

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

LING 1235/2235: Language, Gender, and Society

Instructor: Scott F. Kiesling (Ph.D. 1996, Georgetown University)

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 3-4pm, Friday 1-2pm. Please make an appointment so I know when you are coming and I don't have three people show up at once. For brief questions, I will be available before and after class.

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Course Rationale

Myths and misconceptions about both language and gender abound. Gender is most commonly thought to be an attribute of a person, but it is better thought of as an ongoing practice. In addition, there is more to gender than just men and women, as other social identities such as age, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality affect the kind of gender one performs. Similarly, language is often seen as something static that a person acquires, whereas it is in fact a social practice through which we create and display our gender and other social identities.

Course Goals

At the end of this course, you will:

- understand how gender is performed, created, and recreated through language;
- know the various ways that individuals use linguistic resources to create personal styles, and how these styles are gendered;
- appreciate that these personal gender styles are also creating other aspects of social identity such as sexuality, race, class, ethnicity, and age;
- understand how linguistic resources create meaning in context at the same time that they draw on general social ideologies and discourses to create that meaning;
- appreciate that people are positioned by the ideologies and discourses of society and culture – individuals can only work with the social and linguistic resources available to each individual;
- understand and begin to accept differences in how people use language and how such linguistic performances affect your view of others;
- be willing to try to be sensitive to people in social positions different from yours, and attempt to understand that different social world, and the language used to construct it;
- have improved your skills in writing and verbal expression.

Expectations

My expectations of you:

You will respect the views of all the participants in this class, especially all of your fellow students.

Everyone in this class is intelligent enough to learn the material: if you put in the effort, it is possible for everyone to get an A.

While you are partially motivated by an inherent interest in this subject, you will be largely motivated by assessment (i.e., things that count for a grade).

You are intelligent and mature, and can be relied upon to do work that results in more learning, and better grades.

You will submit work on time and put your best effort into most assignments.

Your background in linguistics and gender studies is quite varied. I assume at least one of you does not have some basic knowledge in each of these subjects.

You also have quite varied skills in reading, writing, and learning. You range in academic level from freshman undergraduates to PhD candidates.

You each learn in a unique way, and I cannot expect everyone to arrive at the goals through the same path.

Most of you need guidance on how to organize what you read and why it is significant.

You will work on this course an average of about 8 hours per week, in addition to class meetings.

You would like a course that is relevant to your lives, or your future lives, in some way.

Your expectations of me:

I will present my goals, objectives, and standards clearly and openly. Everything we do will be focused on the ultimate goal of your learning. I am not your adversary, but your advocate.

I am an expert in this field. If you are interested in my research beyond what we talk about in class, please ask.

I will respect every student's perspective, and attempt to balance all perspectives and allow every student a voice. If you feel uncomfortable in class, you can expect me to listen to your concerns.

I will very rarely give extensions and forgiveness for late or missing assignments. If there is a reason for lateness, you must document it. All due dates are listed on the calendar below. Plan accordingly.

I will return your work promptly and with enough comments that you will be able to improve that work upon revision or on the next assignment. If any comments are not clear, I will be happy to discuss them with you.

You will have the chance, during the semester, to give me feedback about what is good and bad about the course, and I will consider seriously whether I should change the course in light of these comments.

I will likely put in an average of 15 hours per week, in addition to class time, preparing for class.

I may change any portion of the course at any time, but I will give you plenty of warning.

Requirements for both 1235 and 2235

- **Homework/reading questions:** I will collect all reading questions and other assigned homework questions. The value of each will vary depending on its length and difficulty.
- **Class Projects:** We will do two main projects that will require you to extend your knowledge and skills to new data. You will gather data, I will compile it, and then you will individually need to analyze the data based on the questions I give you, and the knowledge you have learned in class. The first paper will be on speech events, and the second will be on the use and impressions of the address term “Ms.” A final paper will ask you to discuss these two projects in light of the final unit.
- **Class participation:** This grade will be based on attendance, courtesy to other students, and willingness to participate in class. I recognize that not everyone likes to speak out in front of the entire class, so I will give ample opportunity for you to participate in smaller groups and dyads. Participation in these groups counts for this grade as well.

W-course requirements

Because this course is meant to teach you not only knowledge about language and gender, but the skills of writing as well, ***all of your work will be graded on writing as well as content.*** On the second day of class, I will talk about what I look for in writing, and also about the writing process more generally. 1235 students may rewrite any class project for up to full credit (no more than two revisions).

Punctuality requirement

Late work will have 15% deducted from the grade each day late, beginning at 5pm on the day due. If there is a reason for lateness, I will need documentation. If you are late because of something you knew about in advance, then you should have done the work ahead of time or made arrangements with me ahead of time.

Weighting of requirements for 1235 only

Homework	45%
Class projects	35%
Class participation	20%

Requirements for 2235 only

- **Tri-weekly discussions** of current research. Every third Friday only 2235 students will be required to meet (although all students are welcome to attend if they wish). In these meetings, we will discuss a piece or pieces of current literature related to the topics from the previous two weeks. Students will be required to critique the research and be able to explain its significance.
- **Final project** that reviews and synthesizes current literature in a language and gender topic (for example, language and sexuality or communities of practice). This review will lead to the identification of a research question and a proposed method for answering the question. ***This project is due December 14.***

Weighting of requirements for 2235 only

Research discussions	15%
Final project	25%
Homework	25%
Class projects	25%
Class participation	10%

Class notes

There will be class notes for every class (unless otherwise noted) that you must download and print out. These notes are not everything we will do or say in class – they are meant to make it easier for you to focus on the content of the class rather than trying to figure out how I have structured each class and what I think is important. You will need to add our own notes to these class notes. Some of you may find them distracting if you have your own way of taking notes; nevertheless, bring them to class because I will often have important example material in these notes which I will not write on the board or otherwise show unless I need to point to them.

I will post the class notes on courseweb (<http://courseweb.pitt.edu>, also available through <http://my.pitt.edu>) for the next class on the day of the previous class. So the notes for Wednesday's class will be available Monday, the notes for Friday will be available on Wednesday, and the notes for Monday, on Friday. Often notes will be up earlier, but my deadline will be 5pm the day of the previous class. If you do not see the notes by this time, feel free to email me and ask where they are. In almost all cases I will use PDF format for these notes; let me know if this poses a problem for you.

Homework

I will also post homework questions on courseweb, although these will be posted at least one week before they are due. Due dates will be included in the questions, and posted on the calendar in courseweb (check this regularly; I am doing it this way so that I can change due dates if I need to!). These questions will include questions that ask for factual knowledge from the text, your opinions of parts of the text, further questions that ask you to apply the knowledge in the text, reaction questions that ask you for your opinions, experiences, or other reactions (these will be similar to journal questions). I will grade all of these for writing and effort. When there is a correct answer, I will grade for that, but when the answer is an opinion or reaction, I will grade on how well you express yourself and express a thoughtfulness about the question's topic. [See the "Homework rubric" handout to see more about how I will grade these.]

Practical Information and Course Policies

Required Text: Eckert, Penelope, and Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2003. *Language and Gender*. New York & Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN:0-521-65426-2.

Recommended Text: Fulwiler, Toby. 2002. *College Writing: A Personal Approach to Academic Writing*. 3rd Edition. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers. ISBN: 0-86709-523-7.

Meetings: MWF 11-11:50am, IS 404

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 3-4pm, Fridays 1-2pm. Please make an appointment so I know when you are coming and I don't have three people show up at once. For brief questions, I will be available before and after class.

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Grading scale

98-100	A+	88-89	B+	78-79	C+	68-69	D+	Below 60	F
93-97	A	83-87	B	73-77	C	63-67	D		
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D-		

Electronic submissions are not accepted

In the past, I have accepted electronic submissions. However, I have come to the conclusion that allowing multiple methods of submission is an organizational nightmare, and time that I might spend commenting on papers is spent on this organizing. Therefore, ***I no longer allow electronic submissions, unless I specifically require electronic submissions.***

Academic Integrity

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

Accommodation for Students with Special Needs

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both me and the [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS) no later than the 2nd week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Office is located in 216 William Pitt Union. The DRS website is located at <http://www.pitt.edu/osaweb/drs/drs.html>. Guidelines for alternative access to Blackboard are located at <http://products.blackboard.com/cp/bb5/access/index/cgi>.

Calendar of Units and Important Dates

Numbers in 'Reading' column refer to page numbers in the Eckert and McConnell-Ginet text.

Days in which "2235" appears in 'Unit' are optional for students registered for 1235.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Class projects</i>
Aug 29	1 Introduction		
Aug 31	2 Gender	1-32	
Sep 02		32-51	
Sep 05		NO CLASS	
Sep 07	3 Linking the linguistic to the social	52-79	
Sep 09		79-90	
Sep 12	4 Organizing Talk 1	92-109	
Sep 14			Project 1 instructions
Sep 16	2235		
Sep 19	5 Organizing Talk 2	109-122	
Sep 21			
Sep 23			
Sep 26	6 Making Social Moves	129-144	Project 1 data due
Sep 28			
Sep 30			Project 1 data returned
Oct 03		144-156	
Oct 05			
Oct 07	2235		
Oct 10	7 Positioning Ideas and Subjects	157-176	
Oct 12		176-191	
Oct 14			
Oct 17			Project 1 due
Oct 19			Project 2 instructions
Oct 21		NO CLASS	
Oct 24	8 Saying and implying	192-213	
Oct 26			
Oct 28	2235		
Oct 31	9 Mapping the world	228-241	Project 2 data due
Nov 02		241-265	

<i>Date</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Class projects</i>
Nov 04			
Nov 07	10 Working the market – use of varieties	266-276	Project 2 data returned
Nov 09		276-292	
Nov 11			
Nov 14		292-304	
Nov 16			
Nov 18	2235		
Nov 28	11 Fashioning selves	305-332	Project 2 due
Nov 30			
Dec 02		NO CLASS	
Dec 05			
Dec 07			
Dec 09			Project final paper due