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**LING 410/510: LANGUAGE, GENDER & SEXUALITY (SUMMER 2011)**

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**TTh 1:00-3:20 PM – ASRC 215**

**Dr. Jeff Conn**

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### **Course description**

This course introduces students to the study of language, gender and sexuality, an interaction that has received increasing attention from linguists since the 1960s. Although the term “gender” has a technical meaning in linguistics, we will discuss and investigate this term in its more widespread sense and talk about it with regard to the socially constructed roles having to do with sex. The field is vast and the literature extensive; part of the class will be devoted to exploring some of the literature critically. The focus will be on the linguistic side but with broad consideration of social issues associated with the distribution of linguistic forms, for the study of language has indeed expanded and now involves considerable overlap with other traditional fields of study such as Anthropology, Sociology, and Psychology, but also newer ones such as Women’s Studies and Queer Studies.

Students are expected to make significant contributions to the class in terms of classroom discussion but also in terms of deciding the nature and direction of the course. Students with little background in linguistics should work with others or with me.

**My Goal** for this course is not to make you an expert in this vast and ever-changing field, but to introduce you to some of the literature and to give you the tools to examine future literature in a critical way, as well as to look at the interaction between language and gender from a more scientific perspective.

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### ***Texts***

#### **Required:**

Coates, Jennifer and Pichler, Pia (eds.) 2011. *Language and Gender: A Reader* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Oxford: Blackwell.

#### **Other Texts (just for your information – not required):**

Cameron, Deborah. 1985. *Feminism and Linguistic Theory*. London: Macmillan Press.

Cameron, Deborah and Kulick, Don. 2003. *Language and Sexuality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eckert, Penelope and McConnell-Ginet, Sally. 2003. *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Janet Holmes and Miriam Meyerhoff (eds.). 2003. *The Handbook of Language and Gender*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Livia, Anna and Hall, Kira (eds.). 1997. *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender and Sexuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hall, Kira and Bucholtz, Mary (eds.). 1995. *Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self*. New York: Oxford University Press.

## CLASS GUIDELINES, REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

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**Classroom atmosphere.** The nature of a course dealing with gender often brings up personal experiences and strong emotional reactions to things. It is critical that we promote the sharing of these experiences and reactions in a constructive, safe and positive atmosphere. Please be respectful of others. However, let's try to focus and not make this class about group therapy.

**Not a competition.** This course is meant to be an individual and group exploration, even a team effort. You are strongly encouraged to discuss the readings and the assignments together, both in and outside of class. Written assignments should be yours and/or your team's alone. In other words, talk things over as much as you like beforehand, but when you write your paper, the work should be all yours or confined to the team.

**Consultation.** Feel free to come talk with me about assignments, issues, questions, comments, suggestions or frustrations at any point.

**Requirements.** Class participation is far and away the most important component of this course. Regular attendance, therefore, is crucial. Not only should you come to class prepared in terms of the reading or other assignment, but you should also come ready to contribute actively to class discussion. You should also willingly contribute to class discussion and, perhaps more importantly, attentively listen to the contributions of others. Be conscious of letting everyone having a chance to say something and accord them the same attention and respect that you expect to receive. Class Participation includes regular attendance and participation in class discussions. Do NOT come to class if you are ill, but DO let me know ahead of time through email.

**Late assignments** are strongly discouraged, although I will give extensions provided that you contact me **before** the assignment is due and your lateness is due to matters beyond your control (sickness, death in the family, etc.). Other late assignments will be accepted but knocked down a full grade, e.g., "A" to "B" and will also receive low priority for grading.

**Evaluation.** Grades will be decided on the following basis: (\*Group learning experiences)

30	Individual Quiz scores (3 quizzes throughout term)*
60	Group Quiz scores (3 quizzes throughout term double points)*
40	Applications (2 X 10 each)*
10	Evaluation of self and group*
40	Written/presentation assignments (2 X 20 each)
40	Gender journals (4 X 10 each)
30	Grad student article/chapter presentation

### Undergrads      Total = 220

A	205-220
A-	198-219
B+	193-197
B	182-192
B-	176-181
C+	171-175
C	160-170
C-	154-159
D/F	Below 154

### Grads      Total = 250

A	230-250
A-	225-229
B+	220-224
B	207-219
B-	200-206
C+	195-199
C	182-194
C-	175-181
D/F	Below 175

**Group learning experience** – We will be using a group learning experience method for understanding some of the material. On the first class, groups will be formed. These groups will be the ones that you take group quizzes with, do applications with, and evaluate. There will be 3 quizzes throughout the term. First, each student will take each quiz individually. Right after those quizzes are handed in, each group will meet and take the quiz again as a group. This provides a venue for discussion. In order to establish equality in the groups, if any student's individual quiz score for the 3 quizzes is LOWER than 75% of the total 3 group quiz scores, that student will have ALL of their quiz points based on **only** their individual quiz scores (they will not get the benefit of the group scores as this indicates they did not contribute well to the group to begin with). There will also be 2 in-class applications during the term where groups meet and discuss a topic provided by the instructor, as well as answer some questions that will be turned in (OK to email me the day after, but do not spend time outside of class working on these). If you are absent on an application day, you will receive a 0 for that application. Finally, each group member will fill out an evaluation form for their group as well as themselves. The form will be provided at the class webpage at a later date.

**Written/Presentation Assignments** – All of the assignments will have a similar format: provide a synopsis of the events/discussion/information. Then analyze the various data that you collect (could be your reactions or experiences). Try to summarize what happened and then discuss how that relates to our class discussions and readings. Some will be hard to relate to language, but do your best to at least think of 1 language connection. Also, provide some of your personal reactions/criticisms, but try to present the data, then analyze it objectively, and THEN critique it from your point of view. Here is some info about how to organize these assignments:

<http://web.pdx.edu/~connjc/How%20to%20organize%20written%20assignments.htm>

Options for the written assignments are as follows:

- **Chapter/Article Presentations** includes summarizing a chapter/article and leading a short (10 mins) discussion (I will still help by adding my 2 cents of course). These are informal presentations that include restating the main points of the chapter/article by summarizing the data and methodology, as well as what the author(s) suggests these findings mean. In addition, tell us at least 1 thing you liked about the chapter/article and 1 thing that raised a question. Also, please bring 3 questions that you will turn in designed to elicit a discussion with the rest of the class. Remember, we want to be appreciative as well as critical of the work we are reading about. Each student will lead 1 discussion, either alone or in pairs. This is to bring other work in the field to the class's attention that you find interesting. I can offer you some advice of where to look based on your interests. (Grad students have to do this at least 1 time for their grade).
- **Radio show compare/contrast** – Compare the radio shows Your Time with Kim Iverson (<http://yourtimewithkim.everyzing.com/> these are listenable online) and Loveline. Kim's show is on 105.1FM (<http://www.1051thebuzz.com/>) from 7pm to Midnight M-F). Loveline is on 94.7 FM (<http://www.947.fm/>) and I believe it goes 10pm-midnight M-Th. I can't find free ways to hear this show other than listening to the radio at that time.

- **Drag Field trip** – Attend a drag show and pontificate gender and language. There is a free drag show (mostly drag queens) at C.C. Slaughters Sunday nights from 8PM-midnight (<http://www.ccslaughterspdx.com/>). Just remember that these are gay and lesbian bars (respectively but not exclusively) so be respectful.
- **Magazine/media expose** – Compare/contrast magazines designed for a specific gender and discuss how they differ in what they talk about as much as HOW they talk about it. You could also focus on TV commercials or print advertisements and discuss the gender and language involved with mass marketing (like, are there women's vs. men's exercises? Foods? Products?). You could also include gay and lesbian magazines and discuss how this fits in with the whole gender and language issues raised in the above.
- **Written chapter/article critique** – It may be boring, but it works. Since there is so much literature that we will not get to, this assignment will hopefully encourage you to look at other articles or chapters in other texts, or chapters in our text that we will not get to. I will be happy to recommend articles or chapters with specific interests if you ask or need direction on where to look. Here is some information about organizing these assignments: <http://web.pdx.edu/~connjc/Article%20Critique%20tips.htm>
- **Your own mini-experiment** – Devise your own mini-experiment and write up the findings following the format for mini-experiment write-ups (distributed soon). Please discuss with me ideas first so I can help with this.

**Gender Journals** are simply your personal thoughts and reactions to the readings or life in general relating to the course (either language and/or gender issues). There are a total of 4 journals due by the end of the term. These are not graded for content, but you are graded just for doing them. They should be anywhere from  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a single-spaced typed page to 2 pages (try not to make them too long). Please only submit one journal a week in class Thursdays or by email. Any journal received after midnight Thursday night will count for the next week. Please do not wait for the last 4 weeks of the term to do these. Feel free to be creative and conduct your own mini-experiments if you like. If you need more guidance, provide your take/reactions to chapters we've read for class (provide 2 things you liked and 2 things you didn't for each chapter).

Attendance is mandatory, but to promote a healthy and safe environment, please do not come to class if you are feeling ill. Email me beforehand and we can make arrangements to deal with missing homeworks etc.

*Students are expected to follow PSU's Code of Student Conduct and Responsibility, particularly §577-031-0135 and §577-031-0136, which can be found at <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct#code>. Violations of the code will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Student Life.*

For info dealing with students who need extra help, please visit the Disability Resource Center at: <http://www.drc.pdx.edu/>

Students not in attendance on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of class will be dropped from the course.

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