

# **ANTH 380T/LING 339N Language Variation and Change**

Binghamton University, Fall 2010

Tuesdays, Thursdays 2:50PM – 4:15PM, Student Service Wing Room 325

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**Overview:** This course will examine how language varies based on regional and historical factors, as well as social factors such as ethnicity, gender, and age. The course will also explore processes that account for synchronic and diachronic variation. This course will focus on English, and students will be encouraged to investigate variation within other languages as well. The course will primarily consist of lectures and class discussions based on the assigned readings.

## **Textbook:**

(Required): Walt Wolfram and Natalie Schilling-Estes. **American English**, Second Edition. (2006)  
ISBN: 978-1-4051-1266-6

(On Reserve in Library): Chambers, Trudgill, and Schilling-Estes. **Handbook of Language Variation and Change**. (2006)

Additional readings may be made available on Blackboard.

## **Grading:**

Attendance and Participation: 10%

Homework and Class Preparation: 10%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Term Paper: 30%

**Blackboard:** Students will be expected to check Blackboard regularly for additional readings, homework assignments, and other handouts. This course syllabus is also available on Blackboard.

**Term Paper:** The final term paper for this course will be a 10 page paper exploring one of the topics discussed in this class, according to each student's interests. This paper will require at least 4 sources, only one of which may be an internet resource. While Wikipedia may be a useful starting point for research, it is not acceptable as a primary source. Scholarly print journals which are available as electronic files are acceptable.

**Academic Integrity:** The Student Academic Honesty Code applies to this course, especially for exams and the term paper. Make yourself familiar with it. You may wish to note that each year academic honesty violations (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on quizzes or exams) can and do result in Harpur students being suspended from the University for multiple semesters. You can find out more about the Honesty Code in the bulletin: <http://bulletin.binghamton.edu> (Click on [Academic Policies and Procedures - All Students](#)).

**Cell Phone Policy:** Please turn off your cell phones entirely or turn off the ringer. If your telephone rings during class, you be asked to leave the classroom to answer the telephone, and you will be marked absent for that day. If you are expecting any important phone calls during class, please set your phone to vibrate. Text messaging during class will not be tolerated. The same rules apply to office hours as well.

**Students with Disabilities:** Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) provides a wide range of assistance to enrolled students with physical, learning or other disabilities. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities, Phone: 607-777-2686 (voice/TTY), Fax 607-777-6893. E-mail: [bjfairba@binghamton.edu](mailto:bjfairba@binghamton.edu)

**Course Goals:** By the end of this course, students will have a basic knowledge of the different varieties of English spoken in the United States, the historical processes that led to the development of multiple varieties, and the social constructs that have an effect on variation between language varieties. These processes and linguistic phenomena can be applied to varieties of any language. The term paper will allow students to develop their knowledge based on their personal/academic interests in conjunction with the topics discussed in this course.

**Schedule:**

31-Aug	Intro/Syllabus
2-Sep	Traditional Dialectology Language with an Attitude - Dennis R. Preston
7-Sep	<b>No Class</b>
9-Sep	<b>No Class</b>
14-Sep	Ch 1 - Dialects, Standards and Vernaculars
16-Sep	Ch 1
21-Sep	Social Networks - Lesley Milroy
23-Sep	Ch 2 - Why Dialects?
28-Sep	Ch 2
30-Sep	Variation and Phonological Theory - Arto Anttila
5-Oct	Ch 3 - Levels of Dialect
7-Oct	Ch 3
12-Oct	Ch 4 - Dialects in the United States: Past, Present and Future
14-Oct	Ch 4
19-Oct	Ch 5 -Regional Dialects
21-Oct	Ch 5
26-Oct	Investigating Chain Shifts and Mergers - Matthew J. Gordon
28-Oct	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
2-Nov	Ch 6 - Social and Ethnic Dialects
4-Nov	Ch 6
9-Nov	Social Class - Sharon Ash
11-Nov	Ch 7 - African American English
16-Nov	Ch 7
18-Nov	Ch 8 - Gender and Language Variation
23-Nov	Ch 8
25-Nov	<b>No Class- Thanksgiving</b>
30-Nov	Sex and Gender in Variationist Research - Jenny Cheshire
2-Dec	Ch 9 - Dialects and Style
7-Dec	Ch 9
9-Dec	Conclusion and Review
Dec 13-17	Finals Week

*Material listed by chapter number is from **American English**. Material listed by title and author is from **the Handbook of Language Variation and Change**.*