

COM 380-02: Topics in Communication: Language and Technology

Spring 2014
M & W 5:00 – 6:15 pm
SH 202/Galvin Library

Instructor:

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Office: Siegel 207
Office Hours: M & W 3:00pm – 4:30pm, and by appointment

Course description: This course examines language change and how traditional and new communication media has augmented, constrained and simulated language. The course is divided into four sections. Section one provides an introduction to language change and new media and examines recent claims about the way in which technology is changing language. Section two introduces students to technology tools which can be used for language analysis. In sections three and four, we examine the impact of technology on the lexicon, syntactic and semantic structures and discourse.

This course has been designed to develop students' information literacy and research skills; therefore, in addition to the core lectures, a number of library sessions have been scheduled in conjunction with the Galvin Library. At the end of the course, students will be able to articulate a research problem, locate and evaluate reliable sources of information and organize and synthesize this information effectively. Library session will be covered in sections one and three of the course.

Requirements: Evaluation will be based on the development of an annotated bibliography, a final paper, a presentation of the paper, a review of selected software, and two in-class exams scheduled at the following times:

Exam 1: February 10

Exam 2: April 07

The paper will be an approved application of some area of language as it relates to technology. The paper for undergrads will be around 1,200 words, and for grads max 20 pages. The paper is due May 07 at midnight, as a PDF or word file sent to hlawren1@iit.edu.

Evaluation: The final grade will be determined by performance on the exams (each worth 20% of overall grade), paper (15% of grade), presentation (5%), software review (20%) and annotated bibliography (20%). Letter grades for undergrads are scheduled as follows: A=80% or higher, B=70-79%, C=60%-69%, D=50-59%, F=49% or lower. Letter grades for grads are scheduled as follows: A=80% or higher, B=70-79%, C=60%-69%.

Deadlines: There will be no opportunity to make up missed exams, or presentations. Late papers will be reduced by 5 percentage points for each day late.

Special needs: Adaptation of methods and materials for students with documented disabilities will be made in consultation with the Center for Disability Resources.

Course Schedule

Section 1: Introduction to Language Change/ Information Literacy 1	
01/13	Lecture 1: Why and how language changes
01/15	Lecture 2: Changing technology; Changing language
01/20	MLK Day: No classes
01/22	Lecture 3: Examining claims about language change
01/27	Lecture 4: Understanding the organization of information systems
01/29	Lecture 5: Recognizing and articulating a research problem
02/03	Lecture 6: Developing appropriate and effective search strategies
02/05	Lecture 7: Locating and retrieving information sources
02/10	Exam 1
Section 2: Technology Tools for Language Analysis	
02/12	Lecture 8: Introduction to Phonetics
02/17	Lecture 9: Phonetics (2)
02/19	Lecture 10: Phonetics Practice
02/24	Lecture 11: Lab Session - Praat
02/26	Lecture 12: Technology tools for natural language and text analysis
03/03	Lecture 13: Lab session – Text Analysis
03/05	Presentation
Section 3: Technology and Lexical and Semantic Change/Information Literacy 2	
03/10	Lecture 14: Technology and Lexical Change
03/12	Lecture 15: Introduction to semantics
03/17	Spring Break – no classes
03/19	Spring Break – no classes
03/24	Lecture 16: Technology and semantic change
03/26	Lecture 17: Analyzing and critically evaluating information
03/31	Lecture 18: Organizing and synthesizing information
04/02	Lecture 19: Using and applying information effectively
04/07	Exam 2
Section 4: Technology and Syntactic Change/Discourse Analysis	
04/09	Lecture 21: Introduction to Syntax
04/14	Annotated Bibliography Due
04/14	Lecture 22: Technology and Syntactic Change
04/16	Lecture 23: Introduction to Discourse Analysis
04/21	Lecture 24: Technology and Discourse Analysis
04/23	Open Session – Discuss Papers/Presentations
04/28	Presentations
04/30	Presentations
05/07	Paper due at midnight

Course schedule

Section 1: Introduction to Language Change/ Information Literacy 1

Week	Date	Topic	Readings & Assignment
1	01/13	Lecture 1: Language Change and evolution	<p>Look at the video "The History of the English Language 1" (URL given below) and respond to the prompt: Stuart-Smith et al. (2013) argue that "The starting point for any discussion about language change and media has to be the locus of language variation and change itself, namely social interaction." What evidences of social interaction can be found leading to change of the English language. What evidence is there of media impacting on the evolution of Early English?</p> <p>Post your answer to the blackboard discussion list.</p>
	01/15	Lecture 2: Changing technology; Changing language	<p>Choose one of the articles below and write an annotated bibliographic entry – full citations are at the end of the document.</p> <p>Baines, L. A future of fewer words? Cook, S. E. New Technologies and Language Change: Towards Anthropology of Linguistic Frontiers. Nkomo, D. Embracing the mobile phone technology: its social and linguistic impact with special reference to Zimbabwean Ndebele.</p>
2	01/20	MLK Day -- no class	Look at the video " History of English Language – 8. " (URL given below)
	01/22	Lecture 3: Examining claims about language change	<p>Read the article "The end of language? LOL. By Sue Khodarahmi and respond to the following prompt: Khodarahmi states that the changes which we are witnessing in texting are just the latest evolution of language. Do you agree or do you think that these changes are detrimental to the English Language or not? Could it be argued that online language has in a way become a dialect? Provide support from one of the articles summarized on 01/15 or the video from 1/20.</p>
3	01/27	Lecture 4: Understanding the organization of information systems	Library Session -- Materials provided by Galvin Library Instructor
	01/29	Lecture 5: Recognizing and	Russell, D. L. Designing a research project: Beginning with the end in mind. In <i>Advances in Interpreting Research</i> . Nicodemus

		articulating a research problem	et al. (eds). 2011 Photocopy of the article will be provided.
4	02/03	Lecture 6: Developing appropriate and effective search strategies	Library Session -- Materials provided by Galvin Library Instructor
	02/05	Lecture 7: Locating and retrieving information sources	Library Session -- Materials provided by Galvin Library Instructor
5	02/10	Exam 1	

Section 2: Technology and Tools for Language Analysis

Week	Date	Topic	Readings & Assignment
		Lecture 8: An Introduction to Text Analysis	Lecture based on article: Text analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods. See full reference below. Individual project assigned – due 03/05
6	02/12	Lecture 9: Introductions to Phonetics	Language files – copies provided
	02/17	Lecture 10: Introductions to Phonetics	Language files – copies provided
7	02/19	Lecture 11: Phonetics Practice	Language files exercises - copies provided
	02/24	Lecture 12: Lab Session – Praat	Download from praat.org
8	02/26	Lecture 13: Lab session – Text Analysis	Individual project due – review of text analysis software. List available at https://digitalresearchtools.pbworks.com/w/page/17801708/Text%20Analysis%20Tools
	03/05	Presentation	Presentation of text analysis software

Section 3: Technology and Lexical and Semantic Change/Information Literacy 2

Week	Date	Topic	Readings & Assignment
9	03/10	Lecture 14: Technology and Lexical Change	The Oxford Dictionary recently added “Infomania” to its list of words – a word directly related to technology culture. Etymologists suggest that words are formed in different ways; for example, blending would explain the formation of the word “informania”. Provide a list of 20 new words related to technology, their definition and etymological roots. The source of their definition should be noted and the list should be posted to BlackBoard.
	03/12	Lecture 15: Introduction to semantics	Prompt for discussion: “Do changes in words and the meaning of words affect society, or does changing society change the meaning of words?”
10	03/17	Spring Break – no classes	
	03/19	Spring Break – no classes	
11	03/24	Lecture 16: Technology and semantic change	Read the article “11 Ordinary Words That Have New Meaning In Social Media” -- full reference below. Come up with a list of 20 words whose meanings have changed because of some late 20 th or 21 st century technology. The list should be posted to BlackBoard.
	03/26	Lecture 17: Analyzing and critically evaluating information	Library Session -- Materials provided by Galvin Library Instructor
12	03/31	Lecture 18: Organizing and synthesizing information	Library Session -- Materials provided by Galvin Library Instructor
	04/02	Lecture 19: Using and applying information effectively	Library Session -- Materials provided by Galvin Library Instructor
13	04/07	Exam 2	

Section 4: Technology and Syntactic Change/Discourse Analysis

Week	Date	Topic	Readings & Assignment
	04/09	Lecture 20: Introduction to Syntax	Language files - copies provided
14	04/14	Lecture 21: Syntax Practice	Annotated Bibliography Due Exercises provided
	04/14	Lecture 22: Technology and Syntactic Change	Modelling syntax for human computer interaction
15	04/16	Lecture 23: Introduction to Discourse Analysis	Reading Materials provided
	04/21	Lecture 24: Technology and Discourse Analysis	Modelling discourse for human computer interaction
16	04/23	Open Session	Discuss Papers/Presentations
	04/28	Presentations	
17	04/30	No classes	
	05/07	Final Paper due	