diversity areas in the General Education Program at UWSP. Each area’s learning outcomes are listed below.

***Social Sciences***

Upon completing this requirement students will be able to

* define the major concepts and methods used by social scientists to investigate, to analyze or to predict human or group behavior.
* explain the major principles, models and issues under investigation by the social sciences.
* examine how the individual or groups of individuals are influenced by social, cultural or political institutions both in their own culture and in other cultures.

***U.S. Diversity***

Upon completing this requirement students will be able to

* describe the various dimensions of diversity and marginalization within the United States.
* explain the means by which one or more persistently marginalized groups in the U.S. have negotiated the conditions of their marginalization.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Specific to this course, we will satisfy the requirements of the GEP in the following ways.

Upon completing this course, students will be able to

* define major concepts and methods used by sociolinguists to investigate and analyze individual and group language use.
* explain major principles, models, and issues under investigation by sociolinguists.
* examine how institutions such as government, educational bodies, and the media influence the language behaviors of individuals and groups.
* describe how the sociocultural reactions to language use contribute to both the diversity and marginalization of individuals and speech communities in the U.S.
* explain how one or more persistently marginalized groups in the U.S. have used linguistic behavior to contribute to the negotiation of their marginalization.

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

***Purchase***

Finegan, Edward, and John R. Rickford (eds.). *Language in the USA: Themes for the Twenty-first Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

***Online resources (other text resources may be held in reserve)***

*Oxford English Dictionary*, available online via the UWSP Library site.

*Dictionary of American Regional English*, available online via the UWSP Library site.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT**

Over the course of the semester, there will be three exams (one of which will be given during finals week), four homework assignments in which you will primarily work with problem sets, and a larger semester project in which you will investigate a topic of your own choosing. Attendance and participation will also play a role in your grade (see below).

***Exams***

The three exams for this class will be given in class, will be equally weighted, and will not be cumulative (except in the sense that all topics we will examine will be interrelated and will therefore share terminology and other concepts).

***Homework assignments***

Homework assignments will provide you with an opportunity to try out some of the topics we have discussed in class. At times, you will examine and analyze data provided. You may also examine your own language practices.

***Semester project***

This will be a project in which you will analyze one or more phenomena associated with language and/or dialect in the U.S. You will have the choice to incorporate primary research or to concentrate on a review of pertinent literature. You will present your findings to the class.

***Reading assignments***

You will be assigned readings that are to be completed before class. If I am concerned that students are not reading, I reserve the right to give reading quizzes, which will be graded.

***Attendance and participation***

Because much of your learning will take place in class, you must attend on a regular basis. I will take attendance every day. *Attendance* means being present, on time, and prepared for the entire class period. A student who is chronically late to class, leaves early, or is not prepared to participate in the day’s classwork will not receive attendance and participation credit.

You will have two (2) “freebie absences” for the semester, excluding the final exam period. Use them carefully. If you miss more than two scheduled classes, each subsequent missed class will result in the loss of ***one full grade*** (e.g. from A to B) from your attendance total.

***Grading***

3 Exams (15% each) 45%

Semester project 25%

4 Homework assignments (5% each) 20%

Attendance/participation 10%

TOTAL 100%

***Grading scale***

93-100% = A 87-89% = B+ 77-79% = C+ 67-69% = D+ 0-59% = F

90-92% = A− 83-86% = B 73-76% = C 60-66% = D

80-82% = B− 70-72% = C−

**university policies**

***UWSP Community Bill of Rights and Responsibilities***

The University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point values a safe, honest, respectful, and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed, we have developed a set of expectations for all students and instructors. This set of expectations is known as the Rights and Responsibilities document, and it is intended to help establish a positive living and learning environment at UWSP. This document can be found at <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Student-Conduct.aspx>

***Plagiarism and academic dishonesty***

Academic integrity is central to the mission of higher education and UWSP in particular. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) is taken very seriously. ***Don’t do it!*** The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failing grade (zero) for the assignment. For more information, see the UWSP “Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures” section of the Rights and Responsibilities document, found here: <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>

**Americans with disabilities act (ADA)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP’s policies, check here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For more information, please visit the Disability and Assistive Technology Center, located on the 6th floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information here: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

For details on all emergency responses at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, see the UWSP Emergency Management Plan at [http://www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/default.aspx](https://email.uwsp.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=GX1lGcFYhkOSArus6JRql6OQYVSrmdEIh67-MUQ24B2cn-30AayTmwdAplBEblCPBxVKj6XLvH4.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.uwsp.edu%2frmgt%2fPages%2fem%2fdefault.aspx)

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT POLICY ON RECORDINGS**

Students may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of lectures or other class activities without written permission from the instructor. Anyone violating this policy will be asked to turn off the device being used. Refusal to comply with the policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom, and possibly being reported to the Dean of Students.

**Classroom protocol**

At all times you should be respectful toward others; inappropriate and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Our classroom will be a place where all involved feel safe when exchanging ideas. Diverse opinions and concepts are a fact of college life and adult life beyond college. As a class we will work together to understand and appreciate different viewpoints. In this class there will be no use of cellular phones or other similar electronic devices, including for sending or receiving text messages. Unless you are otherwise instructed, or unless you have a documented reason for doing so, please refrain from using laptops in class.

*Failure to abide by any of these rules may result in being asked to leave the classroom.*

**PROBLEM SOLVING**

I encourage you to see me during office hours, to email me, or to make an appointment any time we are both available to discuss issues connected with this class and/or your performance.

Please discuss concerns with me at an early time—while we have options. I tend to be generous with students who consult with me while issues are concerns, rather than crises. Of course, if an emergency situation does arise, please let me know as soon as possible.

**SCHEDULE**

(subject to change)

**Date Readings/Assignments**

***Week 1***

Tue-Thu Course introduction; some linguistic background

1/26-28 Chapter 1 History of American English

***Week 2***

Tue-Thu Chapters 2, 3, 6 American English; Regional dialects; *DARE*

2/2-4

***Week 3***

Tue-Thu Chapter 4 Social dialects

2/9-11

***Week 4***

Tue-Thu **Homework 1**

2/16-18 Chapters 5, 16 African American English; Ebonics controversy

***Week 5***

Tue-Thu AAE continued; review for exam

2/23-25 **Exam 1**

***Week 6***

Tue-Thu Chapters 7, 8 Multilingualism; creoles; language contact

3/1-3

***Week 7***

Tue-Thu **Homework 2**

3/8-10 Chapter 9 Native American languages

**Date Readings/Assignments**

***Week 8***

Tue-Thu Chapters 10, 11 Spanish in the U.S.

3/15-17

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* SPRING BREAK, 3/21–25: NO CLASSES \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

***Week 9***

Tue-Thu Chapters 12, 13, 14 ASL; Asian Americans; other diversity issues

3/31-4/2 **Homework 3**

***Week 10***

Tue-Thu Chapter 15 Linguistic ideologies/prejudices

4/5-7 **Exam 2**

***Week 11***

Tue-Thu Chapters 17, 18 Public policies toward language

4/12-14

***Week 12***

Tue-Thu Chapters 19, 20, 21 Speaker age; slang; hip hop

4/19-21 **Homework 4**

***Week 13***

Tue-Thu Chapter 22 Language, gender, and sexuality

4/26-28

***Week 14***

Tue-Thu Chapters 24, 25 Specialized languages

5/3-5 **Semester project due**

***Week 15***

Tue-Thu **Presentations**

5/10-12

***Week 16***

Wed 5/18 **10:15–12:15 Exam 3**