

BLACK ENGLISH

BTP2NA_T_12

W 4-5:40pm

Room 55



Dr. Dorottya Mozes

Pronouns In Use: She, her, hers

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Office Hours: W 2:00-4:00, and by appointment

Office Location: Room 116/1

Fall 2020

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of African American culture through African American English, drawing on work in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, Black studies and cultural studies addressing questions such as the following: How do sociolinguistic theories conceptualize Black Englishes? How do linguistic prejudices reinforce racism and vice versa? What is the role of language in creating, reproducing, or challenging racial relations? How do performed and stylized displays produce, negotiate, or complicate Black identity? How does race relate to other aspects of social identity (including gender, sexual, class, cultural, age, occupational)? How can we account for the complex relationship between African American linguistic style and Black cultural production?

Coursework:

Class Participation (10%)

Active participation means more than just coming to class. It means doing the reading/viewing assignments carefully, annotating your readings (write comments and questions down on the page, circle phrases or words that interest you), and contributing to class discussion. Always bring your texts to class with you.

Final Exam (30%)

The final exam will test your understanding of American popular culture and your capacity to use it in the classroom.

Blogging (25%)

Students will post five (500-word) reading responses to the University of Debrecen E-Learning system at elearning.unideb.hu. Blog posts will be graded. Late or incomplete

blog posts will receive a grade of zero (1). These posts are **mini-essays** and should be composed with precision and thoughtfulness. The class will be divided into two groups, and one group will post each week. Posts are due on Thursdays by 11:11PM. Consult the Reading & Discussion Schedule for guidelines on when posts are due. Blogging is meant to initiate and extend the critical conversation we conduct in class. You must proofread your entries for basic spelling and grammatical errors and move beyond initial reactions to offer a critical perspective, pose insightful questions, or rehearse themes that will be taken up in the final project. **All blog entries must have an original title and cite at least two quotations.** I encourage you to read the blog each week, as this will enrich our class discussion.

Blog Access: If you have any questions or concerns, email me or come see me during office hours and I will walk you through the steps.

Final Paper (25%)

Students will compose a (5-7 page) critical paper formatted according to MLA guidelines.

Presentation (10%)

Each student will present a ten-minute overview of one of the topics, articles, texts, films, or TV series we are covering this term.

Grade Breakdown:

Class Participation (10%)

Final Exam (30%)

Blogging (25%)

Final Paper (25%)

Presentation (10%)

****Students are advised that the quality of their written and spoken performance will count significantly toward their final grade.****

Course Requirements and Expectations:

Under the current regulations, the course is planned to be a face-to-face, classroom-based course, HOWEVER, if due to the pandemic we have to switch to remote teaching, PLEASE be prepared to use the University of Debrecen E-Learning system at elearning.unideb.hu.

In case of such a switch, the course evaluation methods (e.g., for class participation) and grading rules may be subject to change. You will be notified of these changes by the instructor if needed.

It is our shared responsibility to observe effective hygiene rules and follow the relevant government, university and faculty regulations regarding the pandemic. If you become ill or experience any symptoms, please stay home to protect others from infection.

Attendance/Lateness Policy—

This course has a strict attendance policy. **More than three absences result in a failing grade.** Full attendance is mandatory and will be factored into your final grade. Because the success of this class depends so much on the people within it, I expect you to attend

all class meetings and to be on time. Excessive lateness will lower your class participation grade. Unexcused absences will lower your final grade. Except for sickness and emergencies, it is necessary that you see me well in advance of any absence to plan accordingly. Missing class does not excuse you from learning what happened that day, and all assignments must be submitted on time unless you have cleared an alternate due date with the instructor *in advance*.

Academic Integrity—

Knowingly presenting someone else's work as your own constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses in academia because it undermines the community of integrity that supports a scholarly community. As such, the penalties for plagiarism are harsh. **Students who plagiarize will fail the course.** Institute policy is that the cover sheet of your essay must contain your name, the title of the essay, the name and code of the course, the date of submission, and the following statement: **Hereby, I certify that the essay conforms to international copyright and plagiarism rules and regulations. You must sign this statement.**

Laptop/Phone Usage—

Social networking, web browsing, texting, or checking email is not permitted during class time. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in a class participation grade of **ZERO**.

Formatting Guidelines—

Written work should be typed in MS Word. Style requirements are **double-spaced** essays, with **Times New Roman** size **twelve font** with 1-inch margins. I expect you to *edit* and *proofread* all written work. **Drafts that contain excessive typos, misspellings, or grammar mistakes will be returned to the author for correction before I offer comments.** Please give each piece of writing an **original title**, use **page numbers** on multi-page assignments, and include your name, assignment, and the due date in a **header** on the first page. Sources must be cited *within* all of your written work. Your final paper and project will include a properly formatted list of **Works Cited**, following a standard citation format (MLA, APA, or Chicago). All submitted work must be **hard copies**. Electronic submission will only be accepted under special circumstances, with the instructor's permission.

NOTE: If you anticipate a need for accommodations due to disability, please contact me as early in the semester as possible. All communication about disabilities will be kept confidential.

Course materials for the course are available at the Institute library.

DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

September 9, Week 1 — Introduction to Sociolinguistics

Bucholtz, Mary – Hall, Kira. "Identity and Interaction: a sociocultural linguistic approach"

September 16, Week 2 – Race and Language

Alim, H. Samy, "Introducing Raciolinguistics"

September 23, Week 3 – Introduction to African American English

Part Three: *The Living Language* from Russell Rickford, John – Russell John Rickford. *Spoken Soul: The Story of Black English*

Blog 1 due 11:11PM Th for Group 1

September 30, Week 4 – Linguistic Prejudice/Racial Profiling

Baugh, John, “Linguistic Profiling”

Eric Garner. Christopher Lowe. Javiar Ambler. Derrick Scott. Byron Williams.

Manuel Ellis. George Floyd. “I can’t breathe.”

Blog 1 due 11:11PM Th for Group 2

October 7, Week 5 – AAVE in White and Black Literature

Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*

*Selections from *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Sound and the Fury*

Russell Rickford, John – Russell John Rickford, “Writers”

Blog 2 due 11:11PM Th for Group 1

October 14, Week 6 – Sounding Black Politics

Selection from Smitherman, Geneva – H. Samy Alim, “Naw, We Straight” from *Articulate While Black: Barack Obama, Language, and Race in the U.S.*

Selected speeches by Barack Obama, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Angela Davis and others

Blog 2 due 11:11PM Th for Group 2

October 21, Week 7 – Double Consciousness, Self and Code-switching

Sorry to Bother You (2018)

Selection from Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*

“The Crucible of Identity” from *Spoken Soul: The Story of Black English*

Blog 3 due 11:11PM Th for Group 1

October 28, Week 8 — Tea and Shade in the Talk of Black Women

Mitchell-Kernan, C. “Signifying, loud talking and marking”

Selected episodes from *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*

Blog 3 due 11:11PM Th for Group 2

November 4, Week 9 – Consultation Week

Blog 4 due 11:11PM Th for Group 1

November 11, Week 10 – Polyphonous Identity in the Speech of Black Drag Queens

Barrett, Rusty, “Indexing Polyphonous Identity in the Speech of African American Drag Queens.”

Selected episodes from *Ru Paul’s Drag Race*

Blog 4 due 11:11PM Th for Group 2

November 18, Week 11 – Hip-Hop: Afro-sonic Vernacular Cultures

Alim, H. Samy, “We are the Streets”

*Selection from Rose, Tricia. *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America.*

Selected Hip-Hop artists

Blog 5 due 11:11PM Th for Group 1

November 25, Week 12 – Contemporary Diasporic & Global Black Flows

Introduction from *Global Linguistic Flows*

Pennycook, Alastair, “Global Englishes, Rip Slyme, and performativity”

*Selections from Mitchell, Tony, ed. *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop outside the U.S.A.*

PSY, “Gangnam Style”

Bricka Bricka, “Eastern Europe Style”

<https://soundcloud.com/djzhao/afro-bass>

Blog 5 due 11:11PM Th for Group 2

December 2, Week 13 – Final Exam

December 9, Week 14 – Evaluation

Supplementary materials are marked with an asterisk (*) on the syllabus.

*Instructor reserves right to amend syllabus as needed.

Supplementary Resources

Alim, H. Samy – Ibrahim, Awad – Pennycook, Alastair 2009. (eds.) *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*. London–NY: Routledge.

Alim, H. Samy – Rickford, John R. – Ball, Arnetha F. (eds.) 2016. *Raciolinguistics: How language shapes our ideas about race*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Alkalmazott nyelvészeti kasszótár. (szerk.) Ladányi Mária – Hrenek Éva. Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó. 2019.

Coupland, Nikolas (ed.) 2016. *Sociolinguistics: Theoretical Debates*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coupland, Nikolas 2007. *Style*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Green, Lisa J. 2002. *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

Green, Lisa J. 1997. *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology and Discrimination in the United States*. Routledge.

Makoni, Sinfree – Smitherman, Geneva – Ball, Arnetha F. – Spears, Arthur K. (eds.) 2003. *Black Linguistics: Language, Society, and Politics in Africa and the Americas*. New York: Routledge.

Smitherman, Geneva 1994. *Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner*. Houghton Mifflin.

Wolfram, Walt – Natalie Schilling-Estes 1998. *American English*. Oxford: Blackwell.