

School of Humanities and Social Science

Course syllabus

Course code: HUMA3030
Course title: Language, Communication and Culture
Course offered: Spring 2019
Course instructors: Dr. Hideki Nishimura (hmnishimur@ust.hk)

Course description

This course explores human language in relation to the communicative functions which it serves and the cultural context in which it is used. Issues such as how human language is distinct from other communication systems, how language is used to convey different meanings and how culture affects the use of language will be examined in order to highlight the uniqueness of human language.

This course is designed as a required course in the interdisciplinary area of “Literature, Communication and Media” for SHSS’s major program. Students major in Global China Studies can take it in their first or second year of study. This course is also open to non-major students who can take it to fulfill their elective requirement.

Intended learning outcomes

- Identify the differences between language and other forms of communication systems
- Analyze the correspondence between form and meaning/function
- Improve the competence in interpersonal and group communication

Topics to be covered

Topics
Introduction to the course & some basic concepts in studying communication & culture
Different types of communication systems
Development of joint attention in human and animal communications
Mechanism of language acquisition
Speech acts – effects of utterances
Different effects in different cultures
Cooperative principle and implicature
Applying theories – persuasive advertisements
Applying theories – funny jokes
Meaning of “humanities”

Assessments

There are three assessments for this course:

1. In-class work (20%)
2. Group mini project (40%)
3. Term paper (40%)

Sample course readings

Akmajian, Adrian et al. (2010). *Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. (HKUST Library E-Resource: P121 .A4384 2010eb)

Wierzbicka, A. (2003). Cross-cultural Pragmatics. *The Semantics of Human Interaction*. 2nd Edition. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.