

Language & Public Policy

English 402: Fall '07

SYLLABUS

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All national governments, most local governments, and many private institutions have to contend with issues arising from the fact that people speaking different languages or varieties of languages live within their borders or interact with their personnel. In this course, we will be concerned with official and unofficial policies and practices relating to language, and with larger issues of language in society, including language and ethnicity, language and nationalism, language and education, and languages in cross-cultural and international communication. As the title of the course implies, we will also be interested in questions relating to the legal status of languages and language rights. In addition, we will be concerned with the relation between linguistic culture and language policy, with the status of international languages, and with the phenomenon of language death.

Course Goals:

By the end of the course, students should have:

- a broad understanding of basic problems in the field of language and public policy,
- an understanding of the complexity of language roles and attitudes toward language across the world,
- an understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and language,
- an understanding of the relationship between nationalism and language,
- an understanding of the complex factors that go into language planning decisions on the local, national, and international levels,
- and an in-depth understanding of language policy and planning with regard to some particular issue, situation, or region of the world.

Texts:

The following texts are available at the UWM bookstore:

Bernard Spolsky: *Language Policy*

Joshua Fishman, ed.: *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*

Christina Bratt Paulston: *Linguistic Minorities in Multilingual Settings*

Peter Trudgill: *Sociolinguistics*

The following text is available [free] online:

Harold Schiffman: *Linguistic Culture and Language Policy*

<http://www.netLibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=70761>

The Schiffman book is available as an eBook through the UWM Library. Additional online texts are listed below and also in the *Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments*.

Grin: Language Policy in Multilingual Switzerland

Haskel: Language and Globalization: Why National Policies Matter

LoBianco: Real World Language Politics and Policy

Archibald: Immigrant Integration: The Ongoing Process of Reform in France and Quebec

Alidou & Young: Education Language Policies In Francophone Africa: What Have We Learned From Field Experiences?

Brecht & Rivers: The Language Crisis in the United States: Language, National Security and the Federal Role

Walinsky: Meeting Current and Future Language Needs of the German Public Sector

Spolsky: Heritage Languages and National Security: An Ecological View

Alexander: Linguistic Rights, Language Planning and Democracy in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Extra: The Other Languages of Multicultural Europe: Perceptions, Facts and Educational Policies

Dumas: Quebec's Language Policy: Perceptions and Realities

Maher: Language Policy for Multicultural Japan: Establishing the New Paradigm
Trim: Foreign Language Policies in Europe
Kensaku: Fish Bowl, Open Seas and the Teaching of English in Japan
Daoud: Language Policy and Planning in Tunisia: Accommodating Language Rivalry
He: English Language Education in China

The texts above are downloadable from the course website: go the URL at the top of the syllabus, click on 'classes', then your class title. The titles above are available for all students, but they are recommended reading for the graduate students in particular.

Also on the class website, there a large number of links to sites with information about language planning issues.

Assignments & Exams:

There will be no exams in this class. Course grades will be based on written and in-class assignments. There are different requirements for undergraduate students and graduate students. For both graduates and undergraduates there will be two sorts of assignments, each worth 50% of the student's grade.

CHOSEN COUNTRY OR REGION — ***graduates and undergraduates:*** Each student will choose a country or a region and will report to the class periodically on issues relating to that country or region. These reports will take the form of short oral presentations, accompanied by paper handouts where appropriate. [The instructor will duplicate any handouts if they are provided to the instructor a day before class.] Some suggested countries are provided below:

<i>France</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>India</i>
<i>Mexico</i>	<i>China</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>
<i>Iran</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Bolivia</i>
<i>Brazil</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>
<i>Germany</i>	<i>Sudan</i>	<i>Uganda</i>
<i>South Africa</i>	<i>Nigeria</i>	<i>Guyana</i>
<i>Thailand</i>	<i>Lithuania</i>	<i>Singapore</i>

It's also possible to select a region of a country: this would be especially appropriate for large countries. The details of each of the presentations will be discussed in the syllabus below and in class.

POLICY AREA RESEARCH PAPER — ***undergraduate students:*** Undergraduates will write a report on a area of language policy. The paper will be submitted to the instructor in written form [electronic submission is preferable] and its main points will be summarized orally to the class. The written version of the paper should be about 6-12 pages single-spaced and should include a proper bibliography. The topic of the research paper, which must be approved by the instructor, include, but are not restricted to, the following topics:

- language policies and practice in use by an international company or set of related companies
- language policies and practices by international air carriers with regard to customer services [e.g. check-in desks, on-board flights]: should include comparative data involving carriers of different national origins
- language exam policy for PhD students at universities: policy and rationale
- language policies and practice of police agencies: should include comparative data and rationale
- language policies and practice of hospitals and other health-care agencies: comparative data and rationale
- comparative study of language instruction policies, practices, and goals of a set of countries
- comparative study of language graduation requirement for different sorts of majors in different countries
- comparative study of national language policies for the mass media [especially, state-run mass media]

- comparative study of language policies for publications and other media outlets by ethnic organizations in the US
- language policy and practice of a UN agency [e.g. UNICEF]





These papers should be well researched, with numerous references and, where appropriate and practical, with interviews of individuals involved in making and enforcing policy. The paper should be organized around factual information

RESEARCH PAPER — *graduate students*: The research paper can be on any topic relevant to the subject matter of the class. The paper will be submitted to the instructor in written form [electronic submission is preferable] and its main points will be summarized orally to the class. The written version of the paper should be about 10-20 pages single-spaced and should include a proper bibliography. The topic of the research paper, which must be approved by the instructor, can be on, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- A profile of the language policies [overt and covert] and linguistic culture of a given country or region. The country or region chosen can be the same as the one reported on in the oral presentations.
- A profile of a given ethnic or religious group and the language policies and practices that affect and characterize the group and affect language loyalty in whatever polity the ethnic group lives.
- A comparative discussion of two or more regions or ethnic/religious groups.
- A discussion of diglossia in a particular language. A comparative discussion is also possible here.
- A discussion of a particular piece of legislation, a particular court decision, etc. that affects language. This should be discussed from legal and social perspectives. The paper should explore the question of who supported it and who opposed it. The short and longterm consequences should be discussed. [The 'English Only' movement could be discussed under this rubric.]
- A discussion of a particular education practice that relates to language. Again, this discussion should be situated within the legal framework and linguistic practices of the polity that has utilized it. The effects, short and longterm, of the policy should be discussed. [The controversy surrounding bilingual education could be discussed under this rubric.]
- A discussion of language/dialect maintenance and the media. One possible question might be: how do the instruments of the mass media either promote or discourage the maintenance of minority speech communities?
- A discussion of a particular instance of corpus planning. You could discuss the means by which a particular language acquired its standard orthography, grammar, etc. as a result [wholly or partly] of the intervention of a state. You could also discuss a particular instance of orthographic, lexical, or grammatical reform.
- A discussion of a particular instance of status planning. You could discuss the means by which a particular language acquired [or lost] its official status.
- A discussion of the interplay between nationalist feelings and a particular language.

In general, the best topics are the most specific ones; that is, it's better to think and write about a small topic, where you can explore the issues thoroughly, than a very general topic, where you must discuss issues superficially.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments:

Note: The graphic  signifies a reading assignment [for the following week], the graphic  signifies a thought assignment, the graphic  signifies an oral presentation, and the graphic  signifies a written assignment. For the reading assignments, items in italics are recommended, but not required.

Sep 6: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE; THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF LANGUAGES; THE HISTORY OF LANGUAGES



decide which country or region you will report on; decision by 9/12.



Trudgill Ch. 1-3, Spolsky Ch. 1, *Schiffman Ch. 1*

Sep 13: THE HISTORY OF LANGUAGES [CONT]; LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY



tell the class which country or region you've selected.



Trudgill Ch. 4-6; Spolsky Ch. 4

Sep 20: LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY [CONT]



report to the class on the genetic affiliations of the languages spoken in your country or region.



Trudgill Ch. 7-9, *Schiffman Ch. 2*

Sep 27: LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY [CONT]; LANGUAGE AND ETHNICITY



report to the class on the linguistic culture of your country or region.
Describe nature and extent of multilingualism & diglossia, and which varieties are H- and L-variants.



Trudgill Ch. 10, Paulston Ch. 1-3, *Schiffman Ch. 3*

Oct 4: LANGUAGE AND ETHNICITY [CONT]; LANGUAGE AND NATIONALISM



report to the class on the ethnic groups living in your country or region.



Paulston Ch. 7, Fishman Ch. 5-6, Spolsky Ch. 8

Oct 11: LANGUAGE AND NATIONALISM [CONT]; LANGUAGE AND THE STATE



decide on a topic for your research paper; decision by 10/17.



report to the class on the varieties of nationalism – ethnic, linguistic, civic – found in your country or region.



Fishman Ch. 11-12; Spolsky Ch. 7; Universal Declaration of Human Rights:
<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

Oct 18: STATUS PLANNING



tell the class what topic you've chosen for your research paper.



report on the political institutions found in your country or region.



Fishman Ch. 2, 7; Spolsky Ch. 9-11

Oct 25: STATUS PLANNING [CONT]



report to the class on any examples of status planning in your country or region.



Fishman Ch. 3

Nov 1: CORPUS PLANNING



report to the class on any instances of corpus planning in your country or region.



Fishman Ch. 4, 13; Spolsky Ch. 2, 3

Nov 8: CORPUS PLANNING [CONT]; INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES



report to the class on the role of international languages in your country or region.



Spolsky Ch. 6

Nov 15: LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION



report to the class on how the educational system of your country or region deals with the linguistic situation found there.



Fishman Ch. 9, Ch. 29; Spolsky Ch. 12

Nov 22: **Thanksgiving Holiday**

Nov 29: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS



Dec 6: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS



research papers due.

Detailed Topic Outline:

1. Introduction to the course
 - a. illustrative narratives
 - b. discuss focus of class
 - i. language, ethnicity, nationalism, ideologies about language, covert *vs* overt language policies, linguistic culture, language & religion, politics of language, 'good' language *vs* 'bad' language', language & class
 - ii. who decides what is good & bad, which languages should be used/taught/ tolerated/prohibited?
 - iii. how are decisions made?
 - iv. what institutions manage language?
2. The nature and origin of languages
 - a. language and human evolution
 - b. the nature of linguistic systems; differences among languages
 - c. variation within languages: language, dialect, register
3. The history of languages
 - a. the 'out of Africa' hypothesis
 - b. language evolution & change
 - c. language families; language families & human populations
 - d. the origin of languages: language as natural phenomena and as a social construction; language & dialect; standard dialects
 - e. Language contact
 - i. contact situations
 - ii. speech areas
 - iii. borrowing
 - iv. pidgins, creoles, creoloids
 - f. language shift, language death
4. Language and society
 - a. languages as transmitters of culture
 - b. dialects: their origin and social function
 - i. regional and social dialects
 - ii. diglossia
 - c. language & gender
 - d. monolingual & multilingual societies
 - i. the origins of multilingualism
 - ii. stable *vs* transient multilingualism

- e. linguistic culture
 - i. contexts of use among languages & dialects in multilingual settings; registers
 - ii. H- and L-languages/ dialects
- 5. Language & ethnicity
 - a. language and the creation & maintenance of ethnicity
 - b. ethnic languages and languages of religions
 - c. can there be ethnic groups without ethnic languages?
- 6. Language & nationalism
 - a. ethnicity *vs* nationalism
 - b. the origins of the nation
 - c. the relation of language to nationalism
 - d. language and 'nation building'
 - e. do nations require a national language?
- 7. Language & the state
 - a. language & the interests of the state
 - i. public administration, the military, education
 - ii. economy
 - iii. national unity; language & citizenship, participation in national culture
 - b. immigration, emigration, language, and the state
 - c. language policy & linguistic culture
 - i. overt policies and covert policies
 - d. corpus planning & status planning
- 8. Status planning
 - a. the role of the state in promoting mono- or poly-lingualism
 - b. status planning by non-government institutions
 - c. selection among languages
 - i. factors motivating selection: why choose among languages?
 - ii. factors influencing selection
 - iii. consequences of selection
 - iv. discussions of models: France, US, Soviet Union, Uganda
 - d. means
 - i. how are decisions concerning language status made & who makes them?
 - ii. how are policies regarding status implemented?
 - e. language rights of minorities, majorities
 - f. overt and covert policies in status planning
- 9. Corpus planning
 - a. the need for corpus planning
 - i. corpus planning as a result of status planning
 - ii. the functions of a standard dialect
 - iii. problems in the formation of a standard dialect & why standard dialects are considered necessary
 - iv. the origin of standard dialects
 - a. 'natural' evolution
 - b. state intervention
 - v. the relation of standard dialects to elites
 - b. corpus planning: for which languages?
 - c. the mechanics of corpus planning
 - i. goals – standard dialects: dictionaries, grammars, orthographic systems

- a. grammars & dictionaries: selecting among variants, inventing forms
 - b. writing systems and languages
 - ii. means: academies, academic departments, publishers, newspapers, etc.
 - iii. implementation
 - a. role of schools, academies, print media, broadcast media, religious institutions
 - b. role of business, personal interactions
 - d. 'purism' and puristic doctrine: what is 'bad' language?
- 10. International languages
 - a. the role of international & regional languages
 - b. the state & international & regional languages
 - i. education
 - ii. economy
 - iii. international languages & status planning
 - c. international English and the evolution of the various Englishes
- 11. Language and education
 - a. what is best for children, what is best for the state
 - i. bilingual education, immersion
 - ii. economic factors in education
 - b. status planning and education
 - c. corpus planning and education
 - d. language rights and education: indigenous residents, longterm residents, recent immigrants, and guestworkers
 - e. education and intra-language varieties
 - i. purism and the desire to eliminate 'bad' language
 - ii. the rights of speakers of non-standard varieties
- 12. Language death & revitalization
 - a. the 'ecology' of languages
 - b. language loss *vs* language death
 - c. the stages of language 'health'
 - i. contextually unrestricted, contextually restricted; registers of use
 - ii. not threatened, threatened
 - ii. vital [integral community use], moribund [not used by integral communities], dead [extinct]
 - d. revitalization
 - e. the role of the state in language loss and revitalization
 - f. the role of non-state organizations in language revitalization [and language loss]
- 13. Majorities and Minorities
 - a. promoted, protected, tolerated, and prohibited languages
 - b. the rights of minorities
 - i. access [to education, services, jobs, etc.]
 - ii. ethnic heritage
 - iii. the ethnic heritage movement
 - c. the deaf community
 - d. the rights of majorities
 - i. ethnic heritage
 - ii. the English-only movement in the US
- 14. What about language can be 'planned'? Summary.

- a. the effectiveness of language planning
- b. the virtues & faults of the various 'solutions' to multilingualism & multidialectalism
- c. the politics of language

Final Note:

English Department policies on Academic Dishonesty, Grievances, Participation by Students with Disabilities, Observance of Religious Holidays, and Sexual Harassment are posted on a bulletin board in the west corridor of the 4th floor of Curtin Hall (near the department office) and on the English Department homepage (<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/English>).