Language, Power & Identity

HUMA 2032

Credits: 3

(No pre-/co-requisites)

Instructor: Pip Freestone

Email: hmdrpip@ust.hk

Office Hours: Fridays 11-12, Academic Building Room 2387.

Course Description

This course aims to stimulate students' thinking around the complex notion of 'identity', introducing poststructuralist and discourse analytic approaches. The language of individuals and/or institutions will be analysed in depth, with reference to critical theories of society, ideology and language. The course also aims to raise awareness of how language is used to create and maintain power through the production and preproduction of narratives of identity. Case studies will be presented, with a view to deconstructionist analysis of the role of language in producing and reproducing ostensibly stable 'identities' such as masculine/feminine, Western/Asian and straight/queer. The course also investigates the role of language in how humans perform other types of social belonging and difference such as ethnicity and social class.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1.	Summarise key concepts in the field of language and identity
2.	Explain how diverse senses of belonging and difference relate to individual and institutional practices
3.	Reflect on their own beliefs about identity, and on implications for social justice
4.	Critique relevant approaches to the analysis of identity
5.	Create, confidently and critically, academic arguments within the field of language & identity

Course structure:

- One 2-hour lecture per week (taught by lecturer)
- 1-hour seminar every week (taught by TA, two possible timeslots)

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

Assessments:

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Due date
Quiz 1	20%	21/02/2025
Quiz 2	20%	14/03/2025
Quiz 3	20%	13/04/2025
Final examination (semi-open book**)	40%	25/04/2025

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be released within two weeks of the due date.

**‘Semi-open-book’ means that a booklet of short readings from the course will be provided during the exam. No devices or papers can be brought to the exam.

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Quiz 1 & 2	ILO1, ILO2	These short multiple-choice quizzes, administered through Canvas, will assess students' understanding of concepts from the course and their ability to evaluate their applications and implications.
Exam	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3, ILO 4, ILO 5	Students will write an essay under timed conditions dealing with a selected topic related to the issues and debates covered on the course. This will assess students' ability to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills of analysis and evaluation

Final Grade Descriptors:

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates a comprehensive grasp of subject matter, expertise in problem-solving, and significant creativity in thinking. Exhibits a high capacity for scholarship and collaboration, going beyond core requirements to achieve learning goals.
B	Good Performance	Shows good knowledge and understanding of the main subject matter, competence in problem-solving, and the ability to analyze

		and evaluate issues. Displays high motivation to learn and the ability to work effectively with others.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Possesses adequate knowledge of core subject matter, competence in dealing with familiar problems, and some capacity for analysis and critical thinking. Shows persistence and effort to achieve broadly defined learning goals.
D	Marginal Pass	Has threshold knowledge of core subject matter, potential to achieve key professional skills, and the ability to make basic judgments. Benefits from the course and has the potential to develop in the discipline.
F	Fail	Demonstrates insufficient understanding of the subject matter and lacks the necessary problem-solving skills. Shows limited ability to think critically or analytically and exhibits minimal effort towards achieving learning goals. Does not meet the threshold requirements for professional practice or development in the discipline

Course AI Policy

- No electronic devices will be allowed in examinations

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Feedback on assignments will include [specific details, e.g., strengths, areas for improvement]. Students who have further questions about the feedback including marks should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received.

Required Texts and Materials

Specified, short sections of:

Joseph, J. E. (2004). *Language and identity: National, ethnic, religious*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Joseph, J. E. (2006). *Language and politics*. Edinburgh. Edinburgh University Press.

Jones, R. H., & Themistocleous, C. (2022). *Introducing language and society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

Additional Resources

Freestone, P. (2023). Do "Chinese gays" come out? A discursive-sociocultural approach to queer visibility amongst same-gender-attracted men in Chengdu, China. *Journal of Language and Sexuality*, *12*(2), 200-226.

Groves, J. M. (2010). Language or dialect, topolect or regiolect? A comparative study of language attitudes towards the status of Cantonese in Hong Kong. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *31*(6), 531-551.

Lee, T. K. (2023). *Kongish: Translanguaging and the Commodification of an Urban Dialect*. Cambridge University Press.

Tam, G. A. (2020). *Dialect and nationalism in China, 1860–1960*. Cambridge University Press.

Wei, L., Tsang, A., Wong, N., & Lok, P. (2020). Kongish Daily: Researching translanguaging creativity and subversiveness. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, *17*(3), 309-335

Yang, S. (2024). Decoding mixed identities in Hong Kong: A clustering analysis of multiple identity indicators. *Social Indicators Research*, *171*(2), 585-603.

Yip, V., & Catedral, L. (2021). Perceiving (non) standardness and the indexicality of new immigrant Cantonese in Hong Kong. *Language & Communication*, *79*, 81-94.

HUMA 2032 Exam Rubric

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Content & Organization 70%	• The arguments and ideas made within the essay are evidence based and logical • There is clear integration and understanding of course concepts shown throughout the project • The selection of examples and reflections are all relevant to the course themes and help provide a comprehensive understanding of key concepts • The essay is organized in a way that	• Most arguments and ideas made within the essay are evidence based and logical • There may be parts of the essay that lack full integration of course concepts. Opinions may not be fully supported • The selection of examples and reflections are mostly relevant to the course themes and help provide some understanding of key concepts. Some parts may require further detail	• Arguments and ideas made within the essay may not be evidence based and the logical of ideas presented may be hard to follow • There may be many parts of the essay that lack full integration of course concepts • The selection of examples and reflections are only adequately relevant to the course themes • The essay may sometimes fail to demonstrate full	• Relevant arguments and ideas may not be sufficiently present within the essay • There may be little of no support from course content • The selection of examples and reflections may be only tangentially relevant to the course themes • The essay may often fail to demonstrate basic understanding of key concepts • The essay may be disorganised and/or cause

	shows a clear progression of ideas	or are lacking in explanation • The essay is organized in a way that shows some progression of ideas	understanding of key concepts • Some parts of the essay may be irrelevant or confusing • The essay may be organized in a way which shows insufficient progression of ideas	strain on the reader • Significant parts of the essay may be irrelevant or confusing • The essay may be organized in a way which shows a lack of progression of ideas
Use of Language 30%	• The project is able to demonstrate an expert usage of language that is appropriate, persuasive and stylistic for the chosen form • There are no/minimal errors in language within the project	• The project is able to mostly demonstrate usage of language that is appropriate, persuasive and stylistic for the chosen form. There may be issues but overall comprehension is not affected. • There may be language errors but they are not distracting or significant	• Ideas are communicated at a basic level. May not be appropriate or convincing. • Language errors are at times problematic and affects comprehension	• Ideas are severely hindered by language and which results in ideas not being communicated at all