

# **LING 2500 Topic: Language & Religion**

Spring semester 2018

## **Preliminary SYLLABUS**

Instructor: **Karin deJonge-Kannan**, Ph.D.      email [karin.dejongekan@usu.edu](mailto: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!)**

1	Jan 9	Introducing ourselves: Our faith traditions; our language(s); why taking this class? Watch & discuss USU library’s video <i>World Religions</i> . Discuss Everett “Seek Out Strangers”
	Jan 11	Introductory topics: concepts and terminology. Group conversations around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eimer (2013) Jewish perspective</li><li>• Scott (2013) Christian perspective</li><li>• Roberts &amp; Yamane (2016) Becoming and being religious</li></ul> <b>Be sure</b> you have your assigned reading accessible during class (print or electronic version)

2	Jan 16	Labels, names, and identities. Read one of 4 articles; do 1 reading response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joseph (2004) Names</li> <li>• Cragun &amp; Nielsen (2009) label 'Mormon'</li> <li>• Searle-Chatterjee (2008) label 'Hindu'</li> <li>• Souza (2016) Language and religious identities</li> </ul>
	Jan 18	Studying languages & religions (general, conceptual). Read one of 5 articles; do 1 reading response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brubaker (2013) Language, religion, politics of difference</li> <li>• Fishman (1996) What do you lose</li> <li>• Marti et al (2005) Language and religion</li> <li>• Safran (2008) Language, ethnicity, and religion</li> <li>• Yeager-Dror (2014) Religion as a sociolinguistic variable</li> </ul>
3	Jan 23	Major faith traditions: Language & Religion in <b>Hinduism</b> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>optional</i>: Burchett (2008) The 'magical' language of mantra</li> </ul> Diversity in Hindu practices: Read one of 5 articles; do 1 reading response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amarasingam (2008) Sri Lankan Tamil Youth in Toronto</li> <li>• Jaspal &amp; Coyle (2010) British-born South Asians in the UK</li> <li>• Pandharipande (2013) Language of Hinduism in USA</li> <li>• Perera (2015) Sri Lankan languages in Australia</li> <li>• Huffer (2011) Hinduism without religion: Amma's movement in USA</li> </ul>
	Jan 25	Major Faith Traditions: Language & Religion in <b>Jainism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>optional</i>: Long (2011) Jainism: Key themes</li> </ul> Diversity in Jain practices: Read one of 3 articles; do 1 reading response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laidlaw (2005) Jain fasting to death</li> <li>• Cort (2002) Jain devotion and asceticism</li> <li>• Evans (2012) Jainism and contemporary ethical movements</li> </ul>
4	Jan 30	Major faith traditions: Language & Religion in <b>Buddhism</b> . Diversity in Buddhist practices: Read one of 3 articles; do 1 reading response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soucy (2009) Languages and performances in Vietnamese Buddhism</li> <li>• Straut-Eppsteiner (2017) Soka Gakkai Buddhists in the USA</li> <li>• Herat (2015) Sri Lankan Buddhists in the UK</li> </ul>
	Feb 1	Major faith traditions: Language & Religion in <b>China, Korea &amp; Japan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>optional</i>: Partridge (2013) Religions of China; Partridge (2013) Religions of Korea, Japan</li> </ul> Diversity in East Asian practices: Read one of 3 articles; do 1 reading response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jing (2014) Nonbelievers' Beliefs about Religion (China)</li> <li>• Baker (2006) History of Religion in Korea</li> <li>• Shimazono (2005) State Shinto in Japan</li> </ul> Brainstorming topic ideas for <i>iSearch</i>
5	Feb 6	Class guest– Dr. Tim Slocum
	Feb 8	Library session – room change!!! – <b>meet in LIB 155</b> Intro: First-person academic searching ( <i>iSearch</i> )

6	Feb 13	Major faith traditions: Language & Religion in <b>Judaism</b> Diversity in Jewish practices: Read one of 5 articles; do 1 reading response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avineri (2015) Yiddish language socialization (global situation)</li> <li>• Avni (2012) Hebrew in NYC Jewish dayschool</li> <li>• Fader (2008) Reading Jewish signs: Multilingual literacies (New York)</li> <li>• Morahg (2000) Hebrew: A language of identity</li> <li>• Peltz (2010) Diasporic languages: The Jewish world</li> </ul>
	Feb 15	Class guest – Rabbi Ilana Schwartzman
7	Feb 20	<b>[no class!!]</b> ... USU pretends it's Monday today. Attend your Monday classes.
	Feb 22	Major faith traditions: Language & Religion in <b>Islam</b> . Diversity in Muslim practices: Read one of 5 articles; do 1 reading response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chew (2014) Language in Singaporean Madrasahs</li> <li>• Dweik &amp; Qawar (2015) Language Choice among Arab Canadians - Quebec</li> <li>• Garcia-Sanchez (2010) Moroccan Muslim Children in Spain</li> <li>• Moore (2013) Family Language Use in Muslim Community – Cameroon</li> <li>• Gogonas (2011) Arabic Speakers in Greece</li> </ul>
8	Feb 27	Class guest – Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini
	Mar 1	First five sources with detailed notes - Parts I and II of <b>iSearch due</b> ; Watch & respond to <b>video</b> “Luther and the Reformation”
Mar 4-11		<b>Spring Break</b>
9	Mar 13	Class guest – Rev. Scott Thalacker
	Mar 15	Watch & respond to <b>video</b> “Light to the World” (Baha’i)
10	Mar 20	Critique of language policy in Christian missions: Read one of 4 articles; do 1 reading response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edwards (2009) Language, Religion, and Identity</li> <li>• Irvine (2008) African Linguistics, Colonial Encounters</li> <li>• McDougall (2012) Bible Translation (Solomon Islands)</li> <li>• Schieffelin (2014) Christianizing Language (Papua New Guinea)</li> </ul>
	Mar 22	All ten sources with detailed notes - Parts I and II of <b>iSearch due</b> Watch & respond to <b>video</b> “Brothers in the Buddha” Send instructor a PDF of your favorite article or book chapter (from your <i>iSearch</i> )
11	Mar 27	Class will decide on one of 4 options: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sociolinguistic experience of religion among <b>youth in USA</b>: Read 1 of 3 articles; do 1 reading response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choi &amp; Tinker Sachs (2016) Adolescent Multilinguals – Book Club</li> <li>• Kesler Rumsey (2016) Coming of Age – Amish Literacy Practices</li> <li>• Peele-Eady (2011) Membership Identity – African-American children</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>Native American</b> Languages &amp; Religions: Read 1 of 3 articles; do 1 reading response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrasco &amp; Riegelhaupt (2006) Language, Culture, Science, Religion</li> <li>• Garrouette &amp; Beals (2009) Religiosity and Spiritual Engagement</li> <li>• Reagan (2013) Indigenous Education in North America</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Sociolinguistics in <b>Mormonism</b>: Read 1 of 3 articles; do 1 reading response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baker-Smemoe &amp; Bowie (2015) Linguistic Behavior, Linguistic Activity</li> <li>• Sherman (2015) Language in Mormon Mission (Czech)</li> <li>• Stanley (2016) Mormon Terms of Address</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

		4. Diversity in <b>Catholic</b> practices: Read 1 of 4 articles; do 1 reading response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baquedano-Lopez (2008) Doctrina class (youth in California)</li> <li>• Calvillo &amp; Bailey (2015) Latino Religious Affiliation, Ethnic Identity</li> <li>• Crystal (1966) Language and Religion</li> <li>• Hoenes del Pinal (2011) Q'eqchi' Maya Catholics</li> </ul>
	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 <i>iSearch</i> due Watch & respond to <i>video</i> (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.

