

LANGUAGE AND HUMOR: A SIGNATURE COURSE

Course #: UGS 302 (Unique #65035)
Dates/Times: T-TH 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.
Location: Jester (JES) A205A
Instructor: **Dr. Angela M. Nonaka**
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10 a.m. ~ 12 p.m. & by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Adopting a linguistic anthropological approach to the study of 'language' and 'humor,' this course investigates the linguistic and cultural bases for and constraints on humor as well as its individual and collective psychosocial and communicative purposes and effects. Typically, students will identify and reflect on the reasons and motivations for humor, its sources and styles, for individuals and social groups. Methodologically, you will learn about and enjoy hands-on practice with basic linguistic anthropological methods (e.g., ethnographic observation, transcription, and discourse analysis) that will allow you to analyze the linguistic and cultural as well as the physical and performance aspects of humor. By examining a wide range of humorous phenomena, ranging from formal comedy routines to humorous exchanges in the course of every conversation, students will gain insight into the socio-communicative structures, functions, and practices of humor and their significance in human interaction and social life.

Interwoven with the study of language and humor, this course includes a number of key learning objectives specific to the Signature Course program. First, this class is small by design and is meant to encourage the development of intellectual community. Second, special activities like the University Lecture Series and the Gems of UT fieldtrip to attend a Texas Performing Arts event will introduce you to some of the interesting and enriching experiences that UT and Austin have to offer. Finally, this course purposefully incorporates a variety of instructional activities and learning assignments in order to enrich the educational experiences and maximize the learning outcomes of the most number of students and also to hone important social scientific academic skills (e.g., observation, data collection, data analysis, information literacy, writing, public speaking and so forth) that will serve students well at university and in the world beyond.

Disclaimer/Warning: The study of humor is by definition interesting and fun, but at times it can be offensive. Because tastes vary and because the offensive aspect of words or actions in certain contexts is the very source of humor itself, you may sometimes be required to work at the boundaries of or outside your normal comfort zone. Just as doctors are inured to human nakedness in the course of their medical practice, you are university-level students now and you must be prepared to don the professional hat of a linguistic anthropologist in order to undertake rigorous and meaningful social scientific study of humor.

COURSE-RELATED READINGS AND RESOURCES

Readings: *Readings should be completed on time as per the calendar of course events.*****

- There is one required textbook for this course. It is available for purchase at the UT Coop Bookstore. The book is: Ross, Alison. 2005. *The Language of Humor*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Additional electronic postings may be posted on "Blackboard."

Audio-Visual Resources:

- (Most) Audio and visual resources shown in class are available either at the UT in the Fine Arts' audio-visual library or online at public sites like youtube, hulu, etc.

Required Signature Course Activities:

- University Lecture Series = free lecture series consisting of three evening lectures October 1, 2, & 3. As per the Calendar of Weekly Course Activities, you need only required attend one lecture. For more information see <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/uls>
- Gems of UT fieldtrip = see live comedic performance, Texas Performing Arts series, Bass Concert Hall. There is a \$10 student ticket fee that you must pay yourself.

Undergraduate Writing Center:

- The Undergraduate Writing Center is an excellent UT resource!!! For info see <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>
- They have a collection of handouts on various writing-related topics at <http://uwc.utexas.edu/handouts/>
- You may also schedule individualized appointments with a writing tutor.

UT Libraries and Collections:

- UT has numerous libraries with impressive holdings. Enjoy and take advantage of these collections!
- The general library home page can be found at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>
- Learning to use the library; finding secondary good secondary source materials (not Wikipedia or Snoops); and so forth are critical skills to develop both for this class and for your academic future.

Tips for Working Efficiently and Learning Effectively:

- Attendance and participation count, so be present and take part.
- Students are strongly urged to plan ahead, avoid procrastination, and complete readings and assignments in a timely fashion. Such an approach will serve you well not only in this class but in all your courses!
- Quality development of written assignments and oral presentations will require time and several drafts.
- The final test is cumulative & subsequent assignments build on earlier ones, so study accordingly.

Benefit from the Wisdom of your Peer Mentor:

- Peer mentors are a unique and important resource for new students enrolled in Signature Courses at UT.
- As the term suggests, your peer mentor is a more advanced undergraduate student who has already successfully completed this course and who is familiar with UT and with Austin.
- Consult him/her and benefit from his/her experience and knowledge.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Required Assignments*	Due Date	% of Grade
Précis of Unit 1	Thurs. 9/5	5%
Unit 2 questions, exercises, problems & analyses of 1 or 2 supporting humorous data examples	Tues. 9/19	5%
Focal chapter work (you will be assigned one focal chapter b/w #3~8) a. précis of unit b. complete all unit-related questions, exercises, problems c. find & analyze supporting data example(s) for inclusion in oral presentation & final Note: This work forms basis for oral presentation & final paper	Compare assigned ID group with course activities calendar	10%
University Lecture Series Activity	Thurs. 9/20	5%
Gems of UT Activity	Fri. 10/25	5%
Oral presentation (based on focal chapter work & humorous data you select)	Compare assigned ID group with course calendar	20% (10% pre- sentation + 10% peer feedback)

Final paper (+ submission of 3 prior drafts) Specifications: 10~15 page term paper, an analysis of a language and humor, loosely based on your ID group assigned unit in the textbook. Your paper is required to include the following: 1) an intro, body, and conclusion; 2) thesis statement; 3) supporting data example(s) of language and humor; 4) analysis of the data; 5) transcription; 6) secondary source material from the required textbook and from other sources; 7) a bibliography. (Final paper builds on focal chapter work.)	Tues 12/3 (drafts due = Nov 14, 19, 21	20% (15% = final paper; 5% = drafts)
In-Class Test (Format = T/F, multiple choice, matching, identification, and short answer)	Thurs. 12/5	20%
Daily Attendance and Participation	daily	10%

- For this course, there are several required assignments scheduled throughout the term.
 - For details about these assignments, see the Weekly Calendar of Course Activities.
 - NOTE: Hard copies of your assignments must be completed and handed in on time.
 - Do NOT email your assignment and expect the professor to print it.
- There is one in-class test on the last day of class.
 - Note: There is no final exam.
- Attendance and participation count toward your final grade.

Final Assignment of Grades:

Final grades will be calculated on a 100-point scale with the following breakdown:

- 100 – 95% = A
- 94 – 90% = A-
- 89 – 87% = B+
- 86 – 84% = B
- 83 – 80% = B-
- 79 – 77% = C+
- 76 – 74% = C
- 73 – 70% = C-
- 69 – 67% = D+
- 66 – 64% = D
- 63 – 60% = D-
- 59% or less = F

Incompletes:

Except in extreme circumstances and with proper documentation, no incompletes will be given.

Q Drop Policy:

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6).

Religious Holidays:

If you need to miss a class or a deadline to observe a religious holiday anytime during the semester, the university requires that you let me know in writing two weeks before the absence.

Official Written (medical or legal) Excuses:

If you are unable to complete any course requirement due to a medical or another type of genuine emergency, please contact me as soon as possible to apprise me of the situation, and consistent with university policy, please be prepared to provide an official written excuse (e.g. from the UT health center, a doctor, the police department, etc.).

Services for Students with Disabilities:

If you have any special needs associated with a learning or physical disability, please see me. Before course accommodations can be made, you are required to provide documentation for the Office of the Dean of Students—Services for Students with Disabilities. The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 512-471-6259 (or for TTY 512-471-4641).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to do your own work and must acknowledge use of anyone else's work or ideas. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: (1) copying another student's work or letting another student copy your work; (2) copying passages or ideas directly from another source and passing them off as your own, that is, without properly referencing them—including information from the internet; and (3) inappropriate use of blackberries, cell phones, computers, etc. when taking in-class tests, etc.

When scholastic dishonesty is suspected, I am required to notify you and possibly turn the matter over to the Dean of Students office. Penalties for academic dishonesty include a failing grade on the assignment or in this course and possible expulsion from the university. If you have questions about these issues, contact the Office of the Dean of Students.

OTHER RELEVANT UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL):

If you are concerned about someone, please call the Behavior Concerns Advice Line, 512-232-5050.

Emergency Evacuation Policy:

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the instructor in writing during the first week of class.

BUILDING AN INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY: CLASS PHILOSOPHY & EXPECTATIONS

More than just a course, this class is an intellectual community—one to which all of us belong and one to which all of us are accountable. **Welcome! ☺**

All communities have certain features, including: members, activities, goals, rules, etc. Community is an interactive space that is co-constructed. **Community is created, nurtured and maintained, and like learning, it takes genuine and sustained effort—a readiness and willingness to be present, prepared, and engaged.**

To foster a positive classroom environment and to facilitate learning, member of this little community of ours should be prompt: arriving at class on-time, keeping scheduled appointments, communicating with the professor in a reasonable and timely fashion, and meeting deadlines for readings and assignments, etc. Community members are expected to be civil (in comportment, behavior, language, discourse, and interaction) and respectful of fellow students, the teacher as well as any guest speakers. Community members must meet the previously outlined requirements for the class. As a courtesy to your fellow community members, please turn all cell phones, blackberries, ipods, etc. off while class is in session.

Your attendance, preparation, participation, and dedication—like mine—are crucial to our mutual educational endeavor this semester. This course will be as interesting, fun, challenging, and rewarding, as we make it. **So again, welcome and let's get started!**

WEEKLY CALENDAR OF COURSE ACTIVITIES

(*^ mark indicates special Signature Course activity*)

*****The instructor reserves the right to adjust readings and assignments to facilitate learning objectives.** In such instances, students will be alerted in advance of any changes and their implications for course evaluation and grading.***

Week 1

Thurs.8/29 Getting Started

Activities: Introductions, peer mentor, charting a path for the term; fun preliminary analysis of language & humor

Assignments: Begin reading & developing a 1-page précis of Unit 1 of the required textbook

+Resources: <http://www.ccis.edu/faculty/dskarr/X%20H490,%20fa09/HowtoWriteaPrecis.htm>
<http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/2010/types-communication/academic-writing/precis/>

Week 2

Tues. 9/3 Lecture 1: Language—The Innate Human Faculty/Capacity

Activities: Attend lecture and take notes FYI and for the final test

Assignment: Refine 1-page précis of Unit 1 of the required textbook

Thurs.9/5 Lecture 2: Language—The World's Many Different Languages

Activities: Attend lecture and take notes FYI and for the final test

Assignment: Begin reading Unit 2

Begin answering all unit-related questions, exercises, problems, etc.

Find 1 or 2 humorous data examples of key terms, concepts, phenomenon, etc. from Unit 2

DUE = hand in 1-page précis of Unit 1 of the required textbook

Week 3

Tues. 9/10 Lecture 3a: Language Use

Activities: Attend lecture and take notes FYI and for the final test

Assignment: Continue reading Unit 2

Continue answering all unit-related questions, exercises, problems, etc.

Begin analyzing your 1 or 2 humorous data examples of key terms, concepts, phenomenon, etc. from Unit 2

Thurs.9/12 Lecture 3b: Language Use

Activities: Attend lecture and take notes FYI and for the final test

Assignment: Finish reading Unit 2

Continue answering all unit-related questions, exercises, problems, etc.

Begin analyzing your 1 or 2 humorous data examples of key terms, concepts, phenomenon, etc. from Unit 2

Week 4

Tues. 9/17 Lecture 3c: Language Use

Activities: Attend lecture and take notes FYI and for the final test

Assignment: Finish answering all unit-related questions, exercises, problems, etc.

Finish analyzing your 1 or 2 humorous data examples of key terms, concepts, phenomenon, etc. from Unit 2

Prepare for next in-class discussion of Unit 2 and to hand in related written work and data examples

Thurs.9/19 In-class discussion & presentations of Unit 2

DUE: Hand in all unit-related questions, exercises, problems, etc. for Unit 2

Hand in analyses of 1 or 2 humorous data examples of key terms, concepts, phenomenon, etc. from Unit 2

Week 5

Tues. 9/24 Lecture 4a: Language Ideologies

Activities: Attend lecture and take notes FYI and for the final test

Assignment: Receive focal chapter assignments for remaining units 3 ~ 8 of required textbook

Focal chapter assignments will form the general topical basis for your oral presentations & final papers

Thurs.9/26 Lecture 4b: Language Ideologies
Activities: Attend lecture and take notes FYI and for the final test
Assignment: Begin focal chapter assignments for units 3 ~ 8 of required textbook
Read your focal chapter
Find humorous data example(s) of key terms, concepts, phenomenon, etc. from your focal chapter

^Week 6 (*Special Signature Course Activity: University Lecture Series*)

Note: You are only required to attend one of the three lecture. The class will go as a group on Wednesday, 10/2/13. If you prefer to go to an alternate talk on 10/1 or 10/2, that's fine, but then you should write a half or a single page synopsis of the lectures you go to see on your own and then hand in your synopsis to the instructor.

Tues. 10/1 Transcripts & Transcription Session I & Guest lecture by peer mentor—sample oral presentation

Activities: Learn techniques of micro-transcription
See example of oral presentation as demonstrated by your peer mentor

Assignment: Begin transcribing your selected humorous data examples for your focal chapter

Alternate 10/1 *University Lecture 1: In Pursuit of Health*
Tuesday, October 1, 2013
7-8pm Hogg Auditorium

^Wed. 10/2 *Lecture 2: In the Creative Mind* = Peer mentor-led outing

Evening 10/2 Wednesday, October 2, 2013
7-8pm Hogg Auditorium

Activities: Attend University Lecture Series

Thurs.10/3 In-class discussions of University Lecture Series experience & Continue Transcription Session II

Activities: Reflect on University Lecture Series, esp. noting instances of humor in the lectures
Practice techniques of micro-transcription
Refine transcription your selected humorous data examples for your focal chapter

Alternate 10/3 *Lecture 3: In the Lab*
Wednesday, October 3, 2013
7-8pm Hogg Auditorium

Week 7

Tues. 10/8 Unit 3: 'The shock of the new'

Activities: Those assigned this focal chapter give their individual 20-min. oral presentation
Other students provide written peer feedback and evaluation

DUE: Those assigned this focal chapter hand in 1~2 page précis focal chapter & all chapter exercises

Thurs. 10/10 Unit 4: 'My mother-in-law.'

Activities: Those assigned this focal chapter give their individual 20-min. oral presentation
Other students provide written peer feedback and evaluation

DUE: Those assigned this focal chapter hand in 1~2 page précis focal chapter & all chapter exercises

Week 8

Tues.10/15 In-class discussion of readings: Unit 5: 'Crikey: That's a hard one!'

Activities: Those assigned this focal chapter give their individual 20-min. oral presentation
Other students provide written peer feedback and evaluation

DUE: Those assigned this focal chapter hand in 1~2 page précis focal chapter & all chapter exercises

Thurs.10/17 Unit 6: 'Written texts—literature'

Activities: Those assigned this focal chapter give their individual 20-min. oral presentation
Other students provide written peer feedback and evaluation

DUE: Those assigned this focal chapter hand in 1~2 page précis focal chapter & all chapter exercises

^Week 9 (*Special Signature Course Activity: Gems of UT*)

Tues.10/22 Unit 7: 'Spoken humor—television and radio'

Activities: Those assigned this focal chapter give their individual 20-min. oral presentation
Other students provide written peer feedback and evaluation

DUE: Those assigned this focal chapter hand in 1~2 page précis focal chapter & all chapter exercises

Thurs.10/24 Unit 8: 'Stand-up Comedy'

Activities: Those assigned this focal chapter give their individual 20-min. oral presentation
Other students provide written peer feedback and evaluation

DUE: Those assigned this focal chapter hand in 1~2 page précis focal chapter & all chapter exercises

^Fri. 10/25 See John Oliver live at Bass Concert Hall, part of the Texas Performing Arts series
<http://texasperformingarts.org/event/john-oliver-austin-texas-bass-concert-hall>

Week 10

Tues.10/29 In-class discussion of Gems of Austin experience & discussion and planning for final papers

Activities: Begin developing ideas, data, analysis, and secondary sources for your final paper

Thurs.10/ Reviews of sample final papers & guest presentation by peer mentor

Activities: Continue developing ideas, data, analysis, and secondary sources for your final paper

Week 11

Tues. 11/5 Individual preparations for final papers

Activities: Personal writing day for half of class, so write, write write!
Other half of class has individual meetings with the instructor

DUE: Those meeting the instructor must bring tentative outline & thesis statement of your final paper

Thurs. 11/7 Individual preparations of final papers

Activities: Personal writing day for half of class, so write, write write!
Other half of class has individual meetings with the instructor

DUE: Those meeting the instructor must bring tentative outline & thesis statement of your final paper

Week 12

Tues. 11/12 Personal writing day for whole class

Thurs. 11/14 Paper Draft 1 exchange for peer feedback

Activities: In-class, students divide into three groups, exchange first drafts of their paper and get feedback
Assignment: Incorporate peer feedback for revision in Draft 2 of paper

Week 13

Tues.11/19 Paper Draft 2 exchange for class feedback

Activities: Special focus on refining transcripts & bibliography
Assignment: Incorporate feedback for revision in Draft 3 of paper

Thurs.11/21 Paper Draft 3 last sharing of paper for class feedback

Activities: In-class, students divide into three groups, exchange first drafts of their paper and get feedback
Assignment: Incorporate peer feedback for revision final paper

Week 14

Tues. 11/26 Individual working day to finish final papers

Thurs.11/28 NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 15

Tues 12/3 Turn in final papers & Review for test
Activities: Review for test next class period
DUE: Hand hard copy of final paper

Thurs. 12/5 In-class test
DUE: Take test