

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**
<https://ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2020-2021 MLCS 231 B1: Language and Power (Winter Term)

Note: Remote Delivery

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Dailey-O’Cain (Dr. D.) Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:20
Office: REMOTE Place: REMOTE (zoom link on eclass)
E-mail: jenniedo@ualberta.ca Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-2,
Personal Website: <http://www.ualberta.ca/~jenniedo> or by appointment (zoom link on eclass)
Course Website: n/a

Bachelor of Arts / Major in Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies/undergraduate-program-information/prospective-undergraduate-students>

Course Prerequisite: none

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate prerequisites for the course.

Technology requirements (minimum): Computer (or tablet) with ability to use Zoom, eclass, and a word processing program. It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate technology for the course.

Experiential Learning Component

this course has a significant experiential learning component (15% or more of the course grade)

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students’ Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (templates for exam 1 and exam 2 distributed through eclass)
- NA (no final exam)

Course Description, Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

This course will examine how economic and social power is reflected in and created through language, both in talk and in writing. For example: In politics, how is language used to persuade, and to deceive? How is power reflected in, and wielded by, the news media? How can a language reflect things like gender, age, social class, and ethnicity,

and what does that mean for power relationships? What is a “standard language” and where does it come from? What is the role of English in the world? In the first half of the course, we will discuss general topics of language and power, and in the second half you will learn how language and power is analyzed in both talk and text using appropriate discourse analytic methods. At the end of this course, you will be able to recognize how language is used to wield power in your daily lives, and you will also be able to do your own basic-level analysis of that language use in a systematic way.

Course Format: The objectives of this course will be learned from a combination of assigned readings, several short synchronous lectures by Dr. D. immediately followed by student discussion in small groups over Zoom, and short writing-to-learn assignments in your assigned journals concerning the readings.

Texts:

Mooney, Annabelle; Peccei, Jean Stilwell; Labelle, Suzanne; Henriksen, Berit Engøy; Eppler, Eva; Irwin, Anthea; Pichler, Pia; Preese, Shân; and Soden, Satori. *Language, Society and Power: An Introduction* (5th edition).

This text is *required* and should be purchased from SUB (or in a digital version online) before the first class if at all possible.

Additional Course Fees

Yes No

Important Dates: [See Academic Schedule in current Calendar](#)

First Day of Class: January 11, 2021
Add/Delete Date: January 22, 2021
50% Withdrawal Date: February 10, 2021
Winter Term Reading Week: February 16-19, 2021
Withdrawal Date: April 9, 2021
Last Day of Class: April 16, 2021

Components of Course Grade (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Your end-of-semester grade will be calculated on the basis of the following:

- Participation: 15% (throughout the semester)
- Journal writing assignments: 10% (throughout the semester)
- Exam I: 20% (February 25th, 2021)
- Exam II: 20% (April 1st, 2021)
- Draft paper, workshopped with a peer: 10% (sometime in March, TBA)
- Final paper and in-class presentation: 25% (presentations in final four class periods, final paper due Monday, April 22nd, 2021)

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Participation:

This mark will be based on the *quality* and *quantity* of each student's participation in class discussion. This refers both to your daily small-group discussions (which will be an integral part of your internalizing the material in the readings), and in occasional discussions that will take place with the whole class.

Journal writing:

Most of the writing you do in this class, whether in class or at home, will be in your journal on eclass. Please consider this kind of writing to be what we call “low-stakes” writing. This means that while you are required to write in your journal about each of your assigned readings before each class period, Dr. D. will only look these entries over for content and respond to that content. This means that in evaluating your journal writing, Dr. D. will only pay attention to the content of what you write, and not at all on the writing itself—so there is no need to worry about spelling, organization, clarity, and such. It shouldn't take you a long time to write these journal entries, as they are just about your own thoughts. Do make sure to set aside enough time to complete the assigned readings before trying to write them, though!

If, once you have finished your readings for an upcoming class period, you are stuck on what to write about in your journal about them, please feel free to allow yourself to be guided by the following questions: *What did you find unclear? Did you have any strong reactions (positive or negative)? Did the reading spark some connection or interesting thought that you'd like to explore further? What do you hope we will talk about in class?* These questions are optional, however, and you do not need to answer any or all of them if you find you have other things to say about the readings.

Exams:

Both exams will consist of definitions, short-answer questions, and one longer essay question. Both exams will take the length of a regular class period.

You do not need to come to our regular Zoom “classroom” on the day of an exam. Instead, each exam will be posted on eclass at the start of class, and you should email the completed exam to Dr. D. at jenniedo@ualberta.ca once you are finished. Please take care to have your exams completed and emailed by the end of the scheduled class period.

A template of each exam will be posted on eclass (in the “course resources” section) and discussed in class before each exam, in order to give students a chance to see what the format of the exam will be like.

You may feel free to use your book, articles, and notes to compose your answers on each of the two exams, but please don't allow yourself to think this means you don't need to

study beforehand! If you try to complete the exam without studying first, you won't be able to do it in the allotted time.

The second exam will not be cumulative, but will only cover the material discussed from the class period after the first exam onward.

Draft paper, in-class presentation, and final paper:

The paper: Your final paper is due Thursday, April 22nd at 4pm, and it should be emailed to Dr. D. at jenniedo@ualberta.ca. The paper will involve choosing a topic or sociolinguistic phenomenon that interests you and which you want to subject to your own analysis (either in the form of detailed library research or by using a form of discourse analysis—we will talk more about this in class—to analyze a sociolinguistic phenomenon), learning something new about it by finding and reading academic articles on it for background, and then communicating what you have learned to Dr. D. in the form of a paper. We will begin exploring possible topics together as a class beginning partway through the semester, and you will be turning in a draft as a low-stakes writing assignment and “workshopping” these drafts with other students in pairs in class a bit later (the 10% “draft paper” mark will encompass both your work on your own draft and your review of a classmate’s draft). As a result, you should regard the final product that you hand in as a culmination of all of the work that has come before it, rather than as one assignment. You should aim for the final version to be around six or seven pages long.

The presentation: The purpose of your presentation is to give you a chance to teach the other students something about what you have learned through working on your paper. This can consist of a straightforward, conventional presentation of some of the information you have learned, as one might in a lecture, but if you want, you can choose to do some sort of in-class activity with the rest of the class to illustrate the points made in your paper instead. Your presentation will be given on one of the final four days of class. After the presentation, each speaker should expect to entertain questions from the class or from Dr. D. so that you can get feedback on your work and use these ideas in your final paper if it is necessary.

In most cases, the presentation will be worth 10% of the final mark and the paper will be worth 15% of the mark, for a total of 25%. In cases where there has been a misunderstanding of the material that becomes evident in the presentation and is corrected in the final paper, however, Dr. D. reserves the right to shift more of the weight to the final paper, in order to better reflect the learning you have done.

Required Notes:

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.

Student Responsibilities:

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the [Code of Student Behaviour](#) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Sexual Violence Policy:

It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/sexual-violence>

Territorial Statement:

“The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.” (*from the beginning of the Calendar*).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written

consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

In this course, if you cannot attend a regular class (i.e. non-exam or presentation) period, you will simply be required to *e-mail Dr. D. anytime before the beginning of that class period* to let her know that you will be absent. If you do this, your absence will be marked as *excused*. You do not need to give the reason for your absence, but please remember that you can’t participate in discussions and other in-class activities if you are not present, and that frequent absences, even excused ones, will therefore necessarily have an effect on your participation mark. If you do *not* let Dr. D. know before the beginning of that class period that you will be absent, your absence will be marked as *unexcused*, and you will receive an automatic zero for any in-class activities or writing assignments that day, as well as for any at-home assignments due that day.

In cases of potentially excusable absences *on exam or presentation days* due to illness or domestic affliction, *notify Dr. D. by e-mail within two days*. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.4.2 and 23.4.3 of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Policy for Late Assignments:

If your absence is excused (i.e. if you have notified Dr. D. before the absence that you will not be there, see the previous section for details), your late assignment should be completed by the start of the next class period that you are able to attend. If your absence is not excused (i.e. if you have *not* notified Dr. D. before the absence that you will not be there), your late assignments will not be accepted. When you have an excused absence, you are responsible for asking a fellow student (please do *not* ask Dr. D. to recount for you what was done in class in your absence) for a copy of his or her notes to make sure you keep up with what has been

done in class. You will not be reminded to do this or prompted to complete any excused late assignments on time.

Disclaimer:

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Student Resources:

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

Accessibility Resources: (1 – 80 SUB)

The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

The Academic Success Centre: (1-80 SUB)

[The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

The Centre for Writers: (1-42 Assiniboia Hall)

The [Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

Health and Wellness Support: There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

Office of the Student Ombuds:

The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
<p>Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.</p>	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
<p>Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.</p>	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
<p>Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.</p>	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
<p>Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.</p>	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
<p>Failure.</p>	F	0.0	0-59

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Course outline and reading assignments:

The assignments are to be read *before* the date listed. The readings listed as “chapters” (1, 2, 3, etc.) are chapters of the course textbook, while the other readings (required and optional) can be found on and downloaded from eclass.

January

12th: course introduction

Topics in Language and Power

14th: Chapter 1, *Language?*

19th: Chapter 2, *Language, thought, and representation* (optional additional paper: Martin 1986 “Eskimo words for snow: a case study in the genesis and decay of an anthropological example”)

21st: Chapter 3, *Language and politics*

26th: Chapter 4, *Language and the media*

28th: Miller 2004 “Those naughty teenage girls: Japanese Kogals, slang, and media assessments”

February

2nd: Chapter 5, *Linguistic landscapes*

4th: Chapter 6, *Language and gender*

9th: Talbot 1992 “I wish you'd stop interrupting me! Interruptions and asymmetries in speaker-rights in equal encounters” (optional additional paper: McClure 1999 “Wimpy boys and macho girls: gender equity and the crossroads”)

11th: Chapter 7, *Language and ethnicity*

16th: READING WEEK

18th: READING WEEK

23rd: Shenk 2007 “I'm Mexican, remember? Constructing ethnic identities via authentication discourse”

25th: EXAM I

March

2nd: Chapter 8, *Language and age*

4th: Chapter 9, *Language, class, and symbolic capital*

9th: Chapter 10, *Global Englishes*

Analyzing language and power in discourse

11th: Chapter 11, *Projects*

16th: Critical Linguistics (section 1 of parts B & C of Simpson/Mayr book: pp. 50-56 & 110-117, optional additional paper Heller 2001 “Critique and sociolinguistic analysis of discourse”)

- 18th: Humour, language, and power (section 6 of parts A, B, and C of Simpson/Mayr book: pp. 25-30 & 77-80 & 133-136)
- 23rd: Language and the law (section 7 of parts A, B, and C of Simpson/Mayr book: pp. 30-33 & 81-86 & 136-140)
- 25th: Language and advertising (section 8 of parts A, B, and C of Simpson/Mayr book: pp. 34-37 & 86-97 & 140-142)
- 30th: Machin/van Leeuwen 2005 “Language style and lifestyle: the case of a global magazine”

April

1st: EXAM II

6th: student presentations of final projects

8th: student presentations of final projects

13th: student presentations of final projects

15th: student presentations of final projects