

(SPAN 320) SOCIOLINGUISTICS
PROGRAM OF ARGENTINE AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
UNIVERSIDAD DE BELGRANO

Course Syllabus

Course Information

Contact Hours: 60
Semester

Course Description

This course offers an insightful introduction to the study of the Spanish language in its social and cultural context. The course focuses on the relationship and the constant interaction between society and language, discussing both traditional and recent issues including: language variation, language and social class, language and gender, language and age, language and context, language and identity, and language and new media. The course seeks to familiarize students with the wider macro-social phenomena and the micro-level analysis of both face-to-face and computer-mediated interactions, thus providing an opportunity for a better understanding of the interface between sociolinguistics and pragmatics. In addition, attention is also given to the various sociolinguistic approaches and the methods for collecting data for the study of language and society.

Course Requirements

Students must meet the requirement of 75% attendance to class in order to avoid losing regularity. The attendance control system is electronic. The professor also keeps internal control of attendance, since it is part of the course grade (see Grading Policy). Lack of punctuality (arriving more than ten minutes late or leaving class early) will be considered half-absences. In case of not attending class, it is the students' responsibility to contact their classmates or their professor to find out and complete the assignment for the next class.

Students are expected to actively participate in class and make an oral presentation that must be accompanied by a written text (the topic and date will be agreed with the professor during the course). During the semester, students will have homework and papers assigned for each class, which will be evaluated as detailed below. In addition, there will be a final exam that will have the format of an essay or group research paper of approximately 3,000 words and of an exploratory nature on some sociolinguistic aspect of Spanish. This essay will contemplate a small field work, a work methodology with an analysis and a conclusion. Delay in submitting assignments negatively affects the grade and students will have up to two classes to submit the assignment, later submission will not be accepted. Having missed the previous class does not justify not completing the assignment.

Grading Policy

Class participation	10%
Preparing assigned readings with comments (3)	15%
Group oral presentations (2)	20%
Mid – Term written exam	20%
Final group essay	35%

Academic Calendar

- Week 1** Presentation of the course: What is sociolinguistics? Variationist sociolinguistics and interactional sociolinguistics. How does sociolinguistics relate to other areas of the study of language in society such as sociology of language, ethnography of communication and pragmatics?
- Week 2** Characteristics of Spanish from Río de la Plata: uses and styles
- Week 3** Spanish speakers and the different types of communities: linguistic community, speech community, discourse community and community of practice. Methods for sociolinguistic inquiry: quantitative, qualitative and ethnographic methods. Notions and constructs for sociolinguistic research: variable, variant, variation and variety. Phonological, morphosyntactic and lexical variables.
Prepare the Reading with comments: "Field Methods in Sociolinguistics", de *The Routledge Companion to Sociolinguistics* (12-18).
- Week 4** The macro variables that affect the use of Spanish: age, social class, ethnicity and gender.
- Week 5** Language and gender: gender as a sociocultural category and its relations with the use of Spanish. Different perspectives to address gender as a variable in the study of sociolinguistics.
- Week 6** Group presentations of the following chapters of the book *The Routledge Companion to Sociolinguistics*: 1) *El lenguaje y el género, El lenguaje y la clase social, y El lenguaje y la edad. Language and gender, Language and social class, and Language and age.*
- Week 7** Linguistic style and repertoires: linguistic accommodation and audience design.
Text analysis: identification and comments on the different language marks that are used in various texts for the construction of social meaning.
Consolidation of the topics covered as a review for the mid-term exam.
- Week 8** **Mid – Term exam.**
Linguistic Instructions and preparation for the research assignment that students will need to submit on Week 14. Selection of topics, presentation of objectives and discussion of the methodologies to be used.

- Week 9** Multilingualism, diglossia and contact between languages: code switching and loans. Spanish in contact with English.
Reading preparation with comments: "El papel de la televisión y de las redes sociales en la difusión lingüística," (The role of television and social media in linguistic diffusion) (111-128) from the text "Lengua y Sociedad" (Language and Society.)
- Week 10** Language and identity. Identity as a category and social practice. Language as a resource in the construction of both individual and group identities.
- Week 11** The notion of context. Different type of context: linguistic context, social and cultural context, cognitive context. The importance of context in the use and variation of language.
- Week 12** The difference between writing and orality. Conversation and speech acts.
- Week 13** El lenguaje y las nuevas tecnologías: aspectos lingüísticos y socioculturales.
Reading preparation with comments: "*La problematización del contexto en la CMC*," (*The problematization of context in the CMC*) 145-166 from the book "*Lenguaje, Discurso e Interacción en los Espacios Virtuales*"; "*La Comunicación en Línea: aspectos tecnológicos, sociales y situacionales*" (Language, Discourse and Interaction in Virtual Spaces; Online Communication: technological, social and situational aspects) from the book *Guía Práctica de Pragmática del Español*.
- Week 14** Computer-mediated communication (CMC). Spanish on the internet. Digital interaction spaces as discursive spaces.
Delivery of the written group research essay.
- Week 15** Oral presentation of the results of the research assignment. Feedback and comments on the essays.
Signing of minutes and status sheet (mandatory attendance)

Required Textbooks and Materials

The Routledge Companion to Sociolinguistics

Core Bibliography

Llamas, C.; Mullany, L. y Stockwell P. (2007) *The Routledge Companion to Sociolinguistics*. London: Routledge.

Parini, A. y Zorrilla, A. (2006) *Lengua y Sociedad*. Buenos Aires. Editorial Áncora.

Parini, A. y Giammatteo, M. (2014) *Lenguaje, Discurso e Interacción en los Espacios Virtuales*. Mendoza, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Nacional de Cuyo.

Placencia, M.E. y Xosé Padilla (eds.) (2020) *Guía Práctica de Pragmática del Español*. Londres: Routledge

Additional Bibliography

- Blas Arroyo, J.L. (2005) *Sociolingüística del Español. Desarrollos y perspectivas en el estudio de la lengua española en contexto social*. Madrid: Cátedra
- Fetzer, A. y Oishi, E. (eds.) (2011) *Context and Contexts*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Jasper, J; Östman, J. y Verschueren, J. (2010) *Society and Language Use*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Labov, W. (2006) *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mesthrie, R. (ed.) (2011) *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Moreno Fernández, F. (1998) *Principios de sociolingüística y sociología del lenguaje*. Barcelona: Editorial Ariel.
- Silva-Corvalán, C. (2001) *Sociolingüística y pragmática del español*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Swann, J.; Dumert, A.; Lillis, T. y Mesthrie, R. (2004) *A Dictionary of Sociolinguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.