H-813 Bilingual Learners: Literacy Development and Instruction
Course Syllabus
Fall 2016

Meetings: Mondays 4:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m.
Section: Mondays 6:10 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Course website: https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/18451

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Office Hours: Thursday, 2:30-4:00

Course Description

As the number of children who speak, or are exposed to, more than one language increases in US classrooms and in classrooms around the world, educators at all system levels and across varied settings must be prepared to provide high-quality, rigorous education to ever more linguistically diverse groups of students. Designed for researchers and practitioners, this course will focus on the pressing issues related to bilingual students’ literacy and language instruction. The term “bilingual” in this course will be used to refer to a variety of students who have diverse and unequal experiences in more than one language and who speak or hear a language different from the societal language at home, but who might receive bilingual or monolingual instruction at school. The course will provide opportunities to discuss and investigate the literacy development of bilingual learners and to learn and reflect about the efficacy of research-based reading methods in various instructional settings. A number of societal factors related to language and academic achievement will be explored as well: the many modes of being bilingual or multilingual, the role of linguistic minorities in society, the role of educational resources, and the impact of educational policies on bilingual populations. This course will employ an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing on sociocultural, psycholinguistic, and cognitive frameworks of research. Classes will consist of two hours of required class plus one optional hour of section.
Course Requirements

1. **Class participation and on-line discussions (10%):** Active participation in class is required. Students are expected to complete readings in advance and come prepared with questions or comments related to the readings. Effective participation is contingent upon completing the readings ahead of time. Participation in on-line discussions based on reactions to the assigned readings or to other students’ prior postings is also required. Students will be expected to post comments to the course website at least six times (during six different weeks) throughout the semester.

2. **Essays (2x15%=30%):** Students will write 2 essays during the course of the semester. Essays will focus on a particular issue related to the education of bilingual learners. In these essays, students will be expected to cover: an explanation of why the issue is important, sufficient and relevant research findings from the readings to justify claims, and an evidence-based personal perspective. The essays should be 4 to 5 pages (double spaced) in length. I will provide more detailed guidelines in class. Essay 1 will be due on **September 30th** and essay 2 will be due on **October 28th**.

3. **Student presentations (25%):** Students will prepare collaborative presentations of a research-based, innovative initiative that addresses an area of need of bilingual learners. The number of students to present and the format of the presentation will be determined based on enrollment and interest level in the various topics.

4. **Final Paper (35%):** Students will write a final paper on a topic of their choice (related to the major themes of the course). There is considerable flexibility in the paper topic, although students will be required to submit a short description of the topic in advance to ensure that it is in line with the focus of the course. For all papers, students are expected to use published research and journal articles to support their arguments. The final paper should be 15 to 18 pages long. The final paper will be due **December 5th**.

- Final Course Requirement: Submit an evaluation form for the course in order to fulfill the general requirements of the course.
GRADING POLICY

We view the assignments as opportunities for student learning and we view grading them primarily as an opportunity to give you feedback. We do our best to evaluate your work carefully and help you understand a) the strengths of your work, and/or b) how it could have been stronger. Like other members of the faculty, we use the following scale to assign grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Truly outstanding work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Excellent work B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good work B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B- or below</td>
<td>Work is unsatisfactory</td>
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Note that any assignment handed in late will be penalized one letter grade per day and that failure to attend class will be reflected in the grade for class participation. Rubrics for grading the response papers, presentations, and final papers will be posted on the website.

Late paper policy: There are no extensions for the brief essays. If an extension is needed for the final paper, please discuss this before the due date. If a new due date is established and the paper is not turned in by that date, there will be no credit given for the paper.

Academic Integrity

Academic work submitted for this course must be the work of the participant and any sources used in compiling must be accurately and thoroughly cited. The HGSE policy on plagiarism can be found at: http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k97375&pageid=icb.page607286

Writing Assistance

If you are in need of help with your writing, or are unsure of proper methods for citations, please schedule an appointment with a Writing Services Teaching Fellow by visiting the Academic Writing Consultations section in the following website: http://www.gse.harvard.edu/library/services

If you have any doubt or difficulty with specific aspects of your writing, it is wise to access the resources available. As well, feel free to approach the instructor for help, and/or with any questions or concerns.

APA format

Papers should be written in APA style (i.e., American Psychological Association editorial style). The following helpful resource is available at the HGSE website:

Mages, W. APA Exposed. Everything you always wanted to know about APA but were afraid to ask. Available at http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=apa_exposed
REGARDING READING LICENSURE

H813 Bilingual Learners: Literacy Development and Instruction is part of the state approved program leading to licensure as Massachusetts Reading Specialist. It is an integral part of the program that addresses the Reading Specialist subject matter knowledge and professional standards for teachers as required for initial licensure per Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 603 CMR 7.07: Reading Initial License - Subject Matter Knowledge (a-m) and 603 CMR 7.08: Professional Standards for Teachers.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSULT:


➢ Seminar’s schedule start in the next page (Readings marked as supplemental are only suggestions for further reading and are NOT required).
AN OVERVIEW: MULTIPLE MODES OF BILINGUALISM

WEEK 1: MULTIPLE MODES OF BILINGUALISM

- How is bilingualism defined?
- How prevalent is bilingualism or multilingualism around the world?


Supplemental reading:


*** SEPTEMBER 5, 2016 – NO CLASS – LABOR DAY***

SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROACHES TO BILINGUALISM

WEEK 2: SOCIETAL MODELS OF BILINGUALISM

- How do we describe bilingualism at the societal level?
- Why do language policies function differently across multilingual societies?


Supplemental reading:

WEEK 3: IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE  September 19, 2016

- Why is identity a crucial dimension in bilingual children’s development?
- Is L1 maintenance valuable in relation to individual, community and global factors? Why?


Supplemental reading:


WEEK 4: GOALS, VALUES, AND PRACTICES AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL  September 26, 2016

- How do parents support the academic achievement of bilingual children?
- How do parental goals and school goals interact with each other and mediate bilingual students’ academic achievement?


Gebhard, M. (2004). Fast capitalism, school reform, and second language literacy practices,
**PSYCHOLINGUISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES TO BILINGUALISM**

**WEEK 5: BILINGUAL AND BILITERACY DEVELOPMENT: MYTHS AND THEORIES**

- How does research challenge common myths about bilingualism?
- Are there benefits and costs associated with bilingual proficiency?

Bialystok, E. & Hakuta, K. (1994). In other words: The science and psychology of second-language acquisition. New York: Basic Books. Chapters 1 and 7. [iPac](#)


**Supplemental reading:**


***OCTOBER 10, 2016 – NO CLASS – COLUMBUS DAY***

**WEEK 6: LITERACY DEVELOPMENT: WHAT DOES IT ENTAIL?**

- What skills are involved in bilingual children’s literacy development?
- Beyond skills, what other considerations are important?


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*Essay 1 due on Friday, September 30th*
Supplemental reading:

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**WEEK 7: RELATIONS ACROSS LANGUAGES FOR LITERACY AND CONTENT LEARNING**

October 24, 2016

- *How are L1 and L2 skills related throughout bilingual development?*
- *How does research on cross-language relations inform literacy and content learning?*

**Guest Speaker:** Dr. Patrick Proctor, Associate Professor, Boston College

*Cross-linguistic relationships in bilingual learners' language and literacy development: Implications for instruction*

[http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/facultystaff/faculty/proctor.html](http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/facultystaff/faculty/proctor.html)


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Supplemental reading:


* Essay 2 due on Friday, October 28th
WEEK 8: LITERACY DEVELOPMENT AND HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTION

- Why is academic language proficiency key in promoting academic success?
- How can research inform literacy instruction in the current U.S. policy climate?


**Supplemental reading:**

Goldenberg, C. (2013). Unlocking the Research about English Learners: What We Know—and Don’t Yet Know—about Effective Instruction. *American Educator (Summer 2013)*


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EDUCATIONAL POLICY, INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS AND EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

WEEK 9: QUALITY EDUCATION FOR BILINGUAL LEARNERS

- How can educators successfully address the needs and strengths of bilingual learners’ content learning through research-based and promising practices?
- What opportunities and challenges exist beyond classroom instruction?


**Supplemental reading:**


Turkan, S. and Schramm-Possinger, M. (2014). Teaching Content to ELs in the Era of
WEEK 10: EDUCATIONAL MODELS FOR BILINGUAL LEARNERS

- Why some educational models designed to address the needs of bilingual learners might be more effective than others?
- How do systems define who is a language learner in need of additional support services?


Supplemental reading:


WEEK 11: INSTRUCTIONAL FAIR

YOUR TURN TO EXAMINE AND PRESENT EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH-BASED INITIATIVES

HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS' PRESENTATIONS:


Supplemental reading:

WEEK 12: BILINGUALISM: ASSESSMENT AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES November 28, 2016

- Which are some challenges and lessons for valid and reliable assessments of bilingual learners’ performances?
- How do national priorities, educational policies, and literacy instruction and assessment interact with each other?


Supplemental reading:


Final Paper due Friday, December 9th

EXPANDING EMPATHY
Multiple voices: autobiographies, personal essays, and fiction

Students will be asked to choose and read some of these short excerpts for class discussion activities during the semester.

*Always Living in Spanish*
by MARJORIE AGOSÍN
human rights activist, author, and Wellesley College professor; she was born in Maryland and raised in Chile, a descendant of Russian and Austrian Jewish family (b. 1955)

*Superman and Me*
by SHERMAN ALEXIE
writer and filmmaker, graduate of Washington State University; he was born in Washington state, member of the Spokane and the Coeur d’Alene tribes, grew up on the Spokane Reservation (b. 1966)
Walking the Path between Worlds
by LORI ARVISO ALVORD
first Navajo woman surgeon, Associate Dean of student and Multicultural affairs and faculty at Dartmouth Medical School, writer of The Scalpel and the Silver Bear (1999), her autobiography (b. 1958)

Eleven (fiction)
by SANDRA CISNEROS
novelist (The House on Mango Street, 1983), short-story writer, and poet; one of the first Latina writers to achieve commercial success; recipient of many awards including a MacArthur fellowship (the so-called "genius grant") (b. 1954)

The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria
by JUDITH ORTIZ COFER
poet, novelist, and essayist; Regents' and Franklin Professor of English and Creative Writing, Emerita, University of Georgia; she was born in Puerto Rico and raised in Patterson, New Jersey (b. 1952)

New York Day Women (fiction)
by EDWIDGE DANTICAT
Haitian-American author, born in Haiti, immigrated to the United States at age twelve; she received her BA from Barnard College and her MFA from Brown University, where her thesis became her first novel, Breath, Eyes, Memory (1994) -- an Oprah Winfrey Book Club selection in 1998 (b. 1969)

From Native Speaker (fiction)
by CHANG-RAE LEE
Korean-American novelist and professor of creative writing at Princeton University; he was born in Korea and emigrated with his family to Westchester, New York at age three; he received his BA in English from Yale University and an MFA in writing from the University of Oregon (b. 1965)

Child of the Americas (poetry)
by AURORA LEVINS –MORALES
activist and writer; she was born in Puerto Rico until she was thirteen, when her family moved to Chicago; she received her undergraduate degree from Franconia University and her MA and PhD from the Union Institute in Ohio.

Why I Could Not Accept Your Invitation (poetry)
by NAOMI SHIHAB NYE
Arab-American poet, novelist, editor, and political activist; she was born in St. Louis, Missouri to a Palestinian father and U.S. American mother; author of numerous books for adults and children, she has won several prestigious awards and was elected a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets in 2009 (b. 1952)

Speaking in Tongues
by ZADIE SMITH
English novelist tenured professor at New York University’s Creative Writing Program
New York Review of Books, 2009 (b. 1975),

**Mother Tongue**
by AMY TAN
best-selling American author whose works explore the Chinese-American experience; her best-known work *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) has been translated into 35 languages; she was born and raised in California and both of her parents were Chinese immigrants; she received her BA and MA in linguistics at San Jose State University and did doctoral studies in linguistics at the University of California at Santa Cruz and later at Berkeley (b. 1952)

*language and its variations in this country or others.*