

**The University of Hong Kong**  
School of Humanities  
Department of Linguistics

**LING2056 SOCIOLINGUISTICS**

<b>Credits:</b> 6	<b>Time:</b> 10:00 – 13:30
<b>Venue:</b> to be announced	
<b>Instructors:</b> Dr. Eileen Waegemaekers	<b>Office:</b> Rm 9.27 Run Run Shaw Tower <b>Office hours:</b> by appointment <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:eileenw@hku.hk">eileenw@hku.hk</a> <b>Tel:</b> +852 91631336

## **Course Description and Objectives**

### **COURSE INTRODUCTION**

- The course introduces students to the study of the relationship between language and society. The course includes topics like language variation and change, language and gender, multilingualism and language contact, and language policy. Aspects like the distinction between language and dialect will be covered next to how language attitudes shape our communicative behaviour and the way we perceive speakers. The course has both theoretical and empirical content and includes many case studies and practical exercises from languages and regions around the world. This course is recommended for linguistics majors and is an important asset for anyone who seeks to understand how language affects how we relate to each other in society.

### **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- Students will have a basic understanding of the relationship between language and society and are familiar with technical tools and analytical techniques common to the field of sociolinguistics.
- Students can demonstrate familiarity with variation in language, understanding the concepts of language, dialect, style and code. They can recognize how language diversity and variability lead to language change.
- Students can identify and analyse variables that can affect language use and language attitudes in a social context.

### **Recommended readings:**

Meyerhoff, M. (2015). *Introducing sociolinguistics*. Routledge.  
Mesthrie, R. (2009). *Introducing sociolinguistics*. Edinburgh University Press.

## Course Content Overview

Date/Class	Topic	Readings
July 2	Introduction to Sociolinguistics	Holmes (1992) What do sociolinguists study?
July 3	Variation & Language I: Synchronic variation	Meyerhoff (2011), pp. 31-42 (Ch. 3 up to “In search of the unknowable”); 169-174 (“Class as a factor...” up to “fine & broad stratification”) Labov (1972) The social stratification of English in New York City Department Stores.
July 4	Variation & Language II: Diachronic variation	Meyerhoff (2011), pp. 135-158 (Ch. 7 up to “Community-wide change”)
July 5	Language attitudes	Meyerhoff (2011), pp. 58-82 (Ch. 4) Achugar, M., & Pessoa, S. (2009). Power and place: Language attitudes towards Spanish in a bilingual academic community in Southwest Texas. <i>Spanish in Context</i> , 6(2), pp. 199-223.
WEEKEND		
July 8	Language & Gender	Kamwangamalu, N. M. (2000). Languages in Contact. <i>African voices</i> (pp. 88-100) Cameron, D. (2005). Language, gender, and sexuality: Current issues and new directions. <i>Applied linguistics</i> , 26(4), 482-502.
July 9	Social networks & communities of practice	Meyerhoff (2011), pp. 194-211 (Ch. 9)
July 10	Linguistic diversity, Language contact and endangered languages	Evans (2009) Dying words, pp. 5-22 <a href="http://www.endangeredlanguages.com/">http://www.endangeredlanguages.com/</a> Holm, J. (2000). An introduction to pidgins and creoles. Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-11
July 11	Language planning & policy	Meyerhoff (2011) pp. 107-119 Deumert, A. (2009). Language planning and policy, pp. 393-404.
July 12	Course round-up and in-class test	

## Course Assessment

Assessment Method	Weighting	Details
Poster presentation	20%	Groups will be formed, and each group will prepare a A1 size poster from a list of topics provided. Each group will give a short oral presentation and answer questions from your classmates.
In-class test	40%	Written test on topics discussed in class.
Essay	40%	6-8 page essay related to one of the topics discussed in class.

## Study Load/ Study Hours

Activities	Number of hours
Lectures	31.5
Reading / Self-study	34
Assessment: Essay writing	28
Assessment: Poster presentation	8
<b>Total:</b>	<b>101.5</b>