

Language in African Society

LIN 4930 . LIN 6932. SSA 3730 . Spring 2021 . T4 R4-5 . FAC 120 & ONLINE
(see below, under Special information for Spring 2021, for details)

Instructor: Dr. Fiona Mc Laughlin

Office: 305 Pugh Hall

Hours: Wednesday 9:00-11:00am & by appt. (via Zoom)

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Lu nekk, mëneesna ko toxal, mu mel ni mu meloon, ba mu des wax
Anything can be moved and remain the same, except speech
Wolof proverb

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Africa is a vast and diverse continent where multilingualism is the norm and language plays a central role in social belonging and the maintenance of social relations. This course is concerned with the relationship between language and society in Africa from both a sociolinguistic and an ethnographic perspective. You will be introduced to a number of important topics in the study of language in African societies and become familiar with recent theoretical perspectives that allow you to talk about complex linguistic practices in new ways. No knowledge of an African language is required.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of this course are:

- To gain a general familiarity with the overall structure of African societies
- To survey the different roles of language in African societies
- To acquire critical skills for analyzing language in African societies
- To gain experience in presenting oral and written arguments about language in African societies
- To develop a deeper understanding of the role of language in African society

Broader objectives

These are objectives that go beyond the topic of the course to contribute to your growth as an educated person:

- To become a better – and a more interesting – writer
- To develop your ability to make informed and articulate arguments

Class format

My aim is to limit lecturing to at most one hour during a three-hour class week, and to spend the rest of the time on activities and discussion that will enable you to explore the material we are considering. The format of this class demands that you, the students, be active participants in the learning process by a) doing the assigned readings; b) coming to class prepared and ready to contribute to conversations and activities on the day's topic; c) listening to your classmates,

encouraging them, and sharing with them your thoughts, insights, frustrations, and (yes!) problems related to the material and topic at hand.

Class assignments will be posted to Canvas two weeks in advance, so be sure to check it on a regular basis.

Requirements & attendance policy

You are required to attend class, complete readings and assignments on time, and participate in class discussions and activities. I consider these requirements to be interrelated: you cannot do one without the other. You are entitled to one unexcused absence during the course of the semester, but you must provide documentation of extenuating circumstances for any other absence.

READINGS

The following textbooks are **required** for this class:

Grosz-Ngaté, Maria, John Hanson, and Patrick O'Meara, eds. 2014. *Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (4th edition)

Simpson, Andrew, ed. 2008. *Language and national identity in Africa*. Oxford University Press.

Additional required readings will be made available on CANVAS (<https://elearning.ufl.edu>) or through the UF library system.

GRADES

Undergraduate grades calculated as follows:

Paper 1	15%
Paper 1 rewrite	10%
Paper 2	15%
Paper 2 rewrite	10%
Small assignments	25%
Classroom contribution	25%

Graduate grades calculated as follows:

Paper 1	15%
Paper 2	20%
Small assignments	20%
Classroom contribution	25%
Final project	20%

The assignment of a final letter grade will be based on the following scale:

A 92-100	B 81-84.9	C 71-74.9	D 61-64.9
A- 88-91.9	B- 78-80.9	C- 68-70.9	D- 58-60.9
B+ 85-87.9	C+ 75-77.9	D+ 65-67.9	E Below 58

Undergraduates may consult the following website to see how the final letter grade is weighted with regard to overall GPA: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers may request academic accommodation through the Disability Resource Center <https://disability.ufl.edu>. You should share your accommodation letter with me as early as possible so that I can make appropriate arrangements.

Academic honesty

As a UF student you have subscribed to the Student Code of Honor. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, is a violation of that Code. Any student engaging in such activities will be dealt with in accordance with University policy and receive a failing grade for the course.

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

*Special information for Spring 2021

UF has implemented a hybrid teaching model for this semester which will allow some students to attend class in person while others participate simultaneously via Zoom. This will be a new experience for me as well as for you, and it will present some unique challenges. In this sense it will be an experimental semester, so I ask for your patience and flexibility, and I welcome your input into how best to make the hybrid model work.

Beginning the second week of the semester, Tuesday classes will be online for everyone, and Thursday classes will be hybrid. Those of you who signed up for the face-to-face section will meet on Thursdays in FAC 120, and Tuesdays online.

COVID safety requirements

In order to protect the University community, UF has established a set of COVID safety rules and requirements for students. I expect your full cooperation with these. Most pertinent to our class are the following:

1. If you are enrolled in a face-to-face section of this class, you must be cleared for being on campus in One UF. You must be tested for COVID on a regular basis and will only be allowed on campus if your test results are negative. **If you are not cleared, you will not be allowed to attend class.**
2. You are required to wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose at all times in this class. **If you fail to wear a mask you will be denied entry or asked to leave the classroom.**

The use of Zoom during the current pandemic has resulted in a number of best practices. These are outlined on our Canvas web-page under Files>Netiquette. Please read them and apply them to your participation by Zoom.

SCHEDULE of TOPICS (subject to minor changes according to class needs)

*Please consult CANVAS for details of weekly readings and assignments. These will be posted two weeks in advance.

Week 1 **Introduction to African societies: Space and time**
1/12-14

Week 2 **Introduction to African societies: Social relations**
1/19-21

Week 3 **Multilingualism and linguistic repertoires in African societies**
1/26-28

Week 4 **Language and the city in Africa**
2/2-4

Week 5 **Language and the city in Africa**
2/9-11

February 15: First paper due

Week 6 **Multilingualism and the nation**
2/16-18

Week 7 **Multilingualism and the nation**
2/23

March 1: First paper rewrite due

Week 8 **Writing and old literacies in Africa**
3/2-4

Week 9 **Writing and new literacies in Africa**
3/9-10

Week 10 **Language and mediation**
3/16-17

Week 11 **Language and mediation**
3/23-24

March 29: Second paper due

Week 12 **Language vitality and endangerment in Africa**
3/30-4/1

Week 13 NO CLASS (ACAL)
4/6-8

April 12: Second paper rewrite due

Week 14 **Language vitality and endangerment in Africa**
4/13-15

Week 15 **Wrap-up**
4/20