

Lehman College¹
Department of Linguistics

Course Title: **LNG (AAS) 339: African Languages** 3 hours, 3 credits.

Course Description: African languages and language families, their characteristics and development, including pidgin and Creole languages. Analysis of relations of language to ethnicity and identity. The contributions of African languages to general linguistic theory.

Location: Carman Hall, Room 331

Meeting Times: Tuesday & Thursday 9:30-10:45am

Instructor: Michelle A. Johnson

Email: mjohnson2@gc.cuny.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 11:00-12:00 location TBD

Course Learning Objectives (Interdisciplinary Program in Linguistics):

Students will...

1. be able to explain classifications of African languages and why they are significant.
2. develop an understanding of the complexity of differentiating languages and dialects, and the distinction between Creoles and pidgin languages.
3. become sensitive to the relationship between language and ethnicity, language and identity.
4. articulate some of the unique characteristics found in African languages and the contributions they have made to linguistic theory.

Materials:

Textbook: Childs, G. Tucker, 2003. *An Introduction to African Languages*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

The textbook is available in digital format through the Lehman library.

There will also be videos, podcasts and you tube videos you will need to download and watch/listen to available at the course website <http://africanlang.commonsgc.cuny.edu/>.

Multimedia and Technology

Students are expected to utilize both the text and the multimedia resources. Completing the assignments for this course is dependent upon having access to the Internet. There are workstations in the library and a computer lab in Carman Hall if you do not have a personal computer.

This syllabus, additional readings and multimedia links are available on the course website <http://africanlang.commonsgc.cuny.edu/>

It will be very important that you check this website regularly. There you will find announcements, assignments and links to other students' websites. Blackboard will not be used for this course.

If you have any trouble with technology, please call the helpdesk at 718-960-1111

Accommodating Disabilities

Lehman College is committed to providing access to all programs and curricula to all students. Students with disabilities who may need classroom accommodations are encouraged to register with the Office of Student Disability Services. For more information, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services, Shuster Hall, Room 238; phone number, 718-960-8441. Accommodations will only be granted with documentation before the second week of the semester.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy

Statements on plagiarism may be found in the student handbook. For more information, refer to <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/student-affairs/documents/student-handbook-02.pdf>

Lehman College does not discriminate on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, handicap, or political belief, in any of its educational programs and activities, including employment practices and its policies relating to recruitment and admission of students.

Tutoring/Writing Center

The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) and the Science Learning Center (SLC) are two of the tutoring centers on campus. The ACE provides appointment based and drop-in tutoring in the humanities, social sciences, and writing, as well as general writing and academic skills workshops. The SLC provides drop-in tutoring for natural and computer science courses. To obtain more information about the ACE and the SLC, please visit their website at <http://www.lehman.edu/issp>, or please call the ACE at 718-960-8175, and the SLC at 718-960-7707.

Classroom Specific Policies:

Attendance at all class meetings will be taken and is expected. If you miss **more than two (2)** classes during the semester without documentation, your final grade will be reduced by **2% for each day**. It will be difficult to absorb, integrate, and utilize the information presented without attending classes. Students are expected to complete the readings presented in this syllabus **prior** to scheduled lecture dates.

Grading Policy:

Your grade in this course will be solely based on your creation of a website and corresponding presentation. There are no tests in this course.

There are deadlines for components of the project throughout the semester, corresponding to the completion of each chapter. You will receive a grade at each deadline, and your final grade will be a composite of all these grades.

Assignment 0 is worth 10% of your grade. Assignments 1-5 and the presentation are worth 15% of your grade each.

96-100% = A

81-85% = B

71-75% = C

90-95% = A-

78-80% = B-

60-69% = D

86-89% = B+

76-77% = C+

Below 60 = F

Late Policy:

At the discretion of the instructor, all work submitted after the deadline will be subject to a reduction in grade. Due to the nature of the course, it will be very difficult to maintain adequate progress without meeting these deadlines. Therefore, work submitted 1 day to 1 week late will have a 20% reduction; after that, it will not be graded and you will receive a 0 for the assignment.

If you miss a deadline, or know you will be late, please email or text me immediately! Please do not save assignments for the last minute. Not coming to class the day an assignment is due does not grant you an extension.

Deadlines may be adjusted from those printed in the syllabus. If you are late or miss a class, it is your responsibility to both obtain the notes and any administrative updates from your classmates.

TENTATIVE schedule of topics

Date	Topic	Reading	Multi-Media	References	HW
Jan 28	Introduction				
Jan 30	Why study African languages?	Childs 1-18 Lohdi	Ethnologue ⁱⁱ BIGSAS You Tube Video ⁱⁱⁱ		Pick a country ^{iv}
Feb 5	Classification of African languages	Childs 18-41	Maps ^v	H&N2008 15-35	Pick a language ^{vi} Assignment 0 Due Feb 6
Feb 7	Wordpress!!	Greenberg			
Feb 12	NO CLASSES	Lincoln's	Birthday		
Feb 14 (Tuesday schedule)	Classification	Childs 42-54	LinguisticsMarb urg ^{vii}		
Feb 19	Computer Lab - Classification				
Feb 21	Classification				Assignment 1 Due Feb 25
Feb 26	Historical & typological issues	Childs 153- 163			
Feb 28	Historical & typological issues				
March 5	Historical & typological issues	Childs 164- 174			Assignment 2 Due March 11
March 7	Phonology & Phonetics	Childs 55-96	UCLA Endangered Languages ^{viii}		
March 12	Phonology & Phonetics		Peter Ladefoged's web CD		
March 14	Phonology & Phonetics				
March 19	Phonology & Phonetics				Assignment 3 Due March 25
March 21	Social topics	Labov			
March 25- April 2	SPRING	BREAK			
April 4	Morphology	Childs 97- 106		Baker 1988 H&N 2000 161-193	
April 9	Morphology				

April 11	Morphology (special session on Bantu agreement)	TBD			Assignment 4 Due April 15
April 16	Syntax & Semantics	Childs 117-140			
April 18	Syntax & Semantics	Childs 141-152			
April 23	Syntax & Semantics	Childs 153-163			
April 25	Syntax & Semantics	Childs 164-174			Assignment 5 Due April 29
April 30	Social effects	Economist Articles Childs 175-187			
May 2	Social effects	Childs 188-216	Alina potential – Radio & Weasel		
May 7	WORK DAY – Prepare presentations & clean up website!				
May 9	Presentations				
May 14	Presentations				
May 16	Presentations				
May 23, 8:30-10:30	Possible make-up day for presentations.				

Some useful resources (will be made available on my (or the course) website)

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/2011/04/000000_focus_on_africa.shtml

<http://www.fsi-language-courses.org/Content.php>

<http://www.fizzylogic.com/users/bulbul/>

<http://www.nigercongo.com/>

ⁱⁱ http://www.ethnologue.com/country_index.asp?place=Africa

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y61ptLnsyhQ>

^{iv} <http://africa.isp.msu.edu/afrlang/introduction.htm>

^v http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/african_languages.htm

^{vi} <http://www.africanlanguages.org/index.html>

^{vii} <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOEaAD2x9ac>

viii <http://archive.phonetics.ucla.edu/> & <http://phonetics.ucla.edu/>