

Linguistics/AAAS/English 505S. “Language and the Black Experience”

“Service Learning through tutoring of Elementary School African American children”
Winter 2012. Venue: Pomerene 206.

Instructor: Donald Winford.

Office: 207 Oxley Hall.

Office hours: Wednesday 1.00 - 2.00 pm or by appointment. Tel. 2-0362

Class Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1.30 – 3.18pm.

From week 3 on, class will meet on Tuesdays only.

Tutoring times: 3.30 – 5.30 pm (one day per week).

Tutoring days to be decided in the first week of classes.

Course Description:

This service-learning version of Linguistics 505 will combine the study of language and culture in the African American community, with service in a particular community setting, Weinland Park Elementary School located in Columbus, Ohio. The main focus of the course will be on investigation of the varieties of English used by African-Americans in the United States, and the general relationship between language and social organization in the African-American community. We will examine the history, structure, and use of African American English (AAE), and the role it plays in the culture of African Americans. We will also consider ideologies regarding the use of AAE, especially as they relate to social opportunity and disadvantage in education and other areas of social life. The classroom component of the course will provide students with background knowledge and preparation to guide them in the service learning component of the course, which will involve the tutoring of students at Weinland Park Elementary School. The tutoring experience is meant to enhance students’ understanding of African American language and culture by giving them direct experience with language use and literacy development in African American elementary school children.

The service-learning component.

Service learning courses (unlike field experiences or internships) require you to complete practical, onsite work with a community partner and to reflect on that experience as well as on the social issues related to your particular partner organization. For more information about service learning at OSU, go to:

<http://service-learning.osu.edu/>.

In addition to meeting in class once a week on campus, you will act as a literacy partner to one or more students attending the Weinland Park Elementary School. To complete the service requirement of the course, you must be available for two hours each week, on any day except our class day, **between 3.30 and 5.30 pm**. We will talk about your specific schedules during the first week of classes.

Course objectives and overall structure:

A: Learning about African American language and culture:

B: Learning to be tutors.

C: Applying classroom training to the tutoring experience.

The overall objective is to establish connections between (1) the academic learning that takes place in the classroom, and (2) the tutoring experience with elementary school children. The former will involve learning both about African American language and culture, and about how to be tutors. Since our service goal will be to help our literacy partners with their school assignments, we will have to learn a little about how to act as tutors, interacting with elementary school children. The schedule below contains specific publications and materials that we can use to prepare us for our tutoring work at Weinland Park Elementary.

In the on-campus portion of the course, the first two weeks will be devoted to preparing you to be tutors. This will include lectures by educators including guest speakers Mindy Wright, and Angie Brenneis of the Godman Guild Association, as well as a visit to Weinland Park Elementary School where you will be introduced to the after-school tutoring program and assigned to your literacy partners by Angie Brenneis. In the following weeks, you will read about African American language and culture and about issues related to literacy and language learning among African American children, by way of further preparation for tutoring. By connecting the hands-on experience you will be having at Weinland Park Elementary School with the reading, writing, and discussion we do in class, you will gain a better understanding of the ways in which African American children of different backgrounds acquire literacy skills, and of the language and culture of these children.

We will meet in class twice during the first two weeks, and thereafter once a week for the next 8 weeks. From week 3 on, on you will do tutoring at Weinland Park Elementary School, where you will each be assigned to at least one student in the after school program. The actual days and times will be decided in class during the first week. During your meetings at Weinland Park Elementary, you will work as literacy partners, or tutors, with your assigned students to help improve their literacy skills. You will bring what you observe and what you learn through the meetings with your literacy partners back into our classroom and use that information to inform your own understanding of African American children's educational needs.

During the first two weeks, you will also have to obtain a background check at the Buckeye Mentoring Hub. A form will be provided for you to fill out in the first class.
<http://www.mentoringcenterco.org/buckeyementor.htm#getstart>

Textbook:

Rickford, John & Russell Rickford. 2000. Spoken Soul: The story of Black English New York: John Riley & sons. ISBN 9780471399575 pb.

Additional readings available online at CARMEN.

Policies.

Attendance:

Attendance at classes and tutoring sessions is strictly required, except in extenuating circumstances.

Class Cancellation Policy:

In the unlikely event of class cancellation due to emergency, I will contact you via email and request that a note on department letterhead be placed on the classroom door. In addition, I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

Course requirements and Evaluation:

This course will give you an opportunity to write about topics we cover in class, and your experiences with tutoring elementary school children. The primary goal is for you to make connections between your tutoring experience and your study of African American language and culture.

Assignments will consist of the following:

- **Three summaries** of selected readings covered in the class (20%).
[See guidelines for summaries]
- **A journal** that keeps a record of your experiences as a tutor, with weekly accounts of your progress with your literacy partner. A total of six journal entries, each about 200 words long, must be submitted (see schedule of classes below) (30%)
- **A collaborative project** with your WPE literacy partner, which can take various forms (a diary, a collection of pictures and writings, drawings etc.), and will be given to your tutee at your last tutoring session or at the final tutoring session. (20%)
- **A final paper**, about 8-10 typed pages (space and a half) long. This can be

EITHER

(a) a research paper on a topic of your choice, related to African American language and culture, or issues relating to the education of African American children;

OR

(b) An essay based on your journal entries, in which you explicitly tie together what you learned about tutoring and literacy at Weinland Park Elementary School with what you learned in class about African American language and culture.

Your paper should focus on ways in which the child's language background posed challenges for his/her success at reading and writing, and how your own understanding of African American language and culture helped you to overcome those obstacles. This will be due on the scheduled date for final exams. **To be presented in class in the final week. (30%)**

Grading:

All assignments will be graded in accordance with the following scale:

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	60-66
B-	80-82	E	0-59
C+	77-79		

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)

Special Accommodations

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

Syllabus and Readings

Week 1. 1/3-5

Tuesday 1/3.

Overview of the course.

Thursday 1/5

Varieties of language. Dialect, Standard, etc.
African American English.

Reading:

Lanehart, S. 1999. African American English. (CARMEN)
Lanehart, S. 1996. "The language of identity" (CARMEN)

Learn more about service learning here:

<http://service-learning.osu.edu/>

OR here:

<http://service-learning.osu.edu/service-learning-for-students.html>

Visit the following website to learn more about tutoring:

<http://cstw.osu.edu/outreach>

To learn more about mentoring, visit the following website:

<http://www.mentoringcenterco.org/buckeyementor.htm#getstart>

Week 2. 1/10-12

Tuesday 1/10. In class.

Guest talk by Angie Brenneis on tutoring.
African American children in the classroom.

Readings:

Baugh 2001. (CARMEN)

Journal #1 due Tuesday: What do you expect from this course? Look at the Service learning websites listed above.

What did you learn about service learning? What questions do you have?

Thursday 1/12. In class:

Guest lecture by Mindy Wright. The service-learning experience.
The Ebonics controversy.

Readings:

Rickford & Rickford text. Chap. 9.

Vaughn-Cook 2007. (CARMEN)

Winford 2003. Ideologies of language.

Week 3. 1/17-19 (No class on Thursday, Tutoring continues)

Tuesday 1/17. In class.

Alternative approaches to teaching African-American children.

Readings:

Rickford, J. 1999. Using the vernacular to teach the standard. (CARMEN)

Wyatt 2001 (CARMEN)

Journal #2 due Tuesday: What did learn from your readings so far that might help you to prepare for tutoring African American kids?

SUMMARY 1 DUE TUESDAY.

WEEK 3 WILL INCLUDE YOUR FIRST VISIT TO WEINLAND PARK ELEMENTARY. Getting acquainted with your literacy partner.

Week 4. 1/24-26 (No class on Thursday, Tutoring continues)

Tuesday 1/24 In class:

Class discussion of first meeting with your tutee.

What happened during your first visit to Weinland Park Elementary? What went well? What questions do you have? What do we need to change?

Discussion topics:

Phonological features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE). (Pronunciation).

Reading:

Linguistic approaches to reading.

Rickford & Rickford. 2000. Spoken Soul. Chapter 6.

Labov. Spotlight on reading. (CARMEN)

Labov. 1995. "Can reading failure be reversed?" (CARMEN)

Journal #3 due Tuesday: What did learn from your visit to Weinland Park Elementary (WPE)? What questions do you have? How do your observations prepare you for your first tutoring experience?

Week 5. 1/31-2/2 (No class on Thursday, Tutoring continues)

Tuesday 1/31. In class:

AAVE grammar. An exercise on 'ain't'

The forms of BE in AAVE

Reading:

Rickford & Rickford. Spoken Soul. Chapter 7.

SUMMARY 2 DUE TUESDAY

Week 6. 2/7-9 (No class on Thursday, Tutoring continues)

Tuesday 2/7. In class:

Origins and history of AAVE.

Reading:

Rickford & Rickford. Spoken Soul, Chapter 8.

Winford 1997. On the origins of AAVE part 1.

SUMMARY 3 DUE TUESDAY

Week 7. 2/14-16. (No class on Thursday, Tutoring continues)

Tuesday 2/14. In class

Discussion of last week's tutoring.

African American English in its socio-cultural context.

Ethnography of Speaking.

The African-American speech community.

Social differentiation of language in the AA community.

Reading:

Rickford & Rickford. Spoken Soul, Chapters 2-5, Chap 12.

Journal #4 due TUESDAY: Response to tutoring.

Week 8. 2/21-23. (No class on Thursday, Tutoring continues)

Tuesday 2/21. In class:

Attitudes toward AAVE.

Linguistic profiling.

Readings:

Ogbu, John. 1999. Beyond language. (CARMEN)

Baugh, John. Linguistic profiling. (CARMEN)

Journal #5 due TUESDAY: Response to tutoring

Week 9. 2/28-3/1. (No class on Thursday, Tutoring continues)

Tuesday 2/28. In class:

Styles of speaking in the African-American speech community.

Readings:

Rickford & Rickford, Chapter 5.

C. Mitchell-Kernan. Signifying, loud talking and marking. (CARMEN)

Code switching.

Reading:

DeBose, C. E. 1992. Codeswitching: Black English and Standard English.
(CARMEN)

What issues do we still need to discuss?
Preparing for End of Quarter Learning Celebration.

Journal #6 due TUESDAY: Response to tutoring

Week 10. 3/6-8 (No class on Thursday)

Tuesday 3/6: **Presentation of final papers.**
Collaborative project report due.

Learning Celebration with Weinland Park Elementary School Students--If Possible

Final Paper due on date scheduled for final examination.