

# ENG 358 (01W), Language and Society

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2025

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Dongmei Cheng

Office Location: Hall of Languages, Room #116

Office Hours: 12:00-2:00pm, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (but please make an appointment first!). **I'm flexible.** If the prior days/times do not work for you, just reach out and we'll find a time that works for both of us! Book an appointment via the following link: <https://tidycal.com/dongmeicheng>

Office Phone: Phone? Psh, let's zoom instead.

Office Fax: Do you really have something to fax to me? Just email it instead.

University Email Address: [Dongmei.Cheng@tamuc.edu](mailto:Dongmei.Cheng@tamuc.edu)

Zoom: Link provided in course shell under "Contact Information & Office Hours"

Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: I will respond within 24 hours. If you have not heard from me, please assume I have not received your message and reach out to me again. I may not immediately respond to emails on weekends and holidays.

## COURSE INFORMATION

**Textbook(s) Required:** This class does NOT utilize a textbook. 🙅🏻🙅🏻 Instead, all the learning materials you'll need are provided to you in the course shell (D2L).

### Optional Texts and/or Materials:

If you want to own a book that has some but not all of the ideas presented in the course, you may like:

Holmes, J. *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. (5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> edition). London, U.K., & New York, NY: Routledge.

## Course Description

In this course you will attain an advanced understanding of the sociocultural nature of human language. Language may be studied at several structural or functional levels (such as phonology or syntax, for example). However, your attention to this course will be directed to the components of society and culture and to the relationships between these components and language variation within and across individuals. You will also be encouraged in the class to examine carefully your beliefs about your own language and your attitudes toward the language varieties that you and others use. Doing so will

help you better understand the change that language constantly undergoes in personal and social use. Examining your beliefs and attitudes will also help you become more aware of the variation in language use from one group to the next and from one individual to the next.

## Student Learning Outcomes

A student who completes ENG 358 will:

1. become aware of the constant interplay between language and society in both English speaking as well as in societies that speak other languages.
2. become aware of his/her attitudes to varieties of English and other languages.
3. learn to respect all varieties of languages and to put this respect in the language-teaching classroom.

## Course Evaluation Methods

This course will utilize the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes for the course. Detailed information and guidelines for each assignment will be available on the course site. For the course organization, please check the [course calendar on the last three pages of the syllabus](#).

- **Quizzes** (36%): Students will take quizzes on each unit to demonstrate their learning of course content. Quizzes will namely consist of multiple-choice, T/F questions, with the potential for a few short answer questions
- **Discussions** (15%): Online discussions provide students with opportunities to engage with readings and lectures, interact, and share insights with classmates.
- **Assignments** (22%): Students will complete up several assignments in relation to course content. These may be written, verbal (e.g., PowerPoint presents), or visual assignments (e.g., infographic)
- **Midterm Exam** (15%): The midterm exam is to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and learning of the topics covered in the first half of the semester.
- **Final Project** (12%): The final exam is to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge of the topics covered in the entire semester and synthesize their understanding of relevant issues.

## GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%  
C = 70%-79%  
D = 60%-69%  
F = 59% or Below

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades

A = 765 - 850 Points  
B = 680 - 764 Points  
C = 595 - 679 Points  
D = 510 - 594 Points  
F = 0 - 509 Points

Assignment Type	Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Discussions	125	15%
Assignments	190	22%
Quizzes	310	36%
Midterm (Parts I & II)	125	15%
Final	100	12%

**Extra Credit:** There will be (at minimum) one extra credit opportunity; completion of the course evaluation towards the end of the term (10 points). There may be (will likely be) additional extra credit opportunities offered.

**Final Exam:** If you have an “A” (90% or higher) in the course after all your coursework is completed and graded, you do not have to take the final exam.

**Grade Bump:** Oh no, you finished the semester with an 89%, 79%, 69%, or 59%. You were so close to that next grade! Will the professor round my grade up? Each semester, about 10% of my students find themselves on the cusp of the next grade. These students always have something in common; they either missed assignment(s), worked haphazardly on an assignment, and (or) decided not to pursue extra credit opportunities. **You are** responsible for “bumping” your own grade. What does that mean? Take advantage of **every point** through every assignment.

### **Fudge Points**

It is the professor’s discretion on whether to award “fudge” points for quiz questions that seemed problematic. A quiz question is “problematic” when it meets at least two of the following conditions: 1.) at least 40% of the test takers answered it incorrectly, 2.) the

material surrounding the question was not overtly addressed in the materials, and 3.) there is a good argument that the question was generally confusing or ambiguous.

### **Regrading**

If a quiz question was incorrectly set-up, the professor will regrade the quizzes. This may lead to some students seeing an increase in their quiz grade while others may see a decrease in their grade. If you did **not** receive points for a question that you answered **correctly**, you will then receive those points after the regrading. If you received points for a question that you answer **incorrectly**, you will then lose those points after the regrading.

### **Submitting Assignments**

With the exception of the first week and finals week, our work week runs from Monday to Monday. Assignments each week are due on the following Monday, and each Monday, a new week/module will be released. All assignments must be submitted to D2L by the designated due date. If an assignment requires submitting a text-based file, files must be either Word documents, PDF, or Google Docs. **No .pages files!** Also, if you are using Google Docs, you must be sure to grant the right sharing/viewing permissions when submitting the link. If I cannot access the file and have to ask for viewing permissions, it will be considered late. If this is a repeated issue, you will not be allowed to submit Google Doc files throughout the rest of the course. If you have technical issues in uploading the assignment to the course site, please contact CITE Help Desk at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu) and email me to notify me of the problem.

### **Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course**

Being successful in an online course requires self-discipline and high motivation. In this course, all work will be completed through D2L. Access and follow all course instructions found in the content area of the D2L course. Please note that assignment due dates are crucial. No delayed assignments will be accepted. You should check the course website frequently for assignments, announcements, and discussions. I strongly recommend dedicating set days/times to completing your work and working in advance so that you are always ahead. In order to achieve the outcomes of the course, you will be involved in a number of different activities. It is fundamental to complete all of the readings and activities on time: the quizzes, the discussions, and the assignments. I encourage you to do all the course reading and assignments for each learning module in the order they are presented. Moreover, we are co-constructing our knowledge in the online community. Please be prepared, share thoughtfully, respond respectfully, and engage in all learning processes.

### **Best Practices**

Students who have concerns about this course or the instructor should speak to the instructor about those concerns first. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of

that conversation, the next person to talk to is Dr. Christian Hempelmann, Department Head of Literature and Languages. Students should contact him via e-mail at [C.Hempelmann@tamuc.edu](mailto:C.Hempelmann@tamuc.edu). If you bypass this chain of command, your concern will be ignored.

Unless stated otherwise the instructor will grade assignments within two weeks, and respond to emails within one business day. Please refer to the syllabus and/or our myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) course shell before sending an email to your instructor. You may not receive a response if your questions are already answered on the syllabus or on myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace).

Tips for sending emails! When emailing, it's always good to follow the genre conventions of a formal letter. **This includes a subject line stating the name of the class, a greeting ("Hi, Dr. Cheng," for example), specific details and explanation in the body of your email, and a closing ("Thank you, Your Name" for example).** Emails should be properly proofread and edited and contain the course number in the subject.

Let's be professional. Each time you send me a new email about a new topic, please compose a new email with a new subject; do not reply to some old email threads unless we discuss the same issue. It can be very confusing and makes it difficult to reply to your emails.

Should you encounter myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) problems while submitting assignments/discussions/comments, the following procedure must be followed:

- Report the problem to the help desk. You may reach the helpdesk at 1 -866-656-5511. See myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) Technical Support for more details.
- File the problem with the helpdesk and obtain a helpdesk ticket number.
- Once you have helpdesk ticket number, email the instructor to inform her of the problem and provide her with the helpdesk ticket number.

Your personal computer and internet access problems are not legitimate excuses for filing a ticket with the myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) Help Desk. Only myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace)-based problems are legitimate reasons to contact the Help Desk. You are strongly encouraged to check for your browser compatibility before the course begins and take the myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) tutorial offered for students who may require some extra assistance in navigating the myLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) platform.

Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Every student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a

computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a campus open computer lab, etc.

This syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

### Computer Technologies

This class will be delivered completely online using Desire2Learn Brightspace (D2L), the new Learning Management System used by East Texas A&M University. To get started with the course, go to [MyLeo](#). You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. Students are required to have regular access to a computer with an Internet connection. At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. If you experience problems in accessing the course site or have other technological difficulties, please contact the CITE Help Desk at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

### LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements:

- [LMS Requirements](#)
- [LMS Browser Support](#)
- [Zoom Video Conferencing Tool](#)

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary

use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

### **Technical Support**

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. You can also [check out other Brightspace support options](#).

D2L runs monthly updates during the last week of the month, usually on Wednesday. The system should remain up during this time unless otherwise specified in an announcement. You may experience minimal impacts to performance and/or look and feel of the environment.

### **Interaction with Instructor Statement**

I will respond within 24 hours. If you have not heard from me, please assume I have not received your message and reach out to me again. I may not immediately respond to emails on weekends and holidays. The best way to reach me is with a professional email that includes "ENG 358" in the subject.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Course Specific Procedures/Policies**

Students are responsible for attending class and keeping a log of their attendance. Please note that this means that no excuse will be accepted for failure to comply with the class requirements. No make-up quizzes will be given. Students needing particular attention should notify the instructor during the first week. If you miss a class you are responsible to receive the information you missed or you have to be prepared for surprises.

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

### **University Specific Procedures**

#### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the [Rules of Netiquette](#) for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

### **Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01](#)

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)  
[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

### **Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

#### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

### **Nondiscrimination Notice**

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

### **Students' Mental Health**

The Counseling Center, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

### **AI use policy**

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

## COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Assignments will be due on Monday each week, except for the last two weeks. Each new module will be released on Monday each week.

Week	Topics	Assignments	Due
Week 1 1/13-1/20	Welcome & Start Here	Discussion Board	Monday, 1/20
Week 2 1/20-1/27	Introduction to Sociolinguistics	Quiz	Monday 1/27
Week 3 1/27-2/3	Language Variety & Social Factors	Discussion Board  Quiz	Monday, 2/3
Week 4 2/3-2/10	Multilingual Communities	Assignment  Quiz	Monday, 2/10
Week 5 2/10-2/17	Standard Languages & Language Change	Assignment  Quiz	Monday 2/17
Weeks 6 2/17-2/24	Language Varieties & Multilingual Nations	Assignment  Quiz	Monday, 2/24
Week 7 & 8 2/24-3/10	Sociolects, Gender, Ethnicity, & Age	Assignment #1  Assignment #2  Quiz	Monday, 3/10
Week 9 3/17-3/24	Midterm	Midterm; Part I Discussion Board & Part II Assignment	Monday, 3/24
Weeks 10 & 11 3/24-4/7	Theory of Face and Politeness	Discussion Board  Assignment	Monday, 4/7
Week 12 & 13 4/7-4/28	Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, Discourse Patterns &	Quiz  Quiz	Monday, 4/28

	Culture, Pragmatic Particles		
Week 14 4/28-5/2	Prepare for Final	Discussion Board Extra Credit	Friday, 5/2
Week 15	Final	Final Exam	Friday, 5/9