Language in Africa

This course provides an introduction to the linguistic diversity of Africa through the study of African languages and their use. It examines 1) the historical classification of African languages, 2) important linguistic characteristics of the four major language families of Africa, 3) issues of language use (lingua francas, pidgins and creoles, multilingualism, code-switching, and diglossia, and 4) political and educational implications of language policy planning. The course will include readings, discussion, a guest speaker, 2 short research papers and a final debate.

Part I  The Structure of African Languages

Jan 26    Introduction – Childs Ch 1
Jan 31-Feb 2  The Language Families of Africa – Childs Ch 2
               Language & History in Africa – Childs Ch 6
Feb 7-9    Phonetics & Phonology: Clicks, Nasals – Childs Ch 3-3.3
               (Map Quiz, Languages due)
Feb 14-16  Phonetics & Phonology: Tone – Childs Ch 3.7
Feb 23     Syntax & Semantics: Ideophones, Predicates, Negation – Childs 5-5.3
Feb 28-Mar 2 Syntax & Semantics: Focus, Questions, Serial Verbs – Childs 5.4-5.5
               Syntax & Semantics: Agreement, Animacy, Tense, Logophoricity – Childs 5.6-5.8

Part II  Language Contact and Language Use in Africa

Mar 7-9    Sesotho Tutorial (Paper #1 Due)
               The Sociolinguistics of Language Use – Childs 7-7.1
Mar 14-16  Language Contact – Childs 7.2
Mar 21-23  Language Change, Pidgin & Creoles – Childs 7.3
Part III Language Policy and Language Planning

Apr 4-6  Language and National Integration – Bambose Ch 1 (Paper #2 due)
          Language, Communication & National Development – Bambose Ch 2

Apr 11-13 Language and Education – Bambose Ch 3
                Language Planning – Bambose Ch 4

Apr 18-20 Language Planning: Readings 5. Heine, 6. Hartshorne
                Planning: Sociolinguistics, South Africa: Readings 7. Eastman, 8. Heugh

Apr 25-27 South Africa: PanSLAB, Guest Speaker (Debate position papers due)
                Debate

Texts

Readings

Grade:  1/3rd  Class Discussion, Map Quiz, Debate
        2/3rd  2 Research Papers