

## Language and Culture



**Instructor:**  
Gamil Alamrani

gamil.alamrani@scupi.cn  
(preferred)

28-  
85990100-  
217

SCUPI  
R: 427

Mon: 3.30 pm-7.20 pm  
Thurs: 3.30 pm-7.20 pm  
Available on Tu/Wed. by  
appointment

### Course Description

Language is the primary means of communication among humans. It operates on multiple levels, verbal and non-verbal, social, and cultural. This course will focus on the connections between language and culture and the social contexts and forms (gender, class, etc.) in which language use occurs.

The course is also designed to help students understand how culture and communication intersect in the context of intercultural communication. Its overarching goals are to help students become more sensitive to the way language and culture are interplayed to reflect societal issues, and to provide students with the knowledge and skills to interact successfully with people from different cultures. Students will also have the chance to gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will increase their communication competence. While most of the reading materials are in English, students are encouraged to incorporate Chinese materials to enrich discussions.

The course places priorities on personal critical reflection, academic engagement, and experiential learning. To foster personal and critical reflection, much of the class time will be spent in discussion. It is important that students read assigned material ahead of class meetings and come with thoughts and questions prepared for discussions and presentations.

### Suggested Texts

All readings will be made available in Blackboard (<https://pibb.scu.edu.cn>) under the “Content” tab.

### Course Learning Outcomes

With successful completion of this course, students will:

- Analyze how language is used across the array of contexts in which we engage daily
- Understand different perspectives on context, including identities, social institutions, cultural values and their relationships with language
- Articulate why and how some varieties of languages are more highly valued than others
- Undertake small-scale research, with a focus on language variation in the community
- Improve communication skills through analysis and oral presentation
- Explore cultural self-awareness and the dynamics that arise in interactions between people from different cultures

## Assignments and Evaluation

There are no exams or quizzes in this course. This course is project-based and will require a significant commitment of your time. The course includes a combination of reading, writing, in-class discussion, and hands-on experience. The following **four** components are vital to the successful completion of this course, and they figure into assessments and grades. Details of the assignments will be uploaded to the Blackboard.

1. Homework (20%)  
Students will have homework throughout the semester. Themes, questions, resources, and ideas will be shared online. Students should submit their homework (reflections on the assigned themes and reading) no later than Friday night before the week of the class. Students will be responsible for leading and actively participating in class discussions based on their homework.
2. Group Presentation (20%)  
In small groups, students will be expected to prepare a creative and interactive group presentation on one of the week's topics. The presentation will be assigned on a weekly basis. There will be a brief Q&A after each presentation and students are expected to contribute and give feedback on other students' presentations. The time frame for each presenter is 5-8 minutes, including the Q&A session.
3. Final Writing Project (40%)  
Students will conduct their final project on a chosen theme in language and culture. The rubric and further instructions will be posted on Blackboard.
4. Attendance and Participation (20%)  
The final grade will be greatly affected by students' attendance and participation, which includes discussions, Blackboard forums, and any other assignments inside and outside of class. For each part of a class period missed, a student will receive a deduction of half the point value of a full absence for that day. Class

participation will be assessed holistically based on students' engagement in class activities.

## Attendance Policy

Each **unexcused** absence will bear a penalty of half a letter grade (e.g., from a B to a B- or from a B- to a C+). For each part of a class period missed, a student will receive a deduction of half the point value of a full absence. **More than three unexcused absences** will result in a failing grade for the semester. If you are feeling unwell or need to miss a class, inform the instructor ahead of time by email.

## Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change based on the needs of the class at the instructor's discretion.

Week 1	Introduction to the course: Why study language? What is culture? Group presentations sign-up
Week 2	Language thought and representation
Week 3	Language Analysis
Week 4	Language and the Media
Week 5	Linguistic landscapes
Week 6	The global language system
Week 7	Global Englishes
Week 8	Language and ethnicity
Week 9	Language and gender
Week 10	Language and age
Week 11	Language and social capital
Week 12	What do we (not) know about language?
Week 13	Discussion of Students' projects
Week 14	Discussion of Students' projects
Week 15	Peer review Workshop
Week 16	Wrap up the course Final project due

## **Student Use of Electronic Technology Policy:**

Students can use electronic technology (including cell phones, laptops, tablets, and iPads) in appropriate ways during classes. Out of respect, cell phones should generally be turned off or on silent and stored out of sight. They should not be used during classroom activities unless the instructor has given permission.

Technology use in this class is meant to improve the learning environment for all students. Please be respectful of your instructor and classmates and use the technology appropriately.

If you have questions about what this means, please talk to your individual instructor.

## **Recording:**

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may NOT record classroom lectures, discussions, and/or activities without the advance permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly recorded in advance can be used solely for the student's own private study.

## **Make-up Policy for Missed Assignments and Tests:**

Students are responsible for the assignments in their classes. Assignments include in-class activities, quizzes, tests, homework, and any other work related to classes.

- If you are absent from class, you should try to contact one of the students in your class to find out what work was missed.
- If you cannot find out from another student about what work you have missed, when you return to class you must talk to your instructors about the missed work and if/when you can make up the work. You are responsible for talking to your teacher; your teacher is not responsible for reminding you about missed work.
- If you are absent from class on the due date of an assignment, you must hand in the assignment and be prepared to make up tests the day that you return to class or on a date decided with your teacher.
- If you know you will be absent, talk to your teacher before you leave or email your teacher to find out about the work that you will miss while you are away.
- If you have not been absent from class and you want to hand in an assignment late, you must first discuss the reason with your teacher before or on the due date. Do not assume that your teacher will accept late assignments. Also, you may lose points for late work based on teacher discretion.
- If you and your teacher arrange to meet so that you can make up an assignment and you miss that meeting, you may receive a "0" for that assignment.

## **Use of Machine Translation and Other Online Writing and Language Tools**



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While students are encouraged to use dictionaries and other language resources, they should not rely on machine translators for large sections of text. Papers must be written in English. Any paper that is written in Chinese and then processed through an online translator will be considered unacceptable.

If an instructor believes that a paper was written using machine translation, the instructor reserves the right to ask the student to re-write (potentially with a different topic), or give an alternative assignment, which may include a timed-writing essay assignment. Until the re-writing is submitted, the student will have an F for the assignment. Note: **Using AI tools to generate an essay or large sections of text will result in an F.**

### SCUPI Honor Code

Students in this course must follow the SCUPI Honor Code. This means that students should not get help from anyone or outside sources to do their work without the teacher's permission; nor copy the work of another and present it as their own work. Participating in these activities can result in an F and referral to university officials for academic integrity violations.

### Participation:

Active participation is crucial for language learning. Participating in class makes you an engaged learner of English. In this class, participation means:

- arriving to class on time
- staying on task (including appropriate use of technology)
- actively listening to your classmates and teacher when they speak in class
- asking questions
- bringing all class materials
- attending class regularly
- completing all homework on time
- actively and constructively participating in class activities
- being prepared to answer questions
- using only English in class

### Student Responsibility

This syllabus is a contract between you and the instructor. It is the first place you should look for answers to your questions about course requirements, expectations, and policies. By enrolling in this course, you are agreeing to adhere to the requirements, expectations and policies outlined in this syllabus, including sections on the SCUPI Honor Code. Students who fail to submit their work on time or miss more than 3 classes could receive a failing grade and may not graduate.