How speakers see themselves and how they are seen by others are often linked to the language that they speak and the linguistic choices that they make. In the present course, we will consider the interaction of language and ethnicity. We will look at the role of language in the construction of identity, particularly ethnic and racial identity. Further, we will consider in-group and out-group uses of language alike. In particular, we will look at three sets of minorities: African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos.

Language, language attitudes, language use--none of these are neutral. We will examine American language ideology, not only those aspects of it that are widely held among Americans generally but also facets that differ from group to group and may be contested between groups. We will consider the politics of language in America, including the ongoing school-centered controversies over bilingual education and the status of "Ebonics." Still with regard to formal education, we will look at its role in language socialization, particularly in the language socialization of minority children.
Course Requirements

Students are responsible for the both the readings and the lectures, for materials presented formally in class and in the recitations. Every student is expected to come to class and to the recitations prepared to discuss the scheduled readings. There will be a midterm examination and a final. In addition, there will be three short papers on assigned topics, each due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. (Handwritten papers will not be accepted.) The topics will be handed out a few days in advance. The exams and papers will be based on the readings and the lectures.

Note that late papers will not be accepted.

The midterm examination will take place on Monday, October 25, in class. The final examination will take place on Monday, December 20, from 12 noon to 1:50 p.m.

Note that examinations must be taken at the scheduled time.

Examinations that are missed will not be excused unless a student provides notification immediately as well as appropriate documentation; the documentation will then be verified.

Grading

The basis for grading is as follows:

- Performance and Participation in the Recitation (assigned by the preceptors) 15%
- Midterm examination 25%
- Final examination 30%
- First short paper 5%
- Second short paper 10%
- Third short paper 15%

100%

Readings

Book


Articles

The assigned articles for the course are available in a packet from New University Copy, 11 Waverly Place.
Syllabus

9/8: Introduction

9/13, 9/15, 9/20, 9/22: Overview

9/27, 9/29, 10/4/ 10/6: Language Attitudes and Language Ideology
NB: no recitations on 9/29 or 10/1

10/11 First paper due

10/11, 10/13, 10/18, 10/20: Asian American Language and Culture

10/25: Midterm
10/27-11/15: African American Language and Culture

10/27


11/1, 11/3

11/8

11/10: Second paper due

11/10

11/15, 11/17

11/24, 11/29, 12/1, 12/6, 12/8: Latino Language and Culture
no recitations on 11/25 or 11/26

12/6: Third paper due

12/13: Conclusion

12/20: FINAL EXAM, 12 noon–1:50 p.m., 206 Silver