University of Edinburgh
School of Social & Political Science
Social Anthropology
2016-2017

The Anthropology of Language
(SCAN10076)

Key Information

Course Organiser
Dr Magnus Course
Email: magnus.course@ed.ac.uk
Room 5.23
Chrystal MacMillan Building, George Square

Location
Semester 2
Lectures: Mondays, 9-10.50, Appleton Tower, 2.12
Tutorials: Wednesdays, 10-10.50, David Hume Tower, LG.10

Course Secretary
Joanne Blair
Email: joanne.blair@ed.ac.uk
Undergraduate Teaching Office, Ground Floor, Chrystal MacMillan Building

Assessment deadlines
• Short essay due: Wednesday 15 February 2017 at 12noon
• Long essay due: Wednesday 5 April 2017 at 12noon

Aims and Objectives
The emphasis of this course will be on showing how anthropology and comparative studies have enriched our understanding of the dynamic of language, and how engagement with the subject 'language', and with other disciplines concerned with this subject, have historically influenced anthropological thinking beyond language. Students will be introduced to a range of different anthropological approaches to the study of language, and to a variety of interests that have led anthropologists to take an interest in language and literary activity. The course demonstrates that in addition to communicating social reality through diverse mediums and strategies (attention is drawn to description, illustration, evocation and performance; to speech and to writing), language plays a role in constituting social reality. Language has therefore relevance for a broad range of general concerns and specialized interest, and this applies for both scholarship and social and political action. Connections that will be explored include the intersections with processes of personhood, statecraft, political resistance, and institutions of justice.
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Learning Outcomes
The course will offer a good theoretical overview of the place of language in everyday social life and critical political innovation, and of ideas derived from linguistics and language philosophy in anthropological theorising. By the end of the course students should have a strong sense of how social and political actors work language, and of the importance, scope and distinctiveness of anthropology’s contribution to the cross-cultural analysis of language. The reading list includes classical material and works relating to current debates so that students will be aware of both when they come across these approaches and debates in the literature and in future field situations.

Teaching Methods
The course involves one two-hour session a week for the whole class, together with small group teaching in separate one-hour sessions. The main session, most weeks will involve a mixture of a lecture and some discussion and group work.

The ‘small group’ teaching will normally be concerned with one or more readings that illustrate, underpin or extend issues raised in the main sessions. Students should note that participation in the small group support teaching sessions is compulsory and attendance will be recorded.

Assessment
Students will be assessed by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Word count limit</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Submission date</th>
<th>Return of feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial Participation</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Essay</td>
<td>1,500 words max (excluding bibliography)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>15/02/17 (all coursework is due at 12 noon on the date of submission)</td>
<td>08/03/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long Essay</td>
<td>3,000 words max (excluding bibliography)*</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>05/04/17, 12noon</td>
<td>26/04/17</td>
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*Note*: All coursework is submitted electronically through ELMA. Please read the School Policies and Coursework Submission Procedures which you will find [here](#).

**Tutorial Participation**
This carries a weighting of 10% towards the overall mark for the course. This mark will be based on both attendance and submission of weekly personal responses of 150 - 200 words to tutorial readings.

**Short Essay**
A short essay (word-limit: 1,500); this carries a weighting of 30% towards the final overall mark for the course. The essay questions will be posted on Learn.

**Long Essay**
A long essay (word limit: 3,000); this carries a weighting of 60% towards the final
The overall mark for the course. The essay questions will be posted on Learn.

**Communications**
You are strongly encouraged to use email for routine communication with lecturers. We shall also use email to communicate with you, e.g., to assign readings for the second hour of each class. All students are provided with email addresses on the university system, if you are not sure of your address, which is based on your matric number, check your EUCLID database entry using the Student Portal.

This is the ONLY email address we shall use to communicate with you. Please note that we will NOT use ‘private’ email addresses (such as Yahoo or Hotmail). It is therefore essential that you check your university email regularly, preferably each day.

**Reading**
The vast majority of articles are available electronically through Learn or online.

1. Reading for the two-hour lecture: every student must read the article/chapter indicated
2. Reading for one-hour support group: every student must read the article/chapter indicated
3. Further readings listed for each topic are intended to allow students to explore and consolidate their knowledge of particular themes. If you are intending to write an essay or examination answer on a particular topic, you must demonstrate that you have read many, if not all, the different readings suggested for that topic. In some weeks, we have given extensive references in order to help students explore the wider literature if they so wish: we would not expect any student to read all the references for either of these weeks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>16 January 2017</td>
<td>Saussure and the structure of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>23 January 2017</td>
<td>Wittgenstein and meaning as use</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>30 January 2017</td>
<td>Whorf and relativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>6 February 2017</td>
<td>Bakhtin and dialogicality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>13 February 2017</td>
<td>Language as ideology</td>
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**NO CLASS:**
**Festival of Creative Learning Week**

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>27 February 2017</td>
<td>Poetics and the ‘agency’ of speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>6 March 2017</td>
<td>Literacy and Literacies</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>13 March 2017</td>
<td>Language and Gender</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>20 March 2017</td>
<td>Ideologies of Language in Human Rights</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>27 March 2017</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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Reading List

Week 1: Saussure and the structure of language
The posthumously published lectures of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure revolutionized both linguistics itself, and the entire field of social theory. Saussure’s move away from a diachronic approach in which the focus was on the historical evolution of language towards a synchronic one in which the focus was on the relations between symbols, had major implications for anthropology.

Essential readings:

Saussure, Ferdinand. 1983. *Course in General Linguistics*. R. Harris, trans. LaSalle, II: Open Court. [Read Introduction Chapters 2 & 3; Part I Chapter 1; Part II Chapters 3 & 4]


Further readings:


(NB: No tutorial in Week One)

Week 2: Wittgenstein and meaning as use
Wittgenstein, like Saussure, initially viewed language as an arbitrary structure of relations which mapped on to the structure of an objective, external world. In this lecture, however, we will focus instead on Wittgenstein’s later writings in which he repudiated his earlier position and saw meaning in language as emerging through conventional use. Wittgenstein’s writing thus leads into anthropological emphases on context in the creation of meaning.

Essential readings:


Basso, Keith. 1983 “Stalking with Stories”: Names, Places, and Moral Narratives among the Western Apache. In *Text, Play, and Story: The Construction and

Tutorial reading:


Further readings:


Week 3: Whorf and relativity

If we accept the idea that meaning at least partly emerges through context, the question arises of how different contexts give rise to different meanings. We will focus in particular on the work of Benjamin Lee Whorf whose rather ambiguous writings have earned both praise and scorn.

Essential readings:


Tutorial reading:


Further readings:


Duranti, Alessandro. 1997. Linguistic Anthropology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Read Ch. 3]
Week 4: Bakhtin and dialogicality
Having explored through the work of Wittgenstein and Whorf that idea that meaning emerges through social contexts, we turn to Bakhtin’s work on the dialogical nature of language. Bakhtin’s insistence on the social positioning of each ‘voice’ has had a major influence on anthropological studies of the relations between language and power.

Essential readings:


Tutorial readings:


Further readings:


Week 5: Language as ideology
Given that language can be both expressive and constitutive of power, we should not be described that it is also the site of much political struggle. In this lecture we start to explore the importance of language ideology.

Essential readings:


Tutorial reading:


Further readings:


No Classes during Festival of Creative Learning Week

Week 6: Poetics and the ‘agency’ of speech
How does the concept of ‘poetics’ allow for an understanding of language which goes beyond simple reference?

Essential Readings:


Chavez, Alex. 2015. So ¿te fuiste a Dallas? (So you went to Dallas?/So you got screwed?): Language, Migration, and the Poetics of Transgression. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 25(2): 150-172.

Tutorial reading:


Further readings:


Week 7: Literacy and Literacies
How much of a difference does literacy really make? What different meanings might be attached to the term? In this lecture we explore the debate between the ‘great divide’ theorists who suggest that literacy makes a radical difference to society, and ‘literacies’ theorists who argue that literacy takes so many different forms that universal theories cannot be applied.

Essential readings:


Tutorial reading:


Further readings:


Week 8: Language and Gender
Anthropologists, sociolinguists, psychologists and others have directed significant attention to the role of gender in speech practices and the interactional construction of gender identities. This week, we will consider an ongoing debate about theorizing why, when and how gender differences in language use happen. The core conflict can be summarised as between a ‘dual culture’ model and a power-based model. These approaches result in different interpretations when ethnographic specificity if introduced to analysis.

Essential Readings:


Tutorial Reading:

Further Readings:


Week 9: Ideologies of Language in Human Rights Administration
To what extend, and on what grounds, do anthropologists challenge an historically specific ideology of violence, narration and silence that are embedded in the realm of “TRCs”?

Essential readings:


Tutorial reading:


Further readings:


Week 10: Conclusion
Overview of Issues and Exam Preparation.
Appendix 1 – General Information

**Students with Disabilities**
The School welcomes disabled students with disabilities (including those with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia) and is working to make all its courses as accessible as possible. If you have a disability special needs which means that you may require adjustments to be made to ensure access to lectures, tutorials or exams, or any other aspect of your studies, you can discuss these with your Student Support Officer or Personal Tutor who will advise on the appropriate procedures.

You can also contact the Student Disability Service, based on the University of Edinburgh, Third Floor, Main Library. You can find their details as well as information on all of the support they can offer at: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service](http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service)

**Learning Resources for Undergraduates**
The Study Development Team at the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) provides resources and workshops aimed at helping all students to enhance their learning skills and develop effective study techniques. Resources and workshops cover a range of topics, such as managing your own learning, reading, note-making, essay and report writing, exam preparation and exam techniques.

The study development resources are housed on ‘LearnBetter’ (undergraduate), part of Learn, the University’s virtual learning environment. Follow the link from the IAD Study Development web page to enrol: [www.ed.ac.uk/iad/undergraduates](http://www.ed.ac.uk/iad/undergraduates)

Workshops are interactive: they will give you the chance to take part in activities, have discussions, exchange strategies, share ideas and ask questions. They are 90 minutes long and held on Wednesday afternoons at 1.30pm or 3.30pm. The schedule is available from the IAD Undergraduate web page (see above).

Workshops are open to all undergraduates but you need to book in advance, using the MyEd booking system. Each workshop opens for booking two weeks before the date of the workshop itself. If you book and then cannot attend, please cancel in advance through MyEd so that another student can have your place. (To be fair to all students, anyone who persistently books on workshops and fails to attend may be barred from signing up for future events).

Study Development Advisors are also available for an individual consultation if you have specific questions about your own approach to studying, working more effectively, strategies for improving your learning and your academic work. Please note, however, that Study Development Advisors are not subject specialists so they cannot comment on the content of your work. They also do not check or proof read students' work.

To make an appointment with a Study Development Advisor, email [iad.study@ed.ac.uk](mailto:iad.study@ed.ac.uk)

(For support with English Language, you should contact the English Language Teaching Centre).

**Discussing Sensitive Topics**
The discipline of Social Anthropology addresses a number of topics that some might find sensitive or, in some cases, distressing. You should read this Course Guide carefully and if there are any topics that you may feel distressed by you should seek advice from the course convenor and/or your Personal Tutor.)
For more general issues you may consider seeking the advice of the Student Counselling Service, [http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-counselling](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-counselling)

**External Examiner**
The External Examiner for the Social Anthropology Honours programme is: Dr Adam Reed, University of St Andrews.
Appendix 2 - Course Work Submission and Penalties

Penalties that can be applied to your work and how to avoid them.

There are three types of penalties that can be applied to your course work and these are listed below. Students must read the full description on each of these at: http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/current_students/teaching_and_learning/assessment_and_regulations/coursework_penalties

Make sure you are aware of each of these penalties and know how to avoid them. Students are responsible for taking the time to read guidance and for ensuring their coursework submissions comply with guidance.

- **Incorrect submission Penalty**
  When a piece of coursework is submitted to our Electronic Submission System (ELMA) that does not comply with our submission guidance (wrong format, incorrect document, no cover sheet etc.) a penalty of 5 marks will be applied to students work.

- **Lateness Penalty**
  If you miss the submission deadline for any piece of assessed work 5 marks will be deducted for each calendar day that work is late, up to a maximum of seven calendar days (35 marks). Thereafter, a mark of zero will be recorded. There is no grace period for lateness and penalties begin to apply immediately following the deadline.

- **Word Count Penalty**
  The penalty for excessive word length in coursework is one mark deducted for each additional 20 words over the limit. If the limit is 1500 words then anything between 1501 and 1520 words will lose one point, and so on. Word limits vary across subject areas and submissions, so check your course handbook. Make sure you know what is and what is not included in the word count. Again, check the course handbook for this information.
  You will not be penalised for submitting work below the word limit. However, you should note that shorter essays are unlikely to achieve the required depth and that this will be reflected in your mark.

ELMA: Submission and Return of Coursework

Coursework is submitted online using our electronic submission system, ELMA. You will not be required to submit a paper copy of your work.

Marked coursework, grades and feedback will be returned to you via ELMA. You will not receive a paper copy of your marked course work or feedback.

For details of how to submit your course work to ELMA, please see our webpages here. Remember, there is a 5 mark incorrect submission penalty. so read the guidance carefully and follow it to avoid receiving this.

Extensions: New policy-applicable for years 1-4

From September 2016, there will be a new extensions policy that applies to all courses in the school from years one to four.
If you have good reason for not meeting a coursework deadline, you may request an extension. Before you request an extension, make sure you have read all the guidance on our webpages and take note of the key points below. You will also be able to access the online extension request form through our webpages.

- Extensions are granted for 7 calendar days.
- Extension requests must be submitted no later than 24 hours before the coursework deadline.
- If you miss the deadline for requesting an extension for a valid reason, you should submit your coursework as soon as you are able, and apply for Special Circumstances to disregard penalties for late submission. You should also contact your Student Support Officer or Personal Tutor and make them aware of your situation.
- If you have a valid reason and require an extension of more than 7 calendar days, you should submit your coursework as soon as you are able, and apply for Special Circumstances to disregard penalties for late submission. You should also contact your Student Support Officer or Personal Tutor and make them aware of your situation.
- If you have a Learning Profile from the Disability Service allowing you potential for flexibility over deadlines, you must still make an extension request for this to be taken into account.

Exam Feedback and Viewing Exam Scripts:
General exam feedback will be provided for all courses with an examination. General feedback will be uploaded to the relevant course learn page within 24 hours of the overall marks for the course being returned to Students.

Students who sit the exam will also receive individual feedback. The relevant Course Secretary will contact students to let them know when this is available and how to access it.

If students wish to view their scripts for any reason, they must contact the relevant Course Secretary via email to arrange this.

Plagiarism Guidance for Students: Avoiding Plagiarism
Material you submit for assessment, such as your essays, must be your own work. You can, and should, draw upon published work, ideas from lectures and class discussions, and (if appropriate) even upon discussions with other students, but you must always make clear that you are doing so. Passing off anyone else's work (including another student’s work or material from the Web or a published author) as your own is plagiarism and will be punished severely.

When you upload your work to ELMA you will be asked to check a box to confirm the work is your own. All submissions will be run through ‘Turnitin’, our plagiarism detection software. Turnitin compares every essay against a constantly-updated database, which highlights all plagiarised work. Assessed work that contains plagiarised material will be awarded a mark of zero, and serious cases of plagiarism will also be reported to the College Academic Misconduct officer. In either case, the actions taken will be noted permanently on the student's record. For further details on plagiarism see the Academic Services' website:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/conduct/academic-misconduct/what-is-academic-misconduct
Data Protection Guidance for Students
In most circumstances, students are responsible for ensuring that their work with information about living, identifiable individuals complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. The document, *Personal Data Processed by Students*, provides an explanation of why this is the case. It can be found, with advice on data protection compliance and ethical best practice in the handling of information about living, identifiable individuals, on the Records Management section of the University website at:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/dpforstudents