HUMA3030 Course Outline
Language, Communication and Culture

Instructor: Dr. Cathy Ping PAN (hmpanping@ust.hk)
Time: Tuesday & Thursday 10.30pm-11.50am
Venue: Rm 2407, Lift 17-18
Office hours: Monday 1-3pm; Thursday 12.30-2.30pm; Or by appointment
Course TA: Christie LAM (hmchristie@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 majoring 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.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

- Identify the differences between language and other forms of communication systems.
- Analyze the correspondence between form and meaning/function.
- Be aware of the social factors that play a role in shaping the way we use language. Improve the competence in interpersonal and group communication.

Assessment

1. Class participation: 20%
   Attendance is essential for the course. Students should attend the lectures on time, and regularly, including sessions dedicated to student presentations and evaluation activities for them. There will be graded in-class tasks, exercises, or assignments during the lectures. In total they constitute 20% of the final grade. Students are advised to bring their laptop or tablets for these activities.

2. Quizzes: 35%
   There will be 2 in-class quizzes to consolidate and test understanding of the key notions and discussions of the lectures and readings. Students are expected to follow
the lectures carefully, support their learning by reading the materials provided, and participate actively in class discussions and student presentations.

3. **Research proposal (collaboration in pairs): 45%**
Students will work in pairs to develop a research proposal that aims to investigate ‘language in use’ in a small-scale study. Additionally, they will share their proposed research through a five-minute in-class presentation. This assignment thus consists of two components:

- Oral presentation: 10%
- Research proposal (max. 2000 words): 35%

Guidelines are available on Canvas regarding the topics, components and format of the proposal.

**Policy on use of GenAI:**

Generative AI may be used to find and evaluate sources of information, but must not be used to compose the proposal or cited in the text or as an author of the text.

**Course Schedule (subject to changes):**

**Week 1 – February 1, 2024**
Course Introduction: Overview of the course and topics to be covered, the approaches, and expectations.

**Week 2 – February 6, 2024**
Course Introduction: Preliminary introduction to key notions of meaning, politeness and pragmatics

**Week 2 & 3 – February 8 & 15, 2024**
Language as a complex system of communication: Sound grammar, lexicon, and meaning

**Readings:**

**Week 4 – February 20 & 22, 2024**
The meaning of ‘meaning’: Utterances, sentences and propositions

**Readings:**

**Week 5 – February 27 & 29, 2024**
Entailment, presupposition, and implicature

**Readings:**

**Week 6 – March 5 & 7, 2024**
Cooperative Principle and conversational implicature

**Readings:**

**Week 7 – March 12, 2024**
*In-class Quiz 1*

**Week 7 & 8 – March 14 & 19, 2024**
Speech acts: Doing things with words

**Readings:**

**Week 8 & 9 – March 21 & 26, 2024**
Politeness principles, facework and (im)politeness

**Readings:**


**Week 10 – April 9 & 11, 2024**
Cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatics

**Readings:**

**Week 11 – April 16, 2024**
Language variation (I): On uses and users

**Readings:**

**Week 11 – April 18, 2024**
Proposal presentations (12 pairs x 5mins)

**Week 12 – April 23, 2024**
Language variation (II): On uses and users

**Readings:**

**Week 12 – April 25, 2024**
Proposal presentations (12 pairs x 5mins)
Week 13 – April 30, 2024
Language contact: Multilingual societies and multilingual discourse

Readings:

Week 13 – May 2, 2024
Proposal presentations (13 pairs x 5mins)

Week 14 – May 7, 2024
Proposal presentations (13 pairs x 5mins)

Week 14 – May 9, 2024
In-class Quiz 2

Recommended readings:
(These books are accessible at the HKUST Library, with the majority available as ebooks.)


