

SOCIOLINGUISTIC FIELDWORK

LING 580R Section 3 Winter 2023
JFSB B013 TTh 2:00-3:15

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Instructors

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Course Overview

This is a brand-new course, both for us and for BYU, and we are *thrilled* to be teaching it! (Seriously when Joey was applying for this job, he was asked what his dream course would be, and he said, “a sociolinguistic fieldwork course”!) The course is modeled off of the famous-among-sociolinguists course at the University of Pennsylvania, [The Study of the Speech Community](#), that Bill Labov has taught since 1972.

If you’ve taken Sociolinguistics at some point, you learned *about* sociolinguistic research; this course is all about actually *doing* sociolinguistic research. We will collectively decide on a research project that we’re going to explore as a class, with each student having the liberty to go off in a different direction. The main topic will be under the umbrella of contemporary Utah English. We’ll select a speech community that we want to study, learn to do sociolinguistic interviews, and by the end of March, you’ll have conducted a sociolinguistic interview with a stranger! We’ll go over how to transcribe and process the data that you collect, we’ll pool our data together, and at the end of the semester you’ll present what you’ve learned about your research topic, based on our collective hot-off-the-press new data. Compared to other varieties of English, Utah is relatively understudied, so we can almost guarantee that your findings will be truly novel.

If all of this sounds exhilarating but also terrifying, you’re probably not alone. (Guess what: we feel the same way!) We’ll work up towards the “rill dill” and will guide you through every step of the processing.

Prerequisites

Strangely enough, there are technically no prerequisites for this course.

If you are an undergrad, we assume you have taken introductory courses LING 201 or ELING 223. Completion of, or concurrent enrollment in, ELING 468 (Varieties of English) and/or LING 452 (Sociolinguistics) would be helpful, but this is not an enforced requirement.

For the graduate students, being a linguistics graduate student in our department is enough of a prerequisite for this course. It would be helpful if you have already taken LING 550 (Sociolinguistics), though this is not enforced.

Materials

(Required) **Schilling, Natalie (2013).** *Sociolinguistic Fieldwork* (Key Topics in Sociolinguistics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511980541

We will draw heavily from this book and will expect you to have read the assigned readings before class. The library has an electronic version of the book, in case you don't want to or can't purchase the book yourself.

(In Library) **Tagliamonte, Sali (2006).** *Analysing Sociolinguistic Variation* (Key Topics in Sociolinguistics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511801624

We will read selections from this book, which you can access electronically through the library's website. ([Analysing Sociolinguistic Variation \(oclc.org\)](https://www.oclc.org)) If you have not taken a sociolinguistics class, it would be helpful to read chapter 1 of this book before or at the beginning of the semester.

Other readings, as needed, will be available on Learning Suite.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will have learned how to, and successfully executed, a sociolinguistics study from start to finish, including study design, data collection (especially sociolinguistic interviews), data processing and analysis, and presentation.

How this course is going to work

The main objective of this course is to have you do a bona fide sociolinguistic interview with someone that you didn't know at the start of the semester. Consequently, all lectures and activities leading up to that are meant to prepare you for that event. Everything afterwards is geared towards processing that interview.

This is an advanced-level class, so we expect a high level of preparation. We will assume that you have read the assigned material before class starts because the lectures will hit the ground running and will immediately build upon them.

This is an in-person class, and we will not generally be using Zoom. If you have a legitimate illness or emergency, contact us ASAP to see if Zoom may be an option for that day. While there is no official attendance policy for this course, per university policy, you are required to attend in-person for at least 50% of the classes.

Assignments and grades

Your grade will be determined based on the following types of assignments:

- In-Class Activities (25%) Some days will involve in-class activities (e.g. practice interviews) and others will involve mini-presentations.
- Homework (50%) There are weekly homework assignments. They are due the Monday following the week they were assigned.
- Final Project (25%) This includes a presentation and a final paper.

Your assignments will be weighted accordingly, and your final grade will be determined using the following (typical) grade breakdown:

Grade	Minimum Percent	Grade	Minimum Percent
A	93	C	73
A-	90	C-	70
B+	87	D+	67
B	83	D	63
B-	80	D-	60
C+	77	E	0

How you should communicate with us

We will be using Learning Suite for official course-related materials. All the readings, homework, and grades will be available on Learning Suite.

You may communicate with us by sending an email at any time. However, be aware that we do try to treat our jobs as a 9-to-5 gig, so we may not answer it until we get in the next day. That means if you email us late Friday night, we might not get to it until Monday morning. And of course, don't expect an immediate response if you email us at midnight before an assignment is due.

Regarding emails, when it comes to course-related content, if you write to one of us, please copy the other in. Since the two of us are team-teaching this course, we need to have all the same information.

Office Hours

Our office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus. We're happy to meet in-person in our offices or via Zoom. For in-person meetings, you are more than welcome to drop by without making an appointment. If the door is closed, please don't hesitate to knock. If you plan on meeting over Zoom, please shoot us a quick email at least a few minutes beforehand to let us know to expect you. You can schedule in-person or Zoom appointments with Lisa using the

Calendly link <https://calendly.com/lisamorganjohnson/office-hours>. Appointment slots are for 15 minutes by default, but you are welcome to sign up for multiple consecutive appointments for longer meetings.

What are office hours for, you ask? Well, they're for YOU! This is time that we have set aside each week to dedicate to helping students. Do not feel like you are bothering us by coming by – that is what that time is for! Don't feel like you need to stop by exactly at the start time – any time during the entire window is fair game. And don't feel pressured into making it quick: if you want to spend the whole block of time hashing out some things or getting help for whatever reason, that's okay!

You may think that office hours are only for help with homework or if you didn't understand the lecture. Not true! I mean, if you'd like to meet for those reasons, that's certainly fine. But, you can come into office hours to talk about whatever – other things related to the class, other linguistics classes, some fun project idea you're thinking about, guidance on picking a research topic, talking about your future after graduation, shooting the breeze about breadmaking, succulents, or playing the organ, or debating whether dark or milk chocolate is better. This is your chance to have dedicated one-on-one time with a professor to talk shop, regardless of whether it has to do with this class (or any class). We love it when students come by and you should definitely feel comfortable doing so, for whatever reason. (Plus, we both try to have food...)

They're also good ways for us to get to know you. If you end up applying to a future job, a PhD program, law school, or med school and need letters of recommendations, we can't really write a good one if you were "just" another student in class. But if you've come into office hours and given us a chance to get to know you a little bit better, one or both of us can definitely write a better letter for you, if needed.

Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change. Check the schedule posted on Learning Suite for the latest information.

DATE	TOPIC	READING	WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS
1/10	Overview of the course	[syllabus]	CITI training
1/12	Ethics	Ch 1	
1/17	Study design	2.1–2.2 (Tag. Ch 2)	Utah English lit review
1/19	(cont.)	2.3–2.5	
1/24	Utah English presentations		Rapid and anon. survey
1/26	Wordlists and other elicitations	3.1	
1/31	Sociolinguistic interview	3.2, 4.1–4.2 (Tag. Ch 3)	Interview 1 (friend)
2/2	Interview practice	6.2–6.4	
2/7	Transcription conventions	Tag. Ch 4	Manual transcription
2/9	Transcription nuts and bolts	ELAN tutorial	
2/14	Communities	Ch 5	Interview 2 (acquaintance)
2/16	Communities and recording	6.1.1–6.1.2	
2/21	NO CLASS		Manual vs. DARLA transcription
2/23	Processing	DARLA pages	
2/28	Shiny app	(How to read a vowel plot?)	Preliminary write-up
3/2	3rd Wave SLX	4.3–4.4	
3/7	Research hypotheses	Tag. p. 99-112	Proposal write-up
3/9	Project proposal presentations		
3/14	Ethnography	3.3–3.4	Ethnography practice
3/16	(cont.)	TBA	
3/21	Other methods	TBA	Interview 3 (the “rill dill”!)
3/23	(cont.)		
3/28	Listen to others’ interviews		Transcription work
3/30	(cont.)		
4/4	Giving back, advocacy	Ch 7	Formant extraction and analysis
4/6	Case study: Non-interview casual speech	6.1.3	
4/11	Other methods	TBA	
4/13	Remote data collection	TBA	
4/18	In-class presentations		Final presentation
4/26	FINALS WEEK		Final Paper Due

Note: sections are from Schilling unless otherwise noted. “Tag.” refers to Tagliamonte’s book. Days marked in yellow will have little, if any lecture, and will mostly be an in-class activity. Days marked in blue are in-class presentations. Joey = green, Lisa = salmon, both = gray.

University Policies

Honor Code

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards.

Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and every instructor's expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Preventing & Responding to Sexual Misconduct

The health and well-being of students is of paramount importance at Brigham Young University. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment (including sexual violence), there are many resources available for assistance.

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, BYU prohibits unlawful sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, against any participant in its education programs or activities. The university also prohibits sexual harassment by its personnel and students.

Sexual harassment occurs when

- a person is subjected to unwelcome sexual speech or conduct so severe, pervasive, and offensive that it effectively denies their ability to access any BYU education program or activity;
- any aid, benefit, or service of BYU is conditioned on a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; or
- a person suffers sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking on the basis of sex.

University policy requires all faculty members to promptly report incidents of sexual harassment that come to their attention in any way, including through face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at t9coordinator@byu.edu or (801) 422-8692 or 1085 WSC. Reports may also be submitted online at <https://titleix.byu.edu/report> or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours a day).

BYU offers confidential resources for those affected by sexual harassment, including the university's Sexual Assault Survivor Advocate, as well as a number of non-confidential resources and services that may be helpful. Additional information about Title IX, the university's [Sexual Harassment Policy](#), reporting requirements, and resources can be found at <http://titleix.byu.edu> or by contacting the university's Title IX Coordinator.

Student Disability

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. A disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Whether an impairment is substantially limiting depends on its nature and severity, its duration or expected duration, and its permanent or expected permanent or long-term impact. Examples include vision or hearing impairments, physical disabilities, chronic illnesses, emotional disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety), learning disorders, and attention disorders (e.g., ADHD). If you have a disability which impairs your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (UAC), 2170 WSC or 801-422-2767 to request a reasonable accommodation. The UAC can also assess students for learning, attention, and emotional concerns. If you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, please contact the Equal Opportunity Office at 801-422-5895, eo_manager@byu.edu, or visit <https://hrs.byu.edu/equal-opportunity> for help."

Mental Health

Mental health concerns and stressful life events can affect students' academic performance and quality of life. BYU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS, 1500 WSC, 801-422-3035, caps.byu.edu) provides individual, couples, and group counseling, as well as stress management services. These services are confidential and are provided by the university at no cost for full-time students. For general information please visit <https://caps.byu.edu>; for more immediate concerns please visit <http://help.byu.edu>.

BYU College of Humanities Statement on Inclusion

We strive to cultivate mutual respect and empathy for all people, no matter their ethnic, racial, or cultural background, or sexual orientation. Elder Ballard said at a BYU devotional in Feb. 2020: "Through discrimination, racism, sexism, and other social ills, we will often impose false identities on others that keep them and us from progressing. This can stop when we see all people as children of God. We consider every person divine in origin, nature, and potential. Each possesses seeds of divinity. And 'each is a beloved spirit [child] of heavenly parents.'"

We invite all to participate in open and honest inquiry in our classrooms where we deal with complicated social and moral issues. In these conversations we seek to

- Respect and value the contributions of people from backgrounds, religions, and cultures other than our own
- Be aware of hurtful words and phrases
- Learn about and understand different cultural traditions
- Acknowledge discomfort when participating in class discussions about difficult topics
- Speak up on behalf of those who may be hurt by harmful speech
- Show willingness to work in groups with people of diverse backgrounds
- Respond with humility and teachability when our words offend
- Approach these issues with sincerity, respect, and compassion
- Express tolerance, love, and understanding

We fall short of our ideals when we

- Behave as if one is morally superior for treating someone of another race with kindness or not recognizing that benevolent stereotypes can be condescending or paternalistic
- Use words without understanding social context or the full range of a term's meanings
- Expect that everyone in the Church shares similar cultural or political values
- Tacitly accept derogatory, racist, or sexist language without calling it into question
- Excuse or minimize the damage done by others – including leaders – who discriminate or who are biased
- Make assumptions about someone's abilities or attributes based on the color of their skin or national origin
- Assume on the basis of a person's appearance or accent that they come from another country or have a certain immigration status
- Presume that those who suffer from famine, poverty, crime, environmental disasters, or war brought these conditions upon themselves

The College of Humanities is attuned to the reality of an increasingly diverse Church membership. We aspire to better understand our own language and history, and to use language to connect and heal rather than to divide and harm. We invite students, staff, and faculty to use their time in our college to strive toward conduct worthy of Christian discipleship, where we are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).