

**01:070:170 Explorations in Languages and Cultures
Learning an Endangered Language (taught in English)
Rutgers University – Fall 2019**

Prof: Kathleen Riley

Email: kcr58@anthropology.rutgers.edu

Office: RAB 316

Office hours: Wed. 1:30-3:30 or by appointment

Seminar: Wed 5:35-6:55 RAB 209A

Prerequisite: none

Credits: 1.5

Catalogue description: linguistic structure and function; language in ethnohistorical and sociocultural contexts; social life of languages; language shift, obsolescence, endangerment and revitalization; linguistic relativity; performativity; techniques used by linguists and anthropologists heading to the field to work with endangered languages

Full description: Linguists estimate that there are still 7000 languages alive in the world, but these numbers are dwindling fast as the elders who once spoke them daily are dying. Most of these languages cannot be studied at universities or with online apps such as Duo Lingo. How then would you go about learning one of these “little” languages of the world if you had a chance to hang out with some of its speakers? This course will introduce you to the fundamentals of learning a language in the field. We will also think about how and why some languages become endangered, how and why speakers of endangered language are attempting to maintain and transmit them to the next generation, and if and how anthropologists can help them in this endeavor.

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments	Course goals (see list above) met by each assignment	Departmental goals met by each assignment*	Language Engagement goals met by each assignment**
Reading blog	CLG 2, 4	1, 3, 4	LE 3.1, 3.2
Language learning exercises	CLG 1, 3	2, 3	LE 3.1, 3.3
Endangered language project	CLG 1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	LE 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

*See <https://anthro.rutgers.edu/academics/undergraduate/undergraduate-learning-goals> for a numbered list of departmental goals.

** Language Engagement Goals:

LE3. Learn about the cultural relevance of language in general and/or one or several language(s) in particular:

LE3.1 Understand one or more cultural dimensions of language in general, or one or several particular languages.

LE3.2 Understand and be able to explain one or more dimensions of the cultural, academic, or personal relevance of language in general, or of one or several particular languages.

LE3.3 Better appreciate and value linguistic diversity

In this course, students will:

1. Learn about an endangered language and how to engage in learning it (LE 1 and 2)
2. Put into practice some of the methods used by linguists and anthropologists who learn languages for fieldwork (LE 2 and 3)
3. Increase their understanding of how languages are structured and function in society (LE 3)
4. Improve their abilities to read, write, think, and speak effectively about human languages and their relevance to culture and society (LE 3)

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course meets for 14 weeks for 1 hour per week and requires 2 hours of preparation time per week. Below you will find the course calendar and the assignment guidelines in a nutshell. Expanded guidelines as well as the course syllabus (and revisions to it), and lecture notes are posted on Sakai. Some assignments will be submitted on Sakai, and others will be submitted in class. The quizzes will be based on readings from the Bower text book, available on reserve in the library (and in my mailbox). Extracts from the other texts below will be made available on Sakai or as a library e-reserve and discussed in class.

Texts and other resources:

- Bower, Claire. 2015. *Linguistic Fieldwork: A Practical Guide*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Burling, Robbins. 1984. *Learning a Field Language*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. (on reserve in library)
- Cablitz, Gabriele H. 2006. *Marquesan: A Grammar of Space*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. (available as ebook at Rutgers, can be borrowed for 365 days on Adobe Digital Editions)
- Cablitz, Gaby <http://dobes.mpi.nl/projects/marquesan/>
- Catford, J. C. 1969. Learning a Language in the Field. *Modern Language Journal* 53(5): 310-317.
- Donaldson, Emily. Marquesan Phrasebook. <http://www.emilydonaldson.org/phrasebookpage.html>
- Dordillon, Ildephonse René. 1999[1904]. Grammaire et Dictionnaire de la Langue des Iles Marquises. Tahiti: Société des Etudes Océaniques. https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4150716/f1_image.texteImage
- Elbert, Sam. 1941. Chants and love songs of the Marquesas Islands, French Oceania. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 50:53-91.
- Elbert, Sam. 1985. Eighty Years Later: Dordillon's 1904-1932 Marquesan Dictionaries. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 94:67-75.
- Handy, E. S. Craighill. 1929. *Marquesan Legends*. Honolulu: B.P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 69.
- Kramer, Seth, et al. 2007. *The Linguists*. Ironbound Films. (video on reserve at Douglass media 10-1516)
- Perley, Bernard C. 2012. "Zombie Linguistics: Experts, Endangered Languages and the Curse of Undead Voices." *Anthropological Forum* 22 (2): 133-49.

III. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and participation: Both your presence and participation are required for this course. There is no explicit point value for this, but you cannot pass this class without showing up regularly and attempting to engage.

Reading blogs (30% of final grade): You will keep a reading blog and complete 10 entries in response to reading the books by Bower and Burling. Dates and chapters are noted on the class outline, and specific questions will be provided each week to be completed prior to the next class.

Language learning exercises (20% of final grade): There will be 12 in-class language learning exercises based on learning Marquesan. These exercises will test your ability to acquire some degree of facility with pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and cultural content. They will be partially oral and partially written. Your grade is based on your 10 best scores.

Endangered language project (50% of final grade): All forms and guidelines for this project are posted on Sakai under "resources". Submission boxes for each step are available on Sakai under "assignments".

Step 1: Proposal (due 10/23)

Go on ethnologue.com and find an endangered language of interest to you for which there is a written text available online. Fill out the proposal form found on Sakai answering some basic questions: Where is it spoken in the world? How many speakers speak it? What type of language is it, to what language families does it belong, and what are some other languages it is related to? When was it first written down and using what forms of orthography?

Step 2: Ethnohistoric background research (due 11/6)

Do some research about the culture and history of its speakers and provide a 500-word summary of your background research based on 3 primary sources and 3 academic sources. Include your bibliography.

Step 3: Ethnolinguistic analysis (due 11/20)

Find a written text in the language and a translation of it, and in 500 words, explain some interesting details about the language's sounds, words, and grammar as illustrated by the text as well as some of the text's cultural significance.

Step 4: Report (due 12/11)

Write up your findings from your research (approximately 1000 words), and give a short (5-10 minute) presentation about your project.

Course Calendar – topics and assignments: Quiz article authors are **boldfaced**. Recommended articles are italicized. LLP due dates are in *italicized boldface*.

Date	Topics	Readings and due dates
9/4	Introduction: Endangered languages and revitalization movements -- te 'eo 'enana	LLE: Communication 101 Read: Perley; Catford 1968 Watch: The Linguists (on reserve at Douglass)
9/11	Texts in ethnohistoric context and speakers in sociocultural settings	LLE: Conversation 101 Read: Bower Chaps. 1 and 2; Burling Chap. 1
9/18	Speech and writing	LLE: dictionary exercise RB: Bower Chap. 13
9/25		LLE: eliciting utterances RB: Bower Chap. 6
10/2	Sounds and letters	LLE: transcribing sounds RB: Bower Chap. 3
10/9		LLE: recognizing sound patterns RB: Bower Chap. 5; Burling Chap. 2
10/16	Language types	LLE: choosing a language and field site RB: Bower Chap. 10
10/23	LEP 1 due	LLE: working with a consultant RB: Bower Chap. 11
10/30	Why grammar matters	LLE: grammatical categories and word order RB: Bower Chap. 7
11/6	LEP 2 due	LLE: semantics and ethnosemantics RB: Bower Chap. 8; Burling Chap. 3
11/13	Linguistic relativity and performativity	LLE: sociocultural meanings and speech acts RB: Bower Chap. 9
11/15	Indigenous Language Symposium/UN field trip	Extra-credit options
11/20 AAA	LEP 3 due	No class
12/4	Linguistic anthropology and language revitalization movements	LLE: writing up RB: Bower Chap. 14
12/11	LEP 4 due	LEP Presentations

IV. GRADE DISTRIBUTION. The grade will be based on the following evaluations:

TASKS (ADD MORE IF NEEDED)	
Quizzes	30%
Language learning exercises	30%
Endangered language project	40%

V. STUDENTS WELLNESS SERVICES & POLICIES

A. ACCOMMODATIONS and ASSISTANCE: Any student who feels that s/he may need an accommodation based on a disability should bring the proper documentation from the ODS Office (<http://ods.rutgers.edu>) and discuss his or her specific needs privately with the instructor. Any student dealing with extraordinary personal situation should contact (<http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu/>).

B. ATTENDANCE: If you are going to miss a class or evaluation, within 24 hours of your absence you are **required** to use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. Please keep in mind that using the reporting system does not mean that your absence is automatically considered “excused,” nor that you will be offered a make-up. In some instances, you may need to get further documentation excusing your absence. If you must miss a class or exam for religious reasons, please consult <http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/holidays1718.pdf>. It is your responsibility to inform your absence.

C. ACADEMIC HONESTY: Students are not allowed to use computer-assisted translation software or seek outside help in any form. In other words, the writing is to be entirely your own work (words and ideas). If you are using material produced by another person under any circumstances, you must acknowledge it. Any outside help is considered unacceptable collaboration and will be dealt with accordingly. You are responsible for reviewing the University’s definitions and policies for plagiarism and academic dishonesty (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers>).

- *Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: 'to paraphrase Plato's comment...' and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged.*

A student who hands in work that is totally or partially plagiarized will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial affairs. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

D. STUDENT CONDUCT: Additional requirements for ethical student conduct are discussed here: <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/university-code-of-student-conduct>