LG 674-7-SP Language & Human Rights
Spring 2019

Prof. Peter L. Patrick

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Office hours (Spring Term): Tues 12:00–1:00pm, Thurs 1:00pm–2:00pm

Module Aims and objectives

- This module aims to introduce and address key questions within the field:

  - What are language rights/linguistic human rights?
  - Can they be grouped around key concepts such as diversity? Identity? Language vitality?
  - What sorts of conflicts occur around language? Why?
  - What sorts of resolutions are often attempted? What are the roles of language planning and language policy in such efforts?
  - Do language rights qualify as (basic) HRs? Which ones? Why?
  - Which human rights (HRs) are essentially linguistic in nature? How? In whole or in part?
  - How are language rights negotiated in institutional contexts such as the courts? Government policy? Legislation? Schools? Healthcare providers? National and international bodies and organisations?

Module coverage:

This postgraduate module articulates empirical, comparative sociolinguistic views of language use and conflicts within speech communities, contextualizing them within a human rights perspective.

We problematize the ways in which broad social categories (including ethnicity, class, nationality, gender, race, indigenous and regional origin) intersect with ways in which language is used to claim statuses and negotiate conflicts. Such associations are problematic – both practically for speakers (and signers) asserting or negotiating their social identity, access to services, and human rights (political, civil, social, cultural and economic); and theoretically for scholars investigating areas such as citizenship and political participation, (im)migration, indigenous peoples and cultures, language extinction, globalization, maintenance/crossing of ethnic boundaries, mass media

discourse, the construction of gender ideologies, literacy and development, equal opportunity in the workplace, etc.

This module surveys important topics in human rights, focusing on the types of conflicts which occur around language, considering the principles upon which they can be understood and investigated, and examining efforts at solutions, as well as locating attempts to identify and make language rights manifest within a broad context of national and international agreements.

Learning Outcomes:

- For Linguistics & other students: control basic concepts and resources in studying Human Rights, as far as they interact with language issues
- For Human Rights & other students: acquire a basic understanding of socio-linguistic perspectives and principles, as far as they interact with language rights
- Identify, document and explore common types of language conflicts that potentially involve human rights violations
- Investigate language policy, planning and other attempts at resolving language issues which impinge on individual and group human rights
- Familiarise students with basic documents and resources concerning the nature of language rights vis-à-vis other human rights

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites. Any linguistics background will be helpful, equally any background in law or human rights is useful.

Assessment

This module is assessed 100% by coursework.
Thurs of Week 29 (April 18th): Essay, 3000 words   100%
Essay topics will be posted by the second week of term. Submit via Faser. Feedback is due within 20 working days, ie by Thurs 23 May, but I will try to have it back earlier.

Schedule of Classes and Topics:

Fri 18 Jan	*Week 16*	Course introduction. Principles of sociolinguistics. The Linguistic Human Rights (LHR) paradigm, I
Thurs 24 Jan	*Week 17*	Human Rights: Basic approaches. The Linguistic Human Rights (LHR) paradigm, II
Thurs 31 Jan	*Week 18*	Language minorities & minority languages, I. Ethnic & National minorities. Human Rights instruments
Thurs 07 Feb	*Week 19*	Language minorities & minority languages, II. Language policies in multilingual states. Conflicts over multilingualism
Thurs 14 Feb	*Week 20*	Language Planning & Policy. Principles & trends in LP/LP. Development of nonwritten languages. Is standardization a good thing?
Thurs 21 Feb	*Week 21*	**Presentation planning day**
Thurs 28 Feb	*Week 22*	Dialect vs Standard in monolingual context. Language minorities II: 'Race' & regional minorities. Case: Oakland USA "Ebonics" controversy. Schools I: Gatekeepers for elites
Thurs 07 Mar	*Week 23*	Extinction/revitalization of indigenous languages
Thurs 14 Mar	*Week 24*	National standards abroad: When majorities become minorities. Cases: Spanish-speakers in the US: migration, integration & English-Only; Creole speakers in the Caribbean. Autochthonous groups; changes in migration; fairness vs diversity; territorial vs personality principles
Thurs 21 Mar	*Week 25*	Vulnerable speakers

Expectations

- All students are expected to attend class regularly. If you know you'll be absent in advance, it would be nice if you would tell or email me.
- The University has rules and regulations, and you are expected to know them. At the least, you should know where to find out about them! The Dept. of Language and Linguistics *Undergraduate Student Handbook* is the first source for many things.
  - See **Info for current students** page in Moodle
- When you come to class, please make sure you have already read the main readings for that week's topic (see Talis list).

- It's your responsibility to ask any questions you need, each week, to clarify your understanding. It's my responsibility to answer in a helpful and respectful way. Please do speak up – I want to hear from you.
- Do bring a device (tablet, laptop, phone etc.) to class that you can use for activities. Please don't talk or play games etc. on them in class – if you want to do that, I don't mind if you leave class & do it elsewhere.
- Please come to my office hours at least once this term to introduce yourself, ask questions about lectures or assignments, or discuss anything you're interested in about course topics or the university. I'm much more likely to put your name and face together and know how you're getting on, if we can talk one-on-one. You can also come with a friend from class. Also, you'll probably do better on your assignment if you discuss it with me in time.
- Please bring to my attention any resources for learning that you'd like me and other class members to know about, e.g. web links, readings, mass media or audiovisuals, etc.
- Basic knowledge of either descriptive linguistics & sociolinguistics, or human rights, is assumed. You're **not** expected to know both areas when you begin! This course is designed to accommodate students from both linguistics and human rights, as well as other disciplines, with a small amount of extra effort on your part