Language and Identity in Modern Chinese Societies, Fall 2014

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Office hours: Tuesday, 1:30-2:30pm, or by appointment

Course Description:
Language use is inevitably intertwined with identity portrayal and perception in any society. This course will introduce to students fundamental concepts in sociolinguistics and current issues in language and society. We will then examine how identities are retained, shaped and formed through language choice and language use in the People’s Republic of China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and other Chinese diaspora. Students will gain a critical understanding of how ethnic diversity, geography, rich linguistic heritage, radical social experiments, and rapid modernization have affected language use and the forming of social identity in modern Chinese societies. Topics include language and ethnic identity, language and the migrant identity, language and gender identity, language and national identity, and language and identity under globalization. No prerequisites.

Learning Goals:
This course satisfies the following Core Curriculum learning goals:
- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experiences of and perspectives on the world (21C)
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization (SCL)
- Formulate, evaluate, and communicate conclusions and inferences from quantitative information (QQ)

Class materials:
- Other readings: The journal articles and other book chapters listed in the weekly readings will be available on Sakai.
- Films: We will be discussing three films over the course of the semester. We will watch clips of the films in class. You are strongly encouraged to watch the films in their entirety in your own time (they will be on reserve at the library).
- PowerPoint slides: The PowerPoint slides used in the lectures will be available on Sakai.

Course Evaluation:
- Attendance, Preparation & Participation 20%
- Short Responses 20%
- Lead Class Discussion 10%
- Mid-term Exam & Final Exam 50%

Attendance, Preparation & Participation 20%
You are expected to attend class and actively participate in the discussions. You are allowed no more than two absences without a Dean’s excuse. You are expected to complete the assigned readings before each class. Absences can be excused only for religious reasons (must be reported in advance), or documented emergencies (official documents must be provided). If you expect to miss a class, please use the university absence reporting website (https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/) to indicate the date and reason for your absence.
Short Responses 20%
There will be five short response assignments over the course of the semester. For each assignment, you are to write a 250-300 word short response. The questions will be distributed a week in advance.

Lead Class Discussion 10%
You will have two opportunities to lead 20-minute class discussions. For each discussion, working with a partner, you will prepare 5-10 questions for discussion from the day's readings. You are encouraged to use PowerPoint slides or handouts. You will be graded as a pair.

Exams 50%
Mid-term Exam (20%)
The mid-term is an in-class exam consisting of term identification and short answer sections.

Final Exam (30%)
The final exam is a take-home exam. You will be choosing three out of five questions and writing a short essay for each question (300-500 words each). You must refer to at least two course readings for each essay. The essays must be typed, and any other sources used must be properly cited. The questions will be handed out on the last day of class. A hardcopy of the final exam is due at my office at 12:00 noon a week later.

Plagiarism/Cheating Policy
Any form of Plagiarism/Cheating is strictly forbidden in this course. Plagiarism/Cheating on assignments, tests and exams will automatically result in an “F” for the task. Please visit Rutgers Academic Integrity website (http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu) for details, and read in particular the “Policy on Academic Integrity” available at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf.
Schedule:

**Weeks 1-2** | Introduction to language, identity and society
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Course overview
Trudgill, Ch1: “Sociolinguistics—Language and society”
Wardhaugh (2010), Ch2: “Language, dialect, and varieties”

**Weeks 3-4** | Language and ethnic identity
---|---
Trudgill, Ch3: “Language and ethnic group”
Romaine (2000): “Language choice”
Ferguson (2003): “Diaglossia”
Chen (1999): *Modern Chinese: History and Sociolinguistics*, Chapter 4
Diaglossia in Chinese societies
Gunn (2006): *Rendering the Regional: Local Language in Contemporary Chinese Media*, Chapter 4
Discuss film: The City of Sadness 悲情城市 (1989)

**Week 5** | Language and the migrant identity
---|---
Short response #1 due
Trudgill Ch2: “Language and social class”
Language and identity crisis in China’s migrant workers
Jie (2011): *Discourse, Identity, and China’s Internal Migration: The Long March to the City*, Chapters 1 & 4
Discuss film: Last Train Home 归途列车 (2009)

**Weeks 6** | Language and identity at the workplace
---|---
Short response #2 due
Wardhaugh (2010), Ch11: “Solidarity and politeness”
Politeness and “face” at the Chinese workplace

**Mid-term Exam**

**Weeks 7-8** | Language and gender identity
---|---
Trudgill, Ch4: “Language and sex”

Week 9-10  **Language and national identity**

Short response #3 due  
Trudgill, Ch7: “Language and nation”


Linguistic engineering in China  
Selections from Ji (2004): *Linguistic Engineering: Language and Politics in Mao’s China*

Chen (2001): “Development and standardization of lexicon in Modern Written Chinese”

Weeks 11-12  **Language and identity under globalization**

Short response #4 due  
Trudgill, Ch9: “Language and contact”  

Liu & Tao (2012): “Negotiating linguistic identities under globalization: language use in contemporary China”

Selections from Lo Bianco et al. (2009): *China and English: Globalization and the Dilemmas of Identity*

Weeks 13-14  **Language and online identity**

Short response #5 due  

Gao (2012): “Synchronic variation or diachronic change: a sociolinguistic study of Chinese Internet language”

Discuss film: 24 City 二十四城记 (2008)

Weeks 15  **Conclusion**

Wrap-up

**Take-home final exam distributed, due in a week**
References for the readings:


