LINGUISTICS 240
LANGUAGE CONFLICT AND LANGUAGE RIGHTS

BULLETIN INFORMATION
LING 240 – Language Conflict and Language Rights (3 credit hrs)
Course Description:
Examination of linguistic conflict and rights, as well as centrality of language rights to human rights and personal/cultural identity. Basic facts about language related to identity, culture, attitudes, dialects, bilingualism. Case studies (local, national, international) with particular attention to nationalism, language revitalization, language planning.

SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW
All languages are equal in theory; they all have systematic rules of sound and grammar and can be used to convey complex, precise, and novel meanings. However, in practice, languages are necessarily intertwined with the politics of power and social difference. The importance of language rights to basic human rights cannot be overstated. Whether through conquest, colonization, immigration, enslavement, or the simple fact of ignoring ethnic distinctions, linguistic minorities have always existed, as have language conflicts and the infringement of minorities’ rights to use their languages without prejudice. This course will explore language rights and relate them to human rights in general, surveying language conflicts worldwide between those trying to secure and those trying to deny language rights.

An understanding of linguistic conflict and competition requires a basic understanding of linguistics, the study of phonology (sound systems), morphology (word building systems), lexica (inventories of words and word parts), sentence grammars, and sociocultural conventions and ideologies of use. By using linguistics to understand the systematicity and value of language, we can identify how popular ideas about language, such as characterizations of particular languages as ‘broken’, ‘illogical’, ‘ugly, or ‘inauthentic’, are often not merely misinformed but also misleading; they are a reflection of ideological interests rather than scientifically based claims. Accordingly, the course will present a non-technical introduction to analytical tools of linguistics, so as to provide a deeper understanding of language structure and the mechanics of linguistic conflict. By also examining specific cases of language conflict, it will illustrate a range of policy decisions in the areas of education, government, and media.

ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES
Upon successful completion of LING 240, students will be able to:

1. Explain how language is a key symbol of identity and resource for cultural maintenance;
2. Discuss how linguistic differences can result in political and personal conflict;
3. Identify different cultural and moral values that underlie debates about language conflicts and rights;
4. Discover sources of information about these ideological conflicts, and evaluate them for credibility, reliability, bias, and currency;
5. Discuss language rights struggles in the larger context of human rights issues across the world; and
6. Apply concepts of formal linguistics and sociolinguistics to analyses of language rights cases.

SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS
There is no required textbook for this course. Links to all course readings will be provided on Blackboard (https://blackboard.sc.edu).

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAMS
1. Data Mining Assignments (4): During the course of the semester, you will identify four (current or historical) issues touching upon linguistic conflict and language rights, and will find information about these on the internet. You will be required to find one formally “objective” article (e.g. newspaper/news wire articles, academic journal articles, etc.) and one polemically oriented piece (e.g. advocacy websites, opinion columns, official government websites, etc.) You will submit (along with the two articles) a 1-2 page report on what you have found.

2. Introspective/Observational Journal Assignments (2): Two times during the semester you will be asked to record one- to two-page observations (either introspectively or outwardly focused) on some aspect of language related to the current class topic. The observations will sometimes be based on examples from newspapers, from the radio, from the speech of others around you, or from introspection into your own language use. In writing your observations, you will reflect on the cultural and moral values that underlie the observations and issues that you are reporting on. You will articulate why and in what ways community values, ethics, and notions of social responsibility matter to the issue at hand. And you will consider how values shape personal and community ethics and decision-making.

3. Blackboard Question/Comments: Students are required to submit at least one discussion question or comment prior to each lecture, based on the readings for that lecture. The entry should be concise, and make an insightful point or critique or raise a thought-provoking question, while also showing that you’ve read the material carefully.

4. Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will consist of short-answer questions (e.g. multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, write a sentence or two) that test students’ knowledge of terms and concepts introduced in the first seven weeks.

5. Final Exam: The final exam will also have a number of short-answer questions, and will ask students to write short essays on one or more of the case studies that were presented in class.

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS/PROJECTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>What are language rights?</th>
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<tr>
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<td>• <em>How do language rights relate to human rights?</em></td>
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<td>• <em>How do policies protect rights? How do they restrict them?</em></td>
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<td>• Document with links to human rights conventions and declarations.</td>
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<th>Week 2</th>
<th>What is language?</th>
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<td>• <em>What is the structure of language?</em></td>
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<td>• <em>What are its “moving parts”?</em></td>
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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Language variation: What is dialect?</th>
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<td>• <em>How do varieties of a language differ?</em></td>
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<td>• <em>How does one measure the difference between dialects and languages?</em></td>
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<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Dialect case studies: Norway-(Danish)-Norwegian / African-American English</th>
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### Week 5

#### Language Attitudes: Accent, stereotype, and ideology

- What are accents?
- Why do we have stereotypes of accents?
- What is a standard language?
- What is a language ideology?

**Readings:**


**Language attitudes case study: Alabama vs. Michigan**

**Readings:**


### Week 6

**Conflict in communication style**
- Why does miscommunication occur?
- Are there culturally acceptable forms of conflict in language?

**Readings:**

**Cross-cultural communication conflict case studies:**
Korean-Americans and African-Americans / Women and men

**Readings:**

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<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Language ownership</th>
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<td>- Do speakers own languages?</td>
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<td>- What are the consequences of language appropriation?</td>
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<td>- Can language be reclaimed?</td>
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**Readings:**

| Week 8 | Review and midterm exam |
### Week 9

#### National languages
- *What is a nation?*
- *What function is served by having a national language?*
- *How are national languages developed and decided upon?*

**Readings:**

#### Language & Nationalism Case Study: Indonesia and India
**Readings:**

### Week 10

#### Official English and U.S. Spanish
- *Should the United States have a national language?*
- *What language(s) should be used in schools, media, and government?*
- *What is the history of language rights in the US?*
- *How do debates about Spanish involve beliefs about race and class in the United States?*

**Readings:**
Week 11

Language revitalization

- Why should languages be preserved?
- How can we save languages?
- Why does it matter how we talk about endangered languages?
- Can a language be preserved without speakers?
- Who has the right to determine which language forms are “authentic”?

Readings:

Weeks 12-14

Case Studies

Typology of cases:

I. Indigenous minorities (Ainu, Sami, Native American)
II. Geopolitical minorities (Hispanics in Southwest US, Hungarians in Slovakia)
III. Minorities of migration (Mexicans in the US, Koreans in Japan, Roma in Europe)
IV. Intra-linguistic (dialectal) minorities (African-American English, Okinawan)
V. Competition for linguistic dominance (Belgium, Sri Lanka, Canada?)

Japan (I/III/IV): Ainu, Korean, Okinawan

Case study (I): Norway, Sámi


**Case study (II): Slovakia, Hungarian**


**Case study (V): Belgium, Flemish/Walloon**


**Case study (II/V): Wales, Welsh**

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<th>SPECIFIC (CAROLINA CORE) OUTCOMES:</th>
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<td>Students will learn to “examine different kinds of social and personal values, analyzing the ways in which these are manifested in communities as well as individual lives”:</td>
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<td>• To examine sources of cultural and moral values. In particular, they will learn about language ideologies, or shared beliefs about the relative value of languages, and be able to identify language value/ideology as a socio-historical product. This will involve the examination of historical events (colonization, immigration, enslavement) that have shaped hierarchies of language value, institutions (government, education, media) that maintain these value systems, and discourses (everyday talk and internet media) that contest them.</td>
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<td>• To demonstrate the importance of values, ethics, and social responsibility. Students will learn how language ideologies can be used to justify (i) silencing of linguistic minorities by making their language illegitimate in public space, (ii) oppressing and diminishing the status of endangered language groups, and (iii) causing educational, cultural, and psychological harm by devaluing a group’s mode of communication.</td>
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<td>• How values shape personal and community ethics and decision-making. Students will learn how linguistic inequities can be addressed. They will learn about (i) linguistic methods of listening to, and recording, the perspectives of linguistic minorities, and (ii) ways to revalorize and maintain languages, such as the codification of endangered and oral languages, bilingual education, media/literature presented in a minority language, language campaigns, and language laws, etc.</td>
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Final exam according to University exam schedule