

**Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures**

**Fall 2019**

**Professor:** Dr. James Essegbey

**Office:** Pugh Hall 342

**Phone:** (352)8462431 & (352)273-3060

**Offices:** 342 Pugh Hall & 63 Dauer Hall

**Office hours:** Mondays & Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 (and by appointment)

**E-mail:** [essegbey@ufl.edu](mailto:essegbey@ufl.edu)

**SSA 4930 Section 3579/ LIN 4930 Section 4D25/ LIN 6932 Section 4D40**

**Language Endangerment**

**Time: 4<sup>th</sup> period (10:40 - 11:40)**

**Location: Documentation Lab**

**Description**

The United Nations has declared 2019 to be the Year of Indigenous Languages (IY2019) in order to draw attention to the important role these languages play in the lives of people. According to UNESCO, of the world's 6000-7000 languages, 97% of the world's population speak 4% of the languages while only 3% of the people speak 96% of the languages. A great number of these languages are disappearing at an alarming rate, and it is estimated that up to 50% of the languages will become extinct by the end of the century. The course explores the phenomenon of language endangerment across the world, noting the differences in Africa, as opposed to the Americas and Australia. It examines the causes of language endangerment and its ramifications for the societies that lose their languages, on the one hand, and the scientific community, on the other.

**Course objectives**

At the conclusion of the course the participants should be able to:

- describe the highly endangered situation of indigenous languages in all parts of the world
- distinguish between the different processes of language loss
- identify the consequences for a community to lose its language and culture
- define measures taken to reverse language loss

**Course Material:** The course textbook is Sarah G. Thomason (2015) *Endangered languages: an introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

In addition, chapters will be taken from the following books:

- Leonore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (eds.), (1998) *Endangered languages: language loss and community response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Tania Granadillio and Heidi A. Orcutt-Gachiri (eds.), (2011) *Ethnographic contributions to the study of endangered languages*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press
- K. David Harrison (2007) *When languages die: the extinction of the world's languages and the erosion of human knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

These and a few other articles will be placed in the course site on Canvas

### **Requirements**

Final grading is based on an assignment, a test, a project work, and critical report on other projects. While the 4000-level students will do the project work in pairs, 6000-level students will do it alone. The breakdown is as follows:

	4930	6932
Leading a presentation	30pts	20 pts
Midterm Test	30 pts	30 pts
Final (take home) exam	40 pts	30 pts
Project presentations (for 6000-level)	0	20

### **Week 1 (Wednesday August 21 – Friday August 23). Review of syllabus and introduction to language endangerment**

Endangered languages: why it matters <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7HZOsQYx\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7HZOsQYx_U)>

Introduction (Course Textbook pp 1-12)

### **Week 2 (Monday August 26 – Friday, August 30). The endangerment situation on the globe**

Why Save a language? <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7BLBUS1IXc>>

Toward a typology of language endangerment, by Leonore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (1998) *Endangered languages: language loss and community response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp 22-54

Can a language endanger itself? Reshaping repertoires in urban Senegal, by Fiona Mc Laughlin (2015) In James Essegbey, Brent Henderson & Fiona Mc Laughlin, (eds.), *Language documentation and endangerment in Africa*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Pp 131-151

**Week 3 (Wednesday, September 4 – Friday, September 6). Factors that contribute to language endangerment**

Why and how languages become endangered? (Course Textbook pp 18-37)

At the margin – African endangered languages in the context of global endangerment discourses, by Friederike Lüpke. *African Research & Documentation* (2009) No. 109, Social Science Premium Collection.

Monday, September 2, is a holiday

**Week 4 (Wednesday, September 9 – Friday, September 13). Factors that contribute to language endangerment**

Language ideologies in the discourse of education that promote language shift in Kenya. By Heidi A. Orcutt-Gachiri. In Tania Granadillio and Heidi A. Orcutt-Gachiri (eds.), *Ethnographic contributions to the study of endangered languages*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press. Pp 15-29

Education and its role in language endangerment in Siberia and the Far East. By Olga Kazakevich. In Tania Granadillio and Heidi A. Orcutt-Gachiri (eds.), *Ethnographic contributions to the study of endangered languages*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press. Pp 30-41

NB. I am away on Wednesday, September 11

**Week 5 (Monday, September 16 – Friday, September 20). Factors that contribute to language endangerment 2**

Is English education always detrimental to vernacular languages? Education and language endangerment from Papua New Guinea, by M. Lynn Landweer. In Tania Granadillio and Heidi A. Orcutt-Gachiri (eds.), *Ethnographic contributions to the study of endangered languages*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press. Pp42-56

**Week 6 (Monday, September 23 – Friday, September 28). Factors that contribute to language endangerment 2**

Sliding into dormancy: social processes and linguistic effects (Course Textbook pp 42-68)

Language contact, evolution and death: how ecology rolls the dice. In Salikoko S. Mufwene, (2001). *The ecology of language evolution*. Pp 145-166

**Midterm Exam** on Friday, September 28

**Week 7 (Monday, September 30 – Wednesday, October 2). What is lost: linguistic diversity**

The significance of diversity in language endangerment and preservation, by Marianne Mithun. In Leonore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (eds) *Endangered languages: language loss and community response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp 163-191

On endangered languages and the importance of linguistic diversity. By Ken Hale. In Leonore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (eds) *Endangered languages: language loss and community response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp 192-216

Friday, October 4 is Homecoming

**Week 8 (Monday, October 7 – Friday, October 11). What is lost 2**

What a community loses: language loss as cultural loss (Course Textbook pp 79-93)

The library of babel in *Dying words: endangered languages and what they have to tell us*. Nicholas Evans, Wiley-Blackwell pp5-44

**Week 9 (Monday, October 14 – Friday, October 18). What is lost 3**

What science loses: language loss as a threat to our understanding of human history, human cognition, and the natural world (Course Textbook pp 94-107)

Movie: First language: the race to save Cherokee < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9y8fDOLsO4>>

**Week 10 (Monday, October 21 – Friday, October 25). What is lost 4**

Living words and cartoon translations: Longhouse “texts” and the limitations of English. By Christopher Jocks. Leonore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (eds) *Endangered languages: language loss and community response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp 217-233

Documenting rhetorical, aesthetic, and expressive loss in language shift. By Anthony C. Woodbury. Leonore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (eds) *Endangered languages: language loss and community response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp 234-258

**Week 11 (Monday, October 28 – Friday, November 1). What is lost 5**

K. David Harrison When languages die: the extinction of the world’s languages and the erosion of human knowledge. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

An extinction of (ideas about) species (pp 23-56)

CASE STUDY: Vanishing herds and reindeer words (57-60)

Many moons ago: traditional calendars (pp 61-94)

CASE STUDY: Normads of Western Mongolia

**Week 12 (Monday, November 4 – Friday, November 8). What is lost 4**

Back from the (nearly) dead: reviving indigenous languages across North America

Mayan efforts toward language preservation by Nora C. England. In Leonore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (eds) *Endangered languages: language loss and community response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp 99-116

**Week 13 (Monday, November 11 – Friday, November 15). Revitalization**

Revitalizing endangered language (pp153-174)

Monday, November 11 is Veteran’s Day

**Week 14 (Monday, November 18 – Friday, November 22). Revitalization**

Copper Island Aleut: a case of language “resurrection,” by Nikolai Vakhtin. In Leonore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (eds) *Endangered languages: language loss and community response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp 317-327

**Week 15 (Monday, November 25). Presentation**

November 27-30 are Thanksgiving holidays

**Week 16 (Monday, December 2 – Wednesday, December 4) Presentation and revitalization**

Presentation and Take home exam

**Leading a presentation (30% for 4000-level students and 20% for 6000-level students)**

Each student is required to read one of the chapters/papers and give a presentation in class.

**Midterm test (30 points)**

Students will write a midterm test that deals with the topics covered over the period.

**Take home exam (40% for 4000-level students and 30% for 6000-level students)**

Students will receive a number of essay topics to write at home as a take home exam

**Presentation (20%)**

6000-level students will do a detailed presentation on an endangered language of their own choosing. T

**Grading Scale**

93-100 (A); 90-92 (A-); 87-89 (B+); 83-86 (B); 80-82 (B-); 77-79 (C+); 73-76 (C); 70-72 (C-); 67-69 (D+); 63-66 (D); 60-62 (D-); 59 or below (E)

A grade of Incomplete (I) will not be issued under any circumstance.

**Grading Policy**

Information on current UF grading policy can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

**Students with disabilities**

The University of Florida provides high-quality services to students with disabilities, and you are encouraged to take advantage of them. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should 1) Register with and provide documentation to Disability Resources (352-392-8565), and 2) Bring a letter to the instructor from Disability Resources indicating that you need academic accommodations. Please do this as soon as possible, preferably within the first week of class.

**Honor/Conduct Code**

An academic honesty offense is defined as the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage. As a University of Florida student, one is expected to neither commit nor assist another in committing an academic honesty violation. Additionally, it is the student's duty to report observed academic honesty violations. Violations of the Honor Code and academic dishonesty will be sanctioned.