**FRE 251 – Winter 2023**

“Language and the Academe: Critical examinations of our language landscapes and linguacultures”

Prof. Eric Louis Russell

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Tuesdays from 2.10 – 5.00pm

**This seminar is open to all graduate students – French knowledge and graduate standing is not required**

Description

In this seminar, we will critically examine the place of language, writ both large and small, on US campuses. While part of our discussion and exploration will look to language as an object of study (i.e. language pedagogy), much more of it will consider language as it is enmeshed in all aspects of the academe, from the socio-economic forces removing linguistic diversity from campus globalization efforts, to the political forces enacting symbolic violence on student expression, to the sometimes-subtle, sometimes-overt reifications of racial ideologies that play out in classrooms, administrative offices, and much more.

Participants will explore and question how language, as both noun and verb, i.e. something that exists and something that is done, is enmeshed with various ideologies and forces, shaping the ways that our conceptions of linguistic life are both objectified and subjectified in this environment, while being (re)shaped in turn.

After establishing some conceptual and postural bases, notably **language landscape** and **linguaculture**, our time together will be divided into three units.

* The first will explore **globalization**, both in general and how this has shaped language in US higher education since the end of the cold war. We will see how global flows affecting other domains are hybridized and rearticulated in higher education, and question how these have and continue to influence linguistic life on campus.
* The second will shift toward questions of **hegemony** and/in language, specifically the ways that power is deployed and contested by and through linguistic life. We will dissect the often-invisible ways that institutional structures replicate and reinforce preexisting hegemonies, while also noting how these may hybridize and how they are, have been, and may continually be disrupted.
* Finally, we will look to racialization and **raciolinguistics**, specifically how ideological formations surrounding race have and continue to play out in US higher education, as elsewhere. We will apprehend and invert some of the ways that hidden or implicit racial ideologies affect language, most notably in language instruction and linguistic research.

Additional goals of the class include continual development of writing and communication skills applicable to graduate and professional objectives (note that this is also a matter that can and should be critiqued, where ideologies pertaining to language come starkly into play!).

You will practice grasping at linguistic hegemony and hopefully set yourself up to disrupt it a bit by honing your “academic communication” skills in writing and speaking, as well as contending with others’ writing and speaking.

Readings/Materials

Readings will be assigned each week, along with observation and reflection activities. The readings will be cogent to different units and themes and will be made available on Canvas. Observation and reflection activities ask students to apply critical stances and concepts with real examples from linguistic life at UCD (or elsewhere, as applicable). These will serve as the basis for our hands-on discussions in seminar sessions.

Students are expected to complete all readings and reading assignments – when there are unforeseen events that impede steady progress and participation, please contact me as soon as possible and keep the lines of communication open.

Grades

You will be evaluated according to the standard university scale based on two components:

* 50% of course grade: weekly summaries and preparation of observation/reflection
* 50% of course grade: final project, including preliminary work

Each week you will be asked to complete a summary of assigned reading. This should be no more than one page (normal font, spacing) and summarize the key concepts and ideas, while also including questions pertinent to how this might apply (or not apply) to the broader topic at hand. You will also be asked to complete an observation/reflection activity: this is more informal and will serve to focus our discussion and hone your critical thinking skills.

The final project will consist of a QE-worthy “plan of attack”: rather than writing a paper (in a 10-week quarter, this is not really feasible), we will break down a research project into its component parts, some of which include writing, others presentation, and still more menial tasks such as the articulation of a research agenda. More information will be given as we progress.