

CES 240: Language: the Colonial and Imperial Difference

Course blog: <https://ces240winter2019.blogspot.com/>

Kalamazoo College

Winter 2019

Tuesday/Thursday 12:10PM - 02:00PM in UJL 305

Dr. Reid Gómez

107 Humphrey House

269.337.7353

Office Hours: Wednesday 2-4; Thursday 11-12

Course Description:

CES 240 is an interdisciplinary survey course designed to introduce students to the study of language and power. Our primary objective will be to assert linguistic rights and to interrogate the politics of language use, and thought, in light of colonization, imperialism and the transit of empire. We will consider the geo-political ideas and practices of literacy, language revitalization, translation and identity. These explorations will serve as a means to counter monologism, monoculture, and monolingualism often invoked in nationalist projects. These ideas are grounded in narratives and vocabularies particular to racial and colonial projects, consequently, each student will be asked to develop to their own creative understanding (linguistically speaking) of the field (language and the meta-linguistics of power). This will require fluency and immersion in a practice of meta-linguistics and the exploration of the inter-relationship between the language of the academy, and the language of social cultural community relevance. Critical Ethnic Studies requires scholarship able to counter the false binary between activism and intellectualism—that process is grounded in language.

“The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people’s definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relationship to the entire universe.”

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o

Required Texts:

Salvation on Mission Street by Cathy Arellano

His Own Where (Introduced by Sapphire) (1971: 2010) by June Jordan

The Clothing of Books by Jhumpa Lahiri

Language Planning and Policy in Native America: History, Theory, Praxis (Bilingual Education and Bilingualism) (2012) by Teresa L. McCarty

Human 3.0 Reading List 2015-2016 by Cauleen Smith

On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century by Timothy Snyder

Journal articles and/or book chapters (as detailed in this syllabus). These articles will be distributed via our email-list. Please make sure you have the readings, and read them, before the class period scheduled for discussion. See course grid for a detailed schedule.

Handouts distributed in class, or via email

Course Requirements/Assignments/Assessment:

Assessing the status of your language: 10 points

Oral Performance: 10 points

Listening Mid-Term Examination: 10 points

Policy Brief: 20 points

A Telling In Turn/Language Choice: 20 points

Politics & Society Op-Ed Assignment: 20 points

Participation and Decorum: 10 points

Extra credit option: The film *Âs Nutayuneân* [videorecording] [DVD] = **We still live here** is available at the circulation desk [DVD/Videos (W22- 1729)]. You may screen this film alone, or in a group, and write up a review of the film. This review should be 500-1,000 words and should explicitly reference course themes of materials. Each student is required to write their own review. (Up to 10 points available.)

Permalink for video:

http://onesearch.kzoo.edu/iii/encore/record/C__Rb1500234?lang=eng

Format for All Written Assignments: A note about form: all papers must be typed, proofread and printed. You should use a number 12 font. Times New Roman is my preferred font. All papers should include your name, my name (spelled correctly), the date, the assignment and an original title. There are no exceptions to these formatting requirements. Points will be deducted for failure to comply. Additional details for each assignment follow:

NB: I recommend you keep a writer's diary for the duration of this class. Your diary is a private space. You should keep it close at all times. Do not let anyone look through your diary space. If you want to share items you've placed in your diary, read them aloud, or copy out the sections you wish to share. Write, draw, doodle, cut-n-paste and copy—this will provide the source material for each of your written assignments, as well as class dialogue and discussion.

Assessing the status of your language: 10 points

Read Waziyatawin's chapter ("Defying Colonization Through Language Survival").

Answer the questions Waziyatawin asks in this chapter. If you feel they are not relevant, you must argue that point. You should think about the assumptions about language she is working from. Your reading of this chapter and your response to these questions should be informed by the readings for week one (Jordan, Silko and Basso). This paper will be used through out the term, as you engage in your own project of meta-linguistics, and for each of your written projects. Papers will be evaluated according to the clarity and depth of responses.

Oral Performance: 10 points

Each student will be required to deliver a two-minute dramatic reading of a text. Each text must be given written approval by Dr. Gómez. Sign-ups for individual performances will take place in the second week of the term. Performances will begin in the sixth week. Each performance will be evaluated according to the following criteria: verbatim recitation of text by memory, and the embodiment of the language of the text (physical, emotional and spiritual). Oral Performance grades will be decided together; Dr. Gómez will assign 5 points, and the CES 240 language community will assign 5 points.

Listening Mid-Term Examination: 10 points

Students will listen to a story in class. They will not be allowed to ask questions. Immediately following the story they will be given a written exam. They will be required to re-tell the story, in the greatest detail possible, with as much original language as possible. Exams will be evaluated according to the following criteria: accuracy of retelling, detail, and use of original language.

Policy Brief/Statement: 20 points

This paper must follow the format and length requirements of standard policy briefs and statements. Students will be given a written assignment sheet in class. Student's arguments should reflect a detailed and nuanced understanding of the course material, particularly part two of the course design. Policy Brief/Statements will be evaluated according to the following criteria: evidence of engagement with course material, format, strength of argument, originality of argument and innovativeness of policy recommendations.

For examples and/or guidelines see:

[Questions To Consider When Writing a Policy Paper](#)

[Writing Effective Policy Papers](#)

[Suggestions for Writing Policy Analysis](#)

These links will be posted on the course blog.

A Telling In Turn/Language Choice: 20 points

Each paper should contain a maximum of 1,000 words (you must include word count) that critically address ideas of translation and language choice. You may focus your ideas on any of our course materials. You should formulate an argument you can argue. Following Strunk and White's "Elementary Principles of Composition" (rule no. 12) you should "Choose a suitable design and hold to it." Your writing should reflect your passion and creativity, and should be profound. Consequently, you should select a point, or matter, you care intensely about. Each paper will be evaluated according to three principles: has the author (you) identified a key concept (or argument) of the text, can they articulate that concept in their own words, and finally have they clearly and effectively formed an original argument/response to that concept.

Politics & Society Op-Ed Assignment: 20 points

This Assignment is adapted from *Public Sociology for Political Sociology: A Politics and Society Op-Ed Assignment*. Assignment goals: "Students will learn how to synthesize sociological research and communicate their findings in a new but important

format: an op-ed piece. In doing so, they will learn how to communicate research findings to non-academic audiences in an effective manner.” Assignment parts: topic submission; annotated bibliography; Op-ed review and rubric creation; Op-ed draft; and final submission. Details of the assignment will be distributed in class via handout.

Full citation: Brown, Hana E. 2012 “Public Sociology for Political Sociology: A Politics and Society Op Ed Assignment.” Assignment published in TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)

Participation and Decorum: 10 points

Your participation will be evaluated on your attendance, participation in class discussion, use of office hours, responsibility toward intellectual partners (when, and as, assigned) and response to email correspondence.

Required Attendance and Participation:

Class participation: **We create the class together. Everyone's voice is essential and valuable. We will focus on listening, speaking and responding to each other.**

Dialogue (meaningful conversation) and translation (between languages and viewpoints) will be an everyday activity. Daily attendance is required. Any and all absences must be discussed with me, in writing, or during office hours; together we will decide on the best means of making up any missed work. Any unexcused absence will result in a reduction of grade (by 10 points).

Class Responsibility and Decorum: Each class session will consist of group discussion and/or individual writing exercises. My goal is to maintain an intellectually stimulating and supportive class environment. I expect everyone to be prepared for, and to participate in, discussion. **Readings are to be completed before each class.** Each member of the class is expected to follow a code of ethics: no tardiness, no sleep deprivation, no demeaning, hateful or violent remarks, no cell phones, no internet or email, no texting and no intimidation. Failure to follow this code of ethics will result in direct and immediate action.

Resources:

- Kalamazoo College Library: https://reason.kzoo.edu/library/research_help/
- The Writing Center: <http://reason.kzoo.edu/writingcenter/>
- Student Code of Conduct: <https://reason.kzoo.edu/studev/stuconduct/>
- Academic Honesty: <https://reason.kzoo.edu/studev/policies/dishonest/>

Part One: Points of Entry

“Language is political. That’s why you and me, my Brother and my Sister, that’s why we sposed to choke our natural self into the weird, lying, barbarous, unreal, white speech and writing habits that the schools lay down like holy law.”

June Jordan

Week One: Stalking With Stories: Language is Political

June Jordan, “White English/Black English: The Politics of Translation (1972),” *Civil Wars* (1981), and “Nobody Mean More To Me Than You and the Future Life of Willie Jordan”

Leslie Silko, “Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective,” *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit* (1997)

Keith H. Basso, “Stalking with Stories,” *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (1996)

Waziyatawin, “Defying Colonization Through Language Survival” (2005)

Part Two: Language Planning and Policy

“Applied to the project of language reclamation, continuance, as we understand it, is not so much about bringing a language ‘back’ as bringing it ‘forward’ into the vital, ever changing, everyday of people’s lives.”

Teresa McCarty

Week Two: First Peoples, First Principles: Context and Concepts

Reading: *LPP: History, Theory, Praxis* pp. 1-50

Assessing the status of your language: Due Thursday at the beginning of class. No exceptions.

Sign-up for oral performance.

Week Three: Repatriating the Spoken Word

Reading: *LPP: History, Theory, Praxis* pp. 51-102

Reading: *His Own Where*, Jordan readings from week one (review)

Week Four: Language Regensis in Practice

Reading: *LPP: History, Theory, Praxis* pp. 103-154

Op-Ed Topics: Due Thursday at the beginning of class. No exceptions.

Week Five: The Youth and the Seventh Generation

Reading: *LPP: History, Theory, Praxis* pp. 155-202

Listening Mid-Term Examination: Thursday in class.

Policy Brief: Due Thursday at the beginning of class. No exceptions.

Part Three:
Translation: A Telling In Turn

“Regarding a text as a ‘telling in turn’ and thus as a verbal performance assumes that we, too, are part of this ocean of the streams of story, contributing to it and redirecting its flow.”

Christi Merrill

Week Six: Anuvad and Language Choice

Chinua Achebe, “The African Writer and the English Language”

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, “The Language of African Literature”

Christi Merrill, “Can the Subaltern Joke? (to open)”

Reid Gómez, “The Meaning of Written English”

William Leap (Handout: Text and Language Choice)

Oral performances begin. Consult sign up for your date and time.

Op-Ed Bibliography: Due Thursday at the beginning of class.

Week Seven: Choices (Arellano)

Reading: Cathy Arellano, *Salvation on Mission Street*

Review published Op-Ed and Generate Grading Rubric: Thursday class workshop

Week Eight: Choices (hooks and Morgan)

bell hooks, “‘this is the oppressor’s language/yet I need it to talk to you’: Language, a place of struggle”

Marcyliena Morgan, “The African American speech community: culture, language ideology and social face”

Op-Ed Draft: Due Thursday at the beginning of class.

Week Nine: Choices (Lahiri and Smith)

Reading: *The Clothing of Books* by Jhumpa Lahiri

Reading: *Human 3.0 Reading List 2015-2016* by Cauleen Smith

A Telling In Turn/Language Choice: Due Thursday at the beginning of class. No exceptions.

Week Ten: Choices: On Tyranny and Creative Understanding

M. M. Bakhtin (authoritative discourse, and creative understanding)

Reading: Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*

Op-Ed (final): Due Monday morning (after the final day of class) at 8 am via email.

You must include the media outlet and plan for submission of final piece. No exceptions.