

## **HUMA2031 The Cantonese Language**

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### **Yuk Man Carine YIU**

Study of the Cantonese language, with emphasis on sounds and grammar. The course examines historical and socio-linguistic issues pertinent to the development of Cantonese in the context of Hong Kong and compares the characteristics of Cantonese with those of Mandarin. **[This is not a language enhancement course and lectures will not be recorded!!]**

### **Course description**

This course introduces students to the basic linguistic concepts pertinent to sounds and grammar with illustrations from Cantonese and Mandarin. The phonological and grammatical characteristics of the Cantonese language will be highlighted and compared with those of Mandarin. Moreover, the course will study the history of the Cantonese language and examine the on-going changes that have come to define the variety of Cantonese spoken in Hong Kong as a separate dialect from those spoken in its neighboring areas.

### **Intended learning outcomes**

- Identify and articulate the structure of the Cantonese language with the learnt linguistic concepts
- Appreciate the similarities and differences exhibited by Cantonese and Mandarin
- Analyze the structure of the Cantonese language, and by extension other languages, with the learnt skills and analytic tools
- Enhance the communication skills by sharpening the sensitivity to the intended meanings associated with the linguistic and non-linguistic clues

### **Major topics to be covered (tentative)**

Part I: Introduction (Week 1)

1. Cantonese as spoken in Hong Kong

Part II: Phonology (Week 2 - Week 7)

1. Initials
2. Finals
3. Tones
4. On-going sound changes

Part III: Morphology (Week 8)

1. Morpheme and word

Part IV: Syntax (Week 9 – Week 12)

1. Word classes
2. Noun phrase
3. Verb phrase
4. Aspect
5. Modality
6. Sentence elements
7. Ambiguity

Part V: Topics in sociolinguistics (Week 13)

### Assessment

Pop quizzes (short-answer questions) <b>No Make-up!!</b>	20%
Homework assignments (1 transcription exercise and 1 mini-project due on 11 May)	30%
Reflective journals (2 journals, maximum length of one page for each journal)	10%
Final (a 2-hour final exam: transcription, MC questions, short-answer and long-answer questions)	40%

### Textbooks

- Cheung Hung-nin Samuel 張洪年. 2007. *Cantonese as Spoken in Hong Kong* (Revised edition) 香港粵語語法的研究(增訂版). Hong Kong: Chinese University Press. [PL1740.H72 C46 2007, online access]
- Matthews Stephen and Virginia Yip. 1994/2011. *Cantonese: A Comprehensive Grammar*. London: Routledge. [PL1733.M38 1994/PL1733.M38 2011, online access]

### Other references

- Bauer S. Robert and Paul K. Benedict. 1997. *Modern Cantonese Phonology*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. [PL1739.B38 1997, online access]
- Hu Yushu 胡裕樹. 1995. *Xiandai Hanyu* 現代漢語. Shanghai: Shanghai Jiaoyu Chubanshe. [PL1071.X525 1995]
- Li Xinkui 李新魁. 1994. *Guangdong de fangyan* 廣東的方言. Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe. [PL1731.L54 1994]
- Li Xinkui et al. 李新魁等. 1995. *Guangzhou fangyan yanjiu* 廣州方言研究. Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe. [PL1731.K825 1995]

Tang Sze-Wing 鄧思穎. 2015. *Lectures on Cantonese Grammar* 粵語語法講義.  
Hong Kong: The Commercial Press. [PL1734.T36 2015]