

**LING 6310 – Sociolinguistic Analysis**  
Syllabus, Fall 2018

**Class Meetings:** Wednesdays 3-5:30pm

**Instructor:** Jeremy Calder

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**Room:** Hellems 285

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**Office Hours:** Th 3:30-4:30pm (or by appt.)

**Course Description**

This course serves as a graduate-level introduction to the study of sociolinguistic variation, with a focus on sociophonetics. We explore phonetic variation and its social implications, and how differences in language use connect with larger ideological categories such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and locality. This course is designed to complement the graduate-level introduction to linguistic anthropology by exploring sociolinguistics from a quantitative variationist point of view.

**Objectives**

This course is designed to provide you with the theoretical background and methodological skills to conduct quantitative sociophonetic research and interrogate developments in the field of sociolinguistic variation. You will be expected to independently engage with each step of the process of conceptualizing and executing a sociophonetic study (e.g., developing a research question, choosing a community, carrying out sociolinguistic fieldwork, designing a speaker sample, recording and transcribing data, using phonetic software, statistical analysis, interpreting patterns in the data).

**Course structure**

Each class meeting will be divided into two parts: (1) theory and discussion; and (2) hands-on practicum.

For the first half of each class, we will discuss theoretical topics and foundational papers in the sociolinguistic literature. You should read the papers for each class meeting prior to class and actively participate in discussions.

The second half of each class will be a hands-on practicum focusing on various methodological skills we will be covering over the course of the semester. You should bring a laptop and headphones for this portion of the class. During some of these sessions, I will provide tutorials covering various analytical tools. In the remainder of these sessions, you should use the time to work on and discuss the assignments described in the following section.

**Assignments and Grading**

You will be responsible for three hands-on assignments designed to familiarize you with various steps in the process used to execute a study of sociophonetic variation. The data collected via the completion of these assignments will then be brought together and

culminate in a larger group project as a class that will explore sociophonetic variation in a community in Colorado. The successful completion of your assignments will contribute to this larger group project, with the goal of submitting an abstract to one of our field's annual conferences (e.g., LSA, ADS, or NWAV). I encourage you to give yourself plenty of time to complete each of the assignments, as some of them can be quite time-intensive. Don't wait until the last minute, because you may not have enough time to execute each assignment without proper planning. The in-class practicum is designed to help you complete your assignments and ask any questions you may have, but you will almost certainly be unable to complete your assignments if you don't work on them outside of class as well. Descriptions and grading breakdowns for each of the assignments is described below.

- **Assignment 1: The sociolinguistic interview – 20%**
  - You will each conduct and record a sociolinguistic interview with a speaker native to the Colorado Front Range. Each interview should be about 45 minutes in length and include the interviewee reading a word list and completing map tasks. You will be responsible for finding appropriate subjects, obtaining consent, and recording demographic information for each of your interviewees. You will also be responsible for obtaining CITI certification prior to conducting your interviews, if you aren't already certified.
- **Assignment 2: Transcribing data for phonetic analysis – 20%**
  - You will transcribe 30 minutes of each of two sociolinguistic interviews using ELAN transcription software, following transcription conventions that facilitate instrumental sociophonetic analysis of the data. You will transcribe your own interview in addition to a second interview that will be provided to you. Proper transcription can take quite a long time, so I'm giving you plenty of time to complete this assignment. I encourage you to work on your transcriptions little by little over a number of days!
- **Assignment 3: Measuring and plotting vowels – 30%**
  - You will measure a range of vowels for each of your two transcribed interviews using scripts in Praat that will be provided to you. You will learn normalization techniques and create vowel plots that visually map the vowel spaces for each of your two speakers.

For the final assignment, time permitting, you will each write a short project proposal (at most 5 pages) for an independent project of your own design. The proposal should include a research question, a brief review of relevant literature, and a motivated description of the methods that would be required to explore the research question. The proposal will count for **15%** of your grade.

Finally, active participation in the theoretical discussions will count for **15%** of your final grade, so I encourage you to keep up with the reading. Each person will be responsible for presenting the readings and key theoretical concepts during one week of class.

### **E-Mail Policies**

Please feel free to contact me via e-mail with any questions, concerns, or if you need to schedule a meeting outside of the regular office hours. I will respond to your e-mail by the following business day.

### **Late Assignments**

Individual assignments for the class group project are to be uploaded into the course dropbox by 11:59pm the day they are due. Late submission is discouraged, but late assignments will be accepted up to a week after the deadline, with a 50-percent penalty. No submissions will be accepted more than a week after the due date.

Independent project proposals must be submitted by **Wednesday, December 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm**, no exceptions. **Late submissions of project proposals will not be accepted, so plan ahead.**

### **Accommodation for Disabilities**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

### **Classroom Behavior**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

### **Honor Code**

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu)); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor

Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

### **Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation**

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking), discrimination, and harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or [cureport@colorado.edu](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu). Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

### **Religious Holidays**

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. **Please let the instructor know at least two weeks in advance of a potential conflict to schedule alternative arrangements.**

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

## Schedule (subject to change)

### Week 1 – August 29

- Theory: **the sociolinguistic variable**
  - Wolfram 1991. The linguistic variable: fact and fantasy
  - Lavandera 1978. Where does the sociolinguistic variable stop?
- Practicum: **class project, the sociolinguistic interview**

### Week 2 – September 5

- Theory: **foundations of variation, the three waves of variation**
  - Eckert 2005. Variation, convention, and social meaning
  - Fischer 1958. Social influences on the choice of a linguistic variant
  - Labov 1972. The social motivation of a sound change
- Practicum: **the sociolinguistic interview**

### Week 3 – September 12

- Theory: **language change, age**
  - Bailey 2002. Real and apparent time
  - Coupland 2001. Age in social and sociolinguistic theory
- Practicum: **the sociolinguistic interview cont.**

### Week 4 – September 19

- Practicum: **fieldwork debrief, class project discussion**

### Week 5 – September 26

- Theory: **class**
  - Labov 1972. The social stratification of (r) in New York city department stores
  - Rickford 1986. The need for new approaches to social class analysis in sociolinguistics
  - Dodsworth 2009. Modeling socioeconomic class in sociolinguistics
- Practicum: **Introduction to ELAN**

### Week 6 – October 3

- Theory: **race and ethnicity**
  - Rickford 1985. Ethnicity as a sociolinguistic boundary
  - Hoffman and Walker 2010. Ethnolects and the city: ethnic orientation and linguistic variation in Toronto English
- Practicum: **Transcription conventions**
- **Assignment 1 due 11:59pm! – Sociolinguistic interviews**

**Week 7 – October 10**

- Theory: **style**
  - Labov 1972. The isolation of contextual styles
  - Bell 1984. Language style as audience design
  - Schilling-Estes 2002. Investigating stylistic variation
- Practicum: **Transcription workshop**

**Week 8 – October 17**

- Theory: **gender, sexuality**
  - Eckert 1989. The whole woman: sex and gender differences in variation
  - Podesva 2007. Phonation type as a stylistic variable: the use of falsetto in constructing a persona
- Practicum: **Transcription workshop**

**Week 9 – October 24**

- Theory: **speech communities, social networks, communities of practice**
  - Patrick 2002. The speech community
  - Milroy 2002. Social networks
  - Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992. Think practically and look locally: language and gender as community-based practice
- Practicum: **PENN Forced Aligner tutorial, ARPAbet intro**
- **Assignment 2 due 11:59pm! – Transcriptions**

**Week 10 – October 31**

- Theory: **social meaning**
  - Zhang 2005. A Chinese yuppie in Beijing: phonological variation and the construction of a new professional identity
  - Eckert 2008. Variation and the indexical field
- Practicum: **Aligned text-grids will be distributed, intro to praat scripts**

**Week 11 – November 7**

- Theory: **sociophonetics, vowel quality**
  - Hay and Drager 2007. Sociophonetics
  - Kennedy and Grama 2012. Chain shifting and centralization in California vowels: an acoustic analysis
  - McCarthy 2010. The Northern Cities shift in real time: evidence from Chicago
  - Holland and Brandenburg 2017. Beyond the front range: the Colorado vowel space
- Practicum: **Measuring vowel formants**

**Week 12 – No class November 14 (AAA) – work on your vowel measurements!**

**No class November 21 (Thanksgiving break)**

**Week 13** – November 28

- Practicum: **normalizing, plotting vowels**

**Week 14** – December 5

- Practicum: **measuring vowels**
- **Assignment 3 due 11:59pm!** – Vowel measurements and plots

**Week 15** – December 12

- Practicum: **Coding/formatting data, using R for statistical analysis**

**Finals Week – No final exam!**

**5-page independent project proposal due December 19 11:59pm!**