BILITERACY AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

TED 6301 — (CRN: 23077)
Teaching, Learning and Culture Program
The University of Texas at El Paso
Spring 2015
Class meets: Tue 5:30-8:20 in EDUC 308

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Office hours:
T 3:45 to 5:30 p.m.
Office: EDUC 805

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog description: Analysis of scholarly issues with a focus on the role of language acquisition in the academic development of the bilingual/bicultural student. Examines language beyond the practice of signification and looks at the subjectivities of language with implications for curriculum and instruction. Centers on the role of language as a mediator for learning and a powerful force in the construction of meaning across curricular areas.

From an additive, sociocultural perspective on learning, biliteracy potentially promotes academic development in as far as it multiplies the meaning potential and meaning-making tools. In this course we explore biliteracy/bilingualism from an ecological perspective. Biliteracy develops in a historically, socially, ideologically specific context, as well as in the minds of biliterate people. Literate practices are situated so that participants’ beliefs, language use, forms of literacy, power relations, use of mediational tools and resources all have an impact on biliterate development.

Drawing mainly on the research literature in sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and social psychology, we explore the interaction among literacy development, disciplinary boundaries, and learning/development. No prior background knowledge in either applied linguistics or bilingual education is assumed, but students are expected to inquire about any background issues which are unfamiliar. For that reason, the professor may recommend additional readings to individual students.

The course is organized to promote development of scholarly inquiry and writing. Through dialogue and interaction with their peers and with the professor, we will engage with the literature in literacy/biliteracy and academic development.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

You will be able to read and synthesize the research literature in literacy/biliteracy and academic development. You will be able to read and respond to your peers’ scholarly and reflective writing, and to improve your own academic writing based on instructor and peer feedback. You will gather and analyze bilingual data, and develop a topic on an aspect of biliteracy research that is of current relevance to the academic development of bilingual/biliterate learners and that is connected to your own scholarly interests. Based on this topic, you will (1) select and critique an empirical research article and lead a class discussion; (2) make observations of bilingual/biliterate interaction and make conclusions about those interactions; and (3) write a final paper on biliterate development, and (4) and create a poster for public presentation and critique.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Syntheses and Portfolio

The purpose of this weekly assignment is to spark critical dialogue about the research literature. The audience has done the same readings (your classmates and professor), and is interested in your perspective.

Features of the Weekly Reading Syntheses:

- It synthesizes and condenses weekly readings into two pages of text.
- It is NOT a summary the readings, but it may provide an accurate account of the ideas of each article.
- Make connections across texts. Identify ONE theme per synthesis which cuts across readings, and show how multiple texts illustrate or speak to that theme.
- Include an introductory statement in which you identify the theme for the reader. Show how the theme is present across the readings. Develop the theme by providing specific examples from the readings (short quotes and paraphrases of key ideas).
- Be selective in the details you include. You have very limited space, so your language choices must be succinct, concise, and clear.
- Make sure that your presentation of the author’s ideas are correct. However, be critical of all readings. For example, be sure to point out any weaknesses or areas of disagreement. Substantiate your claims, and be explicit about what you are basing them on (other readings, your personal experience, observation, media).
- No title is necessary. Include a header with your name, the week of the readings. Don’t include the assigned references. Only include a reference list if you cite additional references.
- Each synthesis should be two double-spaced pages (approximately 500 words), with a one-line header (name, week, no title necessary).

Procedure for reading syntheses

1. Bring your synthesis to class on the day they are scheduled to be discussed. You may not turn in syntheses late for credit, but you should still include it in your portfolio.
2. Offer your peer a critique of their writing. Did they identify a single theme? Is the representation of ideas accurate? Do you agree or disagree with them?

3. Read and consider all comments on your syntheses. Keep track of your progress throughout the semester so that your syntheses improve across time.

**Leading class discussion**

Each week a different student will prepare to lead the class in discussion of one of the readings. Note that by leading a discussion I do not mean that you will providing a lecture or summarizing the readings. Instead, create opportunities for the whole class to join in the discussion and lead them in learning through the discussion.

Assume that everyone will have read the same article or chapter. Your task as discussion leader is to raise questions based on the reading and to promote discussion about them, rather than to summarize or outline the research. Handouts and/or Multimedia and multi-modal presentations are strongly encouraged—to the extent that they promote thoughtful discussion by the whole class.

**Observation assignment**

The purpose of this assignment is for you to gain hands-on experiences observing, documenting and analyzing bilingual/biliterate interaction. You are not expected to have specialized linguistics preparation to do this assignment. This experience will also help you to understand the methodological challenges in much of the research on bilingualism/biliteracy which we read in this course. You will observe a bilingual person in his/her two languages in the midst of learning activity.

I strongly suggest that you make observations of a topic you are interested in. For instance, if you are interested in mathematics education, observe bilinguals learning about math. The observation will help you to write a meaningful final paper.

This assignment will be written for an audience of educators, in particular educators who espouse an English Only ideology. Thus, your paper is meant to convince them of the benefits of bilingualism.

**Procedure.** You will carry out a naturalistic observation. There are no stipulations as to the amount of time the observation will take place because that depends on the nature of the activity you observe. A learning activity might be, for instance, the person participating orally in a classroom activity, doing a homework task, explaining something to someone, solving a problem, learning how to play a game, learning how to do a new task at work, or learning how to program a new alarm clock. You are encouraged to work in pairs for this assignment. If you do not feel confident in your knowledge of a second language, you must work with a peer who is bilingual.

You will make notes of your observations, which you will turn in. You are not expected to audio or video record. Find a person who you know and who understands that this assignment is something purely for learning purposes. You (or someone on your team) must know the non-English language. You can ask one of your fellow students, but do not ask one of your own students (consent). Obtain written verification.
that the person understands that no identifying information is to be used and that you will not share this information with anyone.

Some Notes on Making Observations
There are certain steps common to most note-taking that may be useful, but may not necessarily apply in all cases.
1. Record basic details such as date, time, place, general setting, and people involved. A sketch of the setting or seating might be useful here. It is important to capture as much of the context as possible, since it helps in the interpretation of observations and conclusions about what they mean.
2. Be descriptive rather than evaluative. Your notes and observations are the "raw data", and you should avoid terms that have multiple meanings or that are ambiguous in nature, such as "hostile", "disrespectful", etc. An example: "Most of the people at the meeting were nervous". How many is "most"? How did you know they were "nervous"? What specific behaviors did they engage in that made you reach your conclusions?
3. Take complete notes. Incomplete notes do not allow for correction or reanalysis, nor do they supply enough of the context to know how judgments or conclusions were reached, or what caused people in the situation to act how they did.
4. Record direct quotations if you can, and indicate if you are paraphrasing, since this may change the meaning intended. Also, since this is an important part of your "raw data", it is often helpful to include it in your final write up to document what you are saying.
5. Take notes immediately after leaving the setting. This improves the reliability of what you are seeing. It is often desirable to include pieces of your observations in your write to illustrate key points.
6. Make your notes focused. Information that is considered noteworthy will depend on the general problem you are looking at, the specific questions you want answered, and your own conceptual framework. Try not to be fragmented and random in your notes.
7. Maintain the confidentiality and trust of those whom you are observing. Make sure you have their permission before you make any observations, recordings, etc., and never divulge names or other identifying information in any written materials you hand in or in class discussions about your project.

Points to Consider in drawing conclusions
- How are languages used?
- What tools are used to accomplish learning activities?
- What artifacts are used to support the activity?
- How does the nature of the learning situation impact (or not) the person’s language use?
- What interactional or sociolinguistic factors seem to be at play when the bilingual switches into bilingual or monolingual mode? This can include audience, topic, or place.
- Are any products of the activity evident (for instance writing completed)?

Content
This assignment should not exceed 6 pages. In some cases you might want to append something to the end of the report, for example a copy of a worksheet or lesson you might have observed or other materials that you think are relevant. That is acceptable, however you should keep the body of the report
within the page limit. While use of references may be useful at the end of the report, use of extensive references is not necessary. In terms of structure of your report, the following outline might be helpful:

- Introduction
- Description of setting
- Description of learning activities
- Analysis of bilingual practices
- Conclusions

**Final Paper**

The purpose of this assignment is for you to write about a topic related to a) biliteracy and b) your research interests. Your audience for this assignment is researchers and educators who value multidisciplinary approaches to research.

**You are strongly encouraged to build on the insights gained from the observation assignment in order to write a paper that is meaningful to you.**

Ideally, the topic you select for the final project should be relatable to and to the article discussion you lead. We will spend some time in class generating questions about biliteracy and considering how to structure research that explores them.

You will meet with the professor to discuss your paper in preparation. The meeting will be conducted in my office, telephone or Skype, and it will last no more than 30 minutes.

The paper should be 20-25 pages long, excluding references and (optional) appendices. You are expected to be familiar with and use APA style.

**Poster presentation**

You will present a preliminary version of your paper at a poster session during the penultimate class, and we will give you feedback you can use to improve the final paper. You will be given guidelines for the poster during class.

**SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of grade</th>
<th>Due date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly reading synthesis</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading class discussion</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of bilingual learning (field notes)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3/31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report of observation of bilingual learning</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final poster presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5/12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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**Criteria for Grading**
A: Outstanding scholarship. Performance that significantly exceeds the requirements and qualitative expectations of the course. Superior mastery of subject matter. Initiative and self-direction leading to significant study and related activity beyond course requirements.

B: Good Scholarship. Performance that fully meets all the requirements and qualitative expectations of the Course. Solid mastery of subject matter.

C: Marginal Scholarship. Performance that barely meets the requirements and qualitative expectations of the course. Marginal mastery of subject matter. Does not meet the expectations of graduate course work.

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Academic honesty.** Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of scholastic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are not attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) and available in the Office of the Dean of Students, may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to failing grades on the work in question, to failing grades in the course, to suspension or dismissal among others.

2. **Changes to the schedule.** It may become necessary to make changes to the schedule to suit student interests and/or to accommodate for any unexpected issues. Any changes to the schedule of readings and assignments will be posted on the course Blackboard site and discussed in class.

3. **Late work.** Students are expected to turn in their work by the stated deadline. It includes weekly syntheses with them to each class. No late work is accepted.

4. **Attendance and participation.** Attendance is required for every class meeting, and you are expected to arrive on time and remain for the duration of each class. However, because unexpected events do occur, you are allowed **ONE** absence before your grade is affected. Please reserve your absence for an emergency. Two absences will **lower your grade**. Three absences is considered excessive, and you will be dropped. It is the student’s responsibility to catch up after an absence. Participation is graded based on the quality of your contributions to class discussion, your preparedness to discuss readings, and the opportunities you take to lead academic classroom discussions.

5. **Absences.** In the event that you must be absent, you are expected to make up your work. You are expected to write a 500-700 word **Meaning Making Paper** in which you: (1) Summarize the major points of the session (use PPT); (2) Re-construct the week’s discussion (via notes from a peer and information from me); (3) Reflect on what the ideas mean to you as a scholar. Turn it in the week you return.

6. **Incomplete.** A grade of incomplete will not be given for this course unless there are extenuating circumstances. Please talk to the professor ASAP if such a situation arises. In any case, incompletes
will be given only if a student has passed the first half of the course and provides evidence of a documented illness or family crisis which genuinely precludes successful completion of the course.

7. **Accommodations.** If you have or believe you have a disability, you may wish to self-identify. You can do so by providing documentation to the Office of disabled Student Services located in Union E Room 203. Students who have been designated as disabled must reactivate their standing with the Office of Disabled Student Services on a yearly basis. Failure to report to this office will place a student on the inactive list and nullify benefits received. If you have a condition which may affect your ability to exit safely from the premises in an emergency or which may cause an emergency during class, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of Disabled Student Services. You may call 747-5148 for general information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**SCHEDULE**

Required readings are electronically available on the course Blackboard site. The ! icon indicates a podcast you will need to retrieve/listen to online. Optional readings will occasionally be posted for those interested in reading more about a given topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>Introduction to course, assignments, policies and participants</td>
<td>Gee (1987/2008)</td>
<td>Esquinca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>Language and language variation</td>
<td>Chaika (2008); Romaine (2001); Kalantzis &amp; Cope (2012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/03</td>
<td>Definitions of bilingualism</td>
<td>Edwards (2006); Grosjean (2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>Current views of bilingualism/ biliteracy</td>
<td>Baker (2006); Garcia &amp; Wei Li (2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2/24</td>
<td>Language use and practices: code-switching</td>
<td>Gort (2006); Ritchie and Bhatia (2006)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3/03</td>
<td>Language use and practices: translanguaging</td>
<td>García &amp; Li Wei (2013); Creese &amp; Blackledge (2010)</td>
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**SPRING BREAK**
### Part III: Learning, ideologies and identities

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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### Part IV: Biliteracy in content areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>Biliteracy in content areas (part1)</td>
<td>Moje (2004) and Moll (1992) AND Select one content area: Martínez (ELAR); Gutiérrez (Math); Reyes (Science); Olmedo (History/ SocStud)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/21</td>
<td>Biliteracy in content areas (part2)</td>
<td>Wilson (2011) AND Select one content area: Medina (ELAR); Moschkovich (Math); Esquinca, Araujo &amp; de la Piedra (Science); Brown (History/ SocStud)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4/28</td>
<td>Preparation for final</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5/05</td>
<td>Poster Session</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5/12</td>
<td>Finals Week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### References


