LING 2500 Topic: Language & Religion

Spring semester 2018

Preliminary SYLLABUS

Instructor: Karin deJonge-Kannan, Ph.D. email karin.dejongekan@usu.edu
Office Phone: 435-797-8318 (but email works much better) Office Location: Old Main 002-J
Office hours: Mondays 3:15-4:15 PM and Tuesdays 1:30 – 2:30 PM; other days/times by appointment.

Course Description:
Two key aspects of a person’s identity are language and religion. Typically, to belong to a religion means to adopt its worldview and to carry out its ritual practices – verbal and non-verbal. What specific linguistic practices are connected with the religions of the world? How are children acculturated into these practices? If the language used by a religious group is not the dominant language of the society in which the group lives, what effects can be observed on the group, the individuals, and the language? These sociolinguistic questions about the topic of religion form the focus of this course. Through discussion of texts and videos, as well as conversations with class guests and classmates, students will develop their understanding of the roles of language and religion in the wider world. At the end of the semester, students will be able to articulate their perspective on issues of social power connected with language and religion.

Course Objectives:
Utah State University uses the IDEA Center Student Evaluation process to assess the extent to which students believe that a course has helped them learn. The objectives selected as “Essential” or “Important” for LING 2500 are:
- Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)
- Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems
- Acquiring an interest in learning more by asking my own questions and seeking answers

Instructor Philosophy:
Students are motivated to learn (and therefore learn better and more) in student-centered classrooms that provide them with freedom to make choices and direct their own learning. This class is for students who are ready to participate and take initiative. Students are expected to be generators of questions as well as seekers and synthesizers of information. If you are intellectually curious and enjoy pursuing answers to your own questions, this is a course for you. No tests, quizzes or exams will be administered in this course; students will demonstrate their understanding of course topics in face-to-face class discussions, short written responses, two brief presentations, the four parts of an iSearch process, and a written final reflection.
Basic format

Since none of us knows much about languages or religions outside our personal experience, we will read a lot so that we can learn. Students should take notes while reading, to make sure they read carefully and understand what they have read. A Reading Response template for note-taking is provided. When we meet as a class, we will discuss what we have read, what we learn from class guests, and what we see in video material. This time of discussion – checking our understanding against that of others; bouncing our ideas off others; asking questions and pondering possible answers – is critical for learning. Therefore, class attendance is mandatory. If you cannot make it to class for a legitimate reason (the instructor is the judge of what constitutes ‘legitimate’), you are expected to act like a responsible adult and inform the instructor immediately. Three absences are allowed without penalty; after that, absences will start affecting your final grade. Also, arriving late or leaving early disrupts the class. To discourage this type of disruptive behavior, three late arrivals / early departures will count as one absence.

To learn from each other while we are together, it is mandatory that everyone arrive on time and put away electronic gadgets and other distractions. This is your class; make it interesting, show respect, demonstrate attentiveness to one another. Pretend, if you have to.

Assignments & Points

30% On-going participation in class (15% attendance; 15% reading responses and reactions to videos or class guests)
6% Outside of class: Lecture or Other-Faith-Tradition experience (3 total; 2 pts each)
6% Presentation: lead small-group discussion of journal article of choice (5 pts)
25% Parts I and II of iSearch (10 points for the first five annotated sources; 15 points for the remaining 5 sources)
20% Parts III and IV of iSearch
5% Presentation of Parts III and IV
8% Written Final Reflection

Most days, several readings are assigned, but each student does only one of them. See Canvas for your assigned reading on a particular day. Fill out the Reading Response connected with that text. Reading Response formats change during the semester, so pay attention. Readings will be discussed first in small groups by those who read the same article, and then in new groups of people who read different articles, so students can help each other broaden their understanding.

Preliminary Schedule (to be updated periodically – pay attention!)

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<th>Jan 9</th>
<th>Introducing ourselves: Our faith traditions; our language(s); why taking this class? Watch &amp; discuss USU library’s video World Religions. Discuss Everett “Seek Out Strangers”</th>
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<td>Jan 11</td>
<td>Introductory topics: concepts and terminology. Group conversations around: • Eimer (2013) Jewish perspective • Scott (2013) Christian perspective • Roberts &amp; Yamane (2016) Becoming and being religious Be sure you have your assigned reading accessible during class (print or electronic version)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Material</td>
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- Cragun & Nielsen (2009) label ‘Mormon’  
- Searle-Chatterjee (2008) label ‘Hindu’  
- Souza (2016) Language and religious identities |
| Jan 18| Studying languages & religions (general, conceptual). Read one of 5 articles; do 1 reading response | - Brubaker (2013) Language, religion, politics of difference  
- Safran (2008) Language, ethnicity, and religion  
- Yeager-Dror (2014) Religion as a sociolinguistic variable |
| Jan 23| Major faith traditions: Language & Religion in Hinduism.  
**optional:** Burchett (2008) The ‘magical’ language of mantra | Diversity in Hindu practices: Read one of 5 articles; do 1 reading response:  
- Amarasingam (2008) Sri Lankan Tamil Youth in Toronto  
- Pandharipande (2013) Language of Hinduism in USA  
- Perera (2015) Sri Lankan languages in Australia  
- Huffer (2011) Hinduism without religion: Amma’s movement in USA |
| Jan 25| Major Faith Traditions: Language & Religion in Jainism  
**optional:** Long (2011) Jainism: Key themes | Diversity in Jain practices: Read one of 3 articles; do 1 reading response:  
- Laidlaw (2005) Jain fasting to death  
- Cort (2002) Jain devotion and asceticism  
- Evans (2012) Jainism and contemporary ethical movements |
| Jan 30| Major faith traditions: Language & Religion in Buddhism.  
Diversity in Buddhist practices: Read one of 3 articles; do 1 reading response |  
- Soucy (2009) Languages and performances in Vietnamese Buddhism  
- Straut-Eppsteiner (2017) Soka Gakkai Buddhists in the USA  
- Herat (2015) Sri Lankan Buddhists in the UK |
| Feb 1 | Major faith traditions: Language & Religion in China, Korea & Japan  
**optional:** Partridge (2013) Religions of China; Partridge (2013) Religions of Korea, Japan | Diversity in East Asian practices: Read one of 3 articles; do 1 reading response:  
- Jing (2014) Nonbelievers’ Beliefs about Religion (China)  
- Shimazono (2005) State Shinto in Japan  
Brainstorming topic ideas for iSearch |
| Feb 6 | Class guest– Dr. Tim Slocum                  |                                                                                  |
| Feb 8 | Library session – room change!!! – **meet in LIB 155**  
Intro: First-person academic searching (iSearch) |                                                                                  |
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| Feb 13 | Major faith traditions: Language & Religion in **Judaism**  
Diversity in Jewish practices: Read one of 5 articles; do 1 reading response  
- Avineri (2015) Yiddish language socialization (global situation)  
- Avni (2012) Hebrew in NYC Jewish dayschool  
- Fader (2008) Reading Jewish signs: Multilingual literacies (New York)  
- Peltz (2010) Diasporic languages: The Jewish world |
| Feb 15 | Class guest – Rabbi Ilana Schwartzman |
| Feb 20 | **[no class!!]** ... USU pretends it’s Monday today. Attend your Monday classes. |
| Feb 22 | Major faith traditions: Language & Religion in **Islam**.  
Diversity in Muslim practices: Read one of 5 articles; do 1 reading response  
- Chew (2014) Language in Singaporean Madrasahs  
- Garcia-Sanchez (2010) Moroccan Muslim Children in Spain  
- Moore (2013) Family Language Use in Muslim Community – Cameroon  
- Gogonas (2011) Arabic Speakers in Greece |
| Feb 27 | Class guest – Dr. Abdulkafi Alibirini |
| Mar 1 | First five sources with detailed notes - Parts I and II of iSearch due;  
Watch & respond to video “Luther and the Reformation” |
| Mar 4-11 | **Spring Break** |
| Mar 13 | Class guest – Rev. Scott Thalacker |
| Mar 15 | Watch & respond to video “Light to the World” (Baha’i) |
| Mar 20 | Critique of language policy in Christian missions: Read one of 4 articles; do 1 reading response  
- McDougall (2012) Bible Translation (Solomon Islands)  
- Schieffelin (2014) Christianizing Language (Papua New Guinea) |
| Mar 22 | All ten sources with detailed notes - Parts I and II of iSearch due  
Watch & respond to video “Brothers in the Buddha”  
Send instructor a PDF of your favorite article or book chapter (from your iSearch) |
| Mar 27 | Class will decide on one of 4 options:  
1. **Sociolinguistic experience of religion among youth in USA**: Read 1 of 3 articles; do 1 reading response  
   - Choi & Tinker Sachs (2016) Adolescent Multilinguals – Book Club  
   - Kesler Rumsey (2016) Coming of Age – Amish Literacy Practices  
2. **Native American** Languages & Religions: Read 1 of 3 articles; do 1 reading response  
   - Garroutte & Beals (2009) Religiosity and Spiritual Engagement  
   - Reagan (2013) Indigenous Education in North America  
3. **Sociolinguistics in Mormonism**: Read 1 of 3 articles; do 1 reading response  
   - Stanley (2016) Mormon Terms of Address |
4. Diversity in Catholic practices: Read 1 of 4 articles; do 1 reading response

- Crystal (1966) Language and Religion
- Hoenes del Pinal (2011) Q’eqchi’ Maya Catholics

Mar 29
5 Student-selected articles; 1 reading response

12 Apr 3
5 Student-selected articles; 1 reading response

Apr 5
parts III-V of iSearch due
Watch & respond to video (TBD);

13 Apr 10
5 Student-selected articles; 1 reading response

Apr 12
5 Student-selected articles; 1 reading response

14 Apr 17
Final presentations (summary of parts III and IV of iSearch)

Apr 19
Final presentations (summary of parts III and IV of iSearch)

15 Apr 24
Contemporary Issues (Brown 2015? Sears & Wood 2016?) or Film + discussion?

Apr 26
Contemporary Issues / Film + discussion

Tues May 1 at 11:20
Reflection Paper due at the end of the time that we would have had a final

**Learning Climate:**

In this class we promise to:

- Acknowledge that human beings experience and participate in religion in many ways
- Ask questions respectfully, humbly, and with an open mind
- Seek to discover, analyze, and understand

Specifically, we will not engage in denigration of that which is holy or sacred to others, nor will we attempt to promote our own religious beliefs and religious value system over those of others.