

Language, Thought, and Culture

ENGL 381, section 1

10:00-11:15 M, W

Prim Library 214

Spring Semester 2014

Instructor: Laura Wetherington
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Office: 2nd floor TCES
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 9-10 a.m. & 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Required Books:

1. *Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics*. 11th ed. Ohio University Press, 2011. ISBN-10: 081425179X
2. *Spreading the Word: Language & Dialect in America* by John McWhorter. Heinemann, 2000. ISBN-10: 0325001987
3. *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook*, 8th ed. by Jane E. Aaron ISBN-10: 020523660X

In addition to the books listed above, students will read articles posted on Moodle and choose one from the following four books for the literary research paper:

1. Anzaldua, Gloria. *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* ISBN-10: 1879960850
2. McCaffery, Steve. *Every Way Oakly*. ISBN 978-1-897388-26-6
3. Philip, M. NourbeSe and Setaey Adamu Boateng. *Zong!* ISBN: 978-0-8195-7169-4
4. Stalling, Jonathan. *Yingleshi: Sinophonic English Poetry and Poetics*. ISBN: 978-1933996233

Course Description:

Every field of study, from psychology to business to biology, introduces students to disciplinary habits of mind. That is to say: Each department on campus has different and specific approaches to critical thinking. A liberal arts education, then, is buffet of incredibly rigorous and sometimes wildly different ways of approaching ideas.

In general, your English classes are a chance to use writing as a tool for discovery, to practice looking for patterns, themes, and arguments in writing (your own and others'), and to discover the world through different perspectives and worldviews. In specific, this course introduces students to descriptive approaches to language using linguistics as a method of discovery about the self. In the first half of the course, students will learn about phonetics, syntax, and morphology, and apply that learning to a dialect of English. In the second half of the course, students will have the chance to use linguistics study as a lens for interpreting literature, namely, contemporary books of poetry which challenge our everyday notions of how language is used.

Some guiding questions for this course:

1. How does language influence the way we interpret the world around us?
2. Can language be used for purposes other than, or in addition to, creating meaning? If so, what are those other purposes?
3. What tools can we use to decode difficult texts, or to make sense from what initially appears as nonsense?

Student Outcomes: On successful completion of this course, students will be practiced in writing well-constructed arguments that matter in a variety of academic contexts. They will be equipped to read actively, question critically, generate research questions, and understand academic writing as a process of discovery. They will, in addition, be familiar with the methods of library research.

Methods of Assessing Student Outcomes: Student outcomes will be assessed using the following:

1. Class Preparation, In-Class Discussions and Participation
2. Written Work
3. Language Files Exercises
4. Midterm & Final

COURSE POLICIES

Workshops, Discussions, and the Group Brain

This kind of class functions best with active, dynamic feedback from all of the students. A discussion or a workshop session, when it's singing, becomes a macrocosm of the mind at work: one student's comment fires a series of thoughts for the rest of the class. Questions and ideas build until the entire class has an epiphany. The students and the teacher work together to tackle material and grapple with complexity. We become a group brain. While the essays we will discuss model the finished product, our discussions model the writing process. We work to hone a set of skills: close-listening and keen observation, recognition of categories and definitions, suspension of disbelief, risk-taking, and a wild willingness to try on different points of view. In our discussions we practice identifying where the complications of an essay lie, and then we look for keys to unlock those gray areas. By doing this work together, we create a space for the whole group to move forward in its thinking.

Attendance

Because much of the work and learning for this course depends on the successful collaboration and cooperation of all class members, attendance and active participation are required throughout the semester, and they will contribute to your grade. Please plan to attend every class and stay for the entire period. If you know you will need to leave early on any given day, please let me know before class begins.

After your third absence, each absence will result in a reduction of one letter grade. For example, if you have an 85% at the end of the semester and have missed 5 classes, then your grade will be dropped to a 65%. Chronic lateness will accrue toward absences.

Some absences may be excused and will not adversely affect students' grades. All excused absences require documentation. These include absences followed by a note from a medical facility identifying you were under medical care during scheduled class time and absences followed by documentation of a school-related trip. Other absences may be excused if the situation warrants. It is the students' responsibility to see me to discuss the nature of the absence.

When you plan to be absent, you are responsible for making arrangements in advance for turning in assignments that are due while you are away. Please make it your responsibility to find out what you missed in class and to be fully prepared for the next session.

Conferences and Office Hours

We will meet in my office during the fourteenth week of class (May 21-May 23rd) to discuss your development as a writer and your literary research paper. This meeting will last about 15 minutes. If you are unable to show up for your conference appointment, notify me in advance so we can reschedule. A missed conference will count as an absence.

Feel free to drop by my office if you have any questions or problems concerning this class. If you are unable to see me during my office hours, please send me an e-mail so we can set up an appointment that fits into your schedule.

Work

In addition to conferences, regular attendance, note-taking during lectures, and active participation in classroom discussions and activities, you will complete a variety of in-class and outside of class reading and writing assignments. By the end of the semester, you will have compiled a grammatical sketch of English, you will have an introductory knowledge of some of the major areas of linguistics, and you will have written a ten page research paper. You will also have multiple opportunities to practice oral presentations and public speaking techniques. You will receive more information and detailed instructions before you begin to work on your assignments.

Portfolio

Your portfolio will contain all of your written work from the semester with instructor comments and a three-page self reflection. Please make sure to keep all of these materials in a safe place throughout the semester.

Manuscript Format

Except for the occasional in-class writing assignment, all work submitted in this course should be typed in black ink, double spaced with one-inch margins all around, in Times New Roman 12 point. Moreover, you must include your name, course and section number, as well as the date of submission in the upper left-hand corner of the paper. If your work is longer than one page, you should number your pages and staple them.

Draft Review

I will be happy to review your draft with you in person during my office hours or by appointment. However, I will not comment on drafts by e-mail.

Electronic Devices

Cell phones, mp3 players, and computers create distractions in the classroom. Use of these devices, therefore, is not acceptable during class time. Failure to comply with this policy will affect your final grade.

Grades: The grades you will receive for your work are identical to the official SNC catalog:

Grade	Explanation	Grade Point Equivalent
A	Excellent	4.0
A-	Excellent	3.7
B+	Above Average	3.3
B	Above Average	3.0
B-	Above Average	2.7
C+	Average	2.3
C	Average	2.0
C-	Average	1.7
D+	Below Average	1.3
D	Below Average	1.0
D-	Below Average	0.7
F	Failing	0.0

Coursework and Grade Breakdown:

Participation 260 points

For the purposes of this class, your participation means that you have prepared for class in good faith and have done your homework on time; made a proactive, concerted effort to understand the course material; consistently contributed vocally to discussions; created space for the inclusion of your classmates in discussion; and paid attention to, listened to, and respected the opinions of your fellow classmates.

Language Files Exercises 90 points

The first half of the course focuses on linguistic study. Exercises accompanying each chapter of the text will offer the opportunity to apply the practices we'll be studying.

Grammatical Sketch

250 points

In the first half of the course, students will complete a grammatical sketch of English focusing on either a) slang, b) regional dialect, or c) English as a second language. This will be a chance to apply the terminology and habits of mind particular to the discipline of linguistics. This work will also give students a foundation for the literary research paper.

Literary Research Project

350 points

Choosing from four contemporary books of poetry, students will write a ten-page literary research paper which focuses on the language, thought, and culture within the text. The research project includes:

Proposal & Preliminary Bibliography	(25 points)
Oral Presentation	(25 points)
Annotated Bibliography	(25 points)
Rough Draft	(25 points)
Final Version	(250 points)

Midterm

25 points

The midterm will provide students with a chance to practice oral presentation skills. Each student will deliver preliminary interpretations of their chosen contemporary book of poetry, including a short synopsis of relevant material from the poetry book, summaries of relevant articles, and a working thesis for the literary research paper.

Portfolio, including 3 page Self-Reflection

25 points

The English Program uses portfolios as a chance for students to reflect on their growth over the entire term. To that end, for the final exam, each student will compile:

1. a title page (with a compelling title!) which includes a table of contents,
2. a three-page self-reflection letter which reflects on the student's work over the term, paying particular attention to the learning objectives in this syllabus, and
3. all graded work, with instructor comments, ordered chronologically.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Sierra Nevada College Mission Statement: Sierra Nevada College graduates will be educated to be scholars of and contributors to a sustainable world. Sierra Nevada College combines the liberal arts and professional preparedness through an interdisciplinary curriculum that emphasizes entrepreneurial thinking and environmental, social, economic and educational sustainability.

Core Themes: Liberal Arts, Professional Preparedness, Entrepreneurial Thinking, Sustainability

Learning Differences: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students with a documented disability are eligible for support services and accommodations. If a student wishes to request an accommodation, please contact the Director of Academic Support Services, Henry Conover, at (775) 831-1314 x7534, hconover@sierranevada.edu.

The Honor Code: The faculty of SNC believes students must be held to high standards of integrity in all aspects of college life in order to promote the educational mission of the College and to encourage respect for the rights of others. Each student brings to the SNC community unique skills, talents, values and experiences which, when expressed within the community, contribute to the quality of the educational environment and the growth and development of the individual. Students share with members of the faculty, administration and staff the responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment conducive to learning and personal development, where actions are guided by mutual respect, integrity, responsibility and trust. The faculty and students alike must make diligent efforts to ensure high standards are upheld by their colleagues and peers as well as themselves. Therefore faculty and students accept responsibility for maintaining these standards at Sierra Nevada College and are obligated to comply with its regulations and procedures, which they are expected to read and understand.

Consequences of Violating the Student Honor Code: SNC students and faculty share the responsibility for maintaining an environment of academic honesty. Thus, all are responsible for knowing and abiding by the SNC Faculty/Student Honor Code published in the current SNC Catalog. Faculty are responsible for presenting the Honor Code and the consequences of violating it to students at the start of their classes AND for reporting all incidences of academic dishonesty to the Provost. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes CHEATING, PLAGIARISM and FABRICATION and for refraining from these and other forms of academic dishonesty. Violations of the Honor Code become part of a student's academic record.

1st Offense: Student receives a zero for assignment/exam and counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

2nd Offense: Student fails course and receives counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

3rd Offense: Student is expelled.

The SNC Email System: The SNC email system is the official communication vehicle among students, faculty members and administrative staff and is designed to protect the confidentiality of student information as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 Act (FERPA). Students should check their college email accounts daily during the school year.

Students have a right to forward their SNC e-mail to another e-mail account (for example, @hotmail or @gmail). However, confidentiality of student information protected by FERPA cannot be guaranteed for SNC e-mail forwarded to an outside vendor. Having email redirected does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with official communication sent to his or her SNC email account.

WRITING RESOURCES

The Prim Library (<http://libguides.sierranevada.edu/library>) which, in addition to its book collection, houses:

Interlibrary Loan This service allows you to obtain articles or borrow books from other libraries. Some of the library's databases allow direct requests through the database interface. The online catalog allows holds to be placed using your library barcode number.

Scarsella-Boleky Tutoring Center (3rd floor Prim Library) Tutoring is available at no charge, not only to SNC students, but also to members of the Incline Village community. We only provide Tutoring services when our Fall and Spring semesters are in session, and only if qualified Tutors are available. You can also schedule one-on-one tutoring appointments in the following subject areas. To schedule, please fill out the [Tutoring Request Form](#) on the SNC website. Please be considerate and cancel by 10am on the day of your session. Repeated no-shows will be turned away for future appointments.

Incline Village Public Library One of the privileges of being a Sierra Nevada College student, staff or faculty member is that you are eligible to be a member of the Washoe County Public Library system at the Incline Village Public Library. This membership enables Sierra Nevada College students to have easy access to the print, video, and other collections of the Washoe Library system. SNC students are encouraged to enroll and use the Washoe County Public Library system. Washoe County Public Library Cards can be obtained at the Incline Village Public Library, 845 Alder Ave., Incline Village, NV 89451

The Eagle's Eye Newspaper The Eagle's Eye is a student-run publication which covers news of interest and importance to the greater Sierra Nevada College community.

Sierra Nevada Review The Sierra Nevada Review is an annual literary magazine published in May featuring poetry and short fiction. Editors read manuscripts from September until March (manuscripts submitted outside of the reading period risk a long, dusty dormancy). Response time may vary between a month and several months. The editorial staff changes on a yearly basis with the exception of advisory editor, June Sylvester Saraceno.

Writers in the Woods Reading Series: The Creative Writing Department has organized a series of readings and workshops. The Friday night readings remain free and open to all. Workshops are open to the community for a \$50 registration fee, and may be taken for credit or non-credit. The eclectic group of writers offers something for a wide range of interests—from history to science, drama, politics, comedy and, of course, literature.

ENGLISH 102 READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

The dates below are due dates. Please complete the assignments and readings in advance of class time. This schedule is subject to change. You are responsible for keeping up with in-class and email announcements about changes to our schedule.

SPRING 2014 READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

The dates below are due dates. Please complete the assignments and readings in advance of class time. This schedule is subject to change. You are responsible for keeping up with in-class and email announcements about changes to our schedule. Unless otherwise noted, written assignments are due before class begins on turnitin.com.

Wk	Date	Theme	Reading Prep	Due
1	Wednesday, January 22 nd	Introductions, Syllabus		
2	Monday, January 27 th	Languages	Language Files 2-34	
	Wednesday, January 29 th	Phonetics	LF 36-62	Chapter 1 Exercises #12, 20, 21
3	Monday, Feb. 3 rd	Phonetics	LF 62-67	Chapter 2 Exercises # 1, 3, 5-10
	Wednesday, Feb. 5 th	Phonology	LF 102-134	Chapter 2 Exercises #13-19
4	Monday, Feb. 10 th	Morphology	LF 148-164; 170-177	Chapter 3 Exercises # 1, 2, 6, 9
	Wednesday	Syntax	LF 196-214	Chapter 4 Exercises

	y, Feb. 12 th			# 2-4
5	Monday, Feb. 17 th	President's Day—No Class		
	Wednesda y, Feb. 19 th	Syntax	LF 215-229	Chapter 5 Exercises # 1, 2, 4, 18, 21, 29
6	Monday, Feb. 24 th	English in Action	McWhorter 1-60	
	Wednesda y, Feb. 26 th	CLASS CANCELLED— meet in study groups	McWhorter 60-76	Choose poetry book and post title to Moodle
7	Monday, March 3 rd	Grammatical Sketch Workshop		
	Wednesda y, March 5 th	Introduction to Literary Research Paper/ Library Research Skills		Grammatical Sketch due
8	Monday, March 10 th	Midterms: Oral Presentations of Poetry Books/ Library Research Skills, cont.	Little, Brown Compact Handbook (LBCH) pp. 311-371	
	Wednesda y, March 12 th	Midterms: Oral Presentations of Poetry Books		
9	Monday, March 17 th	SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS		
	Wednesda y, March 19 th	SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS		
10	Monday, March	Signifier-Signified	Saussure p. 956-	Mini-presentation (5

	24 th		977 (Moodle)	min. each) applying the reading to your poetry book
	Wednesday, March 26 th	Metaphors	Jacobson p. 1254-1269 (Moodle)	Mini-presentation (5 min. each) applying the reading to your poetry book
11	Monday, March 31 st	Developing Research Questions		Proposal and Preliminary Bibliography
	Wednesday, Apr. 2 nd	Decoding Difficult Secondary Sources		
12	Monday, Apr. 7 th	Team Teaching: Difficult Secondary Sources		
	Wednesday, Apr. 9 th	Team Teaching: Difficult Secondary Sources		Annotated Bibliography
13	Monday, Apr. 14 th	Synthesizing Multiple Sources		
	Wednesday, Apr. 16 th	Developing Arguments		Research Outline
14	Monday, Apr. 21 st	Individual Conferences—class cancelled		
	Wednesday, Apr. 23 rd	Revising Research Papers		Rough Draft
15	Monday, Apr. 28 th	Workshop		
	Wednesday, Apr. 30 th	Workshop		

16	Monday, May 5 th	Workshop		
	Wednesday, May 7 th	NO CLASS—STUDY DAY		
		Final Exam		Portfolio (including Research Paper)