

LINGUISTICS PROGRAM  
BOSTON UNIVERSITY - COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

**CAS LX 345 – GRS LX 645**

**Languages in Contact: The high stakes of grammatical border-crossing**

<b>Time:</b>	TBD	<b>Location:</b>	TBD
<b>Professor:</b>	Daniel Erker	<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:danerker@bu.edu">danerker@bu.edu</a>
<b>Office:</b>	718 Commonwealth Ave Room 501a	<b>Office hours:</b>	TBD

*Course website:* The course will be hosted on Blackboard Learn  
*Instructor website:* <http://blogs.bu.edu/danerker/>

**Course description and goals:**

Where does one language end and another begin? Can we neatly box in one linguistic system and seal it off from another? While we often associate particular languages with specific countries or regions of the world, the truth is that linguistic and national frontiers very rarely overlap in either time or space. Indeed, languages do not require passports, and they routinely travel, mix, and interact with each other across permeable borders on both micro- and macroscopic scales. The goal of this course is to examine the mechanisms and outcomes of such language contact by surveying cases around the globe from the past and present. We will focus our attention on common, relatively superficial processes of language contact such as lexical-borrowing and code-switching as well as remarkable contact events such as wholesale language death and the emergence of entirely new linguistic systems. We will investigate whether certain levels of linguistic structure, such as sounds, words, or sentences, are more susceptible to contact-induced language change than others. We will examine the relationship between individuals and groups in situations of language contact and explore the idea that a single person might be able to accelerate or stall rates of linguistic change. We will consider language contact within bi- and multilingual minds. Finally, we will determine the extent to which the outcomes of language contact are universal and inevitable, and, conversely, the ways in which each contact situation must be understood uniquely as the complex result of interacting social, political, linguistic, and historical factors.

**Prerequisites for the course:**

CAS LX 250 Introduction to Linguistics or consent of instructor.

**Students completing this course will learn:**

- To understand basic concepts in contact linguistics
- To assess patterns of contact-induced linguistic variation and change
- To identify, describe, and explain mechanisms of language contact
- To demonstrate a knowledge of language contact situations around the world
- To critique current theoretical and methodical trends in the study of pidgins and creoles

**Required Readings – (Available at Barnes and Noble in Kenmore Square):**

- Winford, Donald. 2003. *An Introduction to Contact Linguistics*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Bickerton, Derek. 2008. *Bastard Tongues*. Hill and Wang

**Course requirements and grading:**

	CAS LX 345	GRS LX 645
Classroom participation	10%	10%
Weekly quizzes	20%	20%
Midterm examination	25%	20%
Final examination	25%	20%
Semester research project	20%	15%
Critical reading summaries	NA	15%

- **Weekly quizzes** – will be administered during Thursday lecture. Quizzes will cover reading and lecture material from the previous week. These quizzes, which will take roughly 15 minutes to complete, encourage you to complete the weekly readings, review lecture notes and keep on top of the course material. There will be 11 quizzes in total, the first of which will be practice (during the first week of class) and will not count towards your course grade. The lowest quiz grade of the remaining 10 will be dropped, making the quiz grade the result of your 9 best quizzes.
- **Semester project** – Each student will examine a language contact event currently underway in the city of Boston. The project will be discussed in detail in week three. A project proposal will be due in week seven. Final versions of your project will be due at the end of the last week of class.
- **Graduate students** – will complete additional assignments for the course. Graduate students will submit critical summaries of each week’s readings starting in week 2. Summaries should not exceed two pages in length (per reading), and they should be submitted via Blackboard. Summaries should recount the major themes of the readings, critique their contact, and pose questions. Sample summaries will be provided in the first week of class.

**Course policies:**

Late assignments are not accepted.

Missing the midterm or final examination without receiving explicit verbal permission from me beforehand automatically drops your grade 10%, and makeups will be given *only* at my discretion and convenience, provided that there is a good and compelling reason for your absence. Leaving a message on my voice mail or sending me e-mail does not constitute receiving verbal permission unless I have responded to you.

Procedures. Class time will be devoted to presenting information that the textbook reinforces and also offers another viewpoint. Many topics will be covered in greater detail in class than in your textbook. It is your responsibility to (1) read material from the text(s) *before* coming to class, (2) to attend class promptly and regularly, (3) to obtain any class notes for sessions you miss, and (4) print class notes (if desired) which will be posted on Blackboard by 8 pm the night before class. I encourage you to talk to me outside of class if you are having particular difficulties and/or have comments about the course.

Other matters. No cell phones, no “extra credit”, no computers unless looking at class notes

Attendance. I will take attendance every time we meet. More than two unexcused absences will result in a failing ‘Classroom Participation’ grade. Please feel free to speak with me regarding any and all absences. It is not my intent to punish students for getting sick or having genuine and compelling reasons for missing a class.

**Grading policies:**

We will review the quizzes together immediately after taking them, and I will return graded quizzes the following week. I am committed to grading exams promptly.

**Grading standards:**

Grading standards			
93-100	A	78-79.99	C+
90-92.99	A-	73-77.99	C
88-89.99	B+	70-72.99	C-
83-87.99	B	60-60.99	D
80-82.99	B-	< 60	F

**Academic Integrity.** All students are responsible for understanding and complying with the BU Academic Conduct Codes, available at <http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code> and <http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/grs-forms-policies-procedures/academic-discipline-procedures/>

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**Course roadmap (with sample dates)**

<b>Week Dates</b>	<b>Quiz</b>	<b>MAIN TOPICS Sub-topics</b>	<b>Reading for week <i>W(inford)</i> <i>B(ickerton)</i></b>
1 9-2 9-4	Q*	INTRODUCTION <i>What is the 'natural state' of language?</i> <i>Bilingualistic diversity &amp; language endangerment</i> <i>What is language, 'a language?'</i> <i>*Practice quiz</i>	W Chapter 1 B C1-2
2 9-9 9-11	Q	LANGUAGE SHIFT & LEXICAL BORROWING <i>Types of contact situations – Maintenance, Shift, Creation</i> <i>The Speech Community – Community of Practice</i>  <i>Case study: The Norman conquest of England</i>	WC2 (1 <sup>st</sup> half) B C3
3 9-16 9-18	Q	BICKERTON C1-3  LANGUAGE SHIFT & LEXICAL BORROWING Basics of borrowing <i>Distribute Semester Project Description</i>	WC2(2 <sup>nd</sup> half) BC4
4 9-23 9-25	Q	LANGUAGE SHIFT & LEXICAL BORROWING <i>Social motivations for lexical borrowing</i> <i>Products of Lexical Borrowing</i> <i>Phonological and Morphological integration of loanwords</i>  STRUCTURAL DIFFUSION <i>Direct borrowing of structural features</i>	WC3 BC5
5 9-30 10-2	Q	STRUCTURAL DIFFUSION <i>The social contexts of structural convergence</i> <i>Constraints on syntactic diffusion</i>  CODE-SWITCHING IN ITS SOCIAL CONTEXT <i>Defining code-switching</i> <i>Social motivations for Code-Switching</i> <i>Case study: code-switching in Acadian French</i>	WC4 BC6
6 10-7 10-9	Q	CODE-SWITCHING: LINGUISTIC ASPECTS <i>Structural constraints on code-switching</i> <i>A production based model of code-switching</i> <i>Case study: constraints on English code-switching in Swahili,</i> BICKERTON 4-6	WC5  Prepare for Midterm exam
10-14	<b>No Classes BU Monday</b>		
7 10-16		<b>In Class Midterm</b> <i>Research project proposal due</i>	

8 10-21 10-23		BILINGUAL MIXED LANGUAGES <i>Definition and classification</i> <b>Case studies:</b> <i>Media lengua of Sarguro, Copper Island Aleut, and Michif in Manitoba</i>	WC6(1 <sup>st</sup> h) BC7 - 8
9 10-28 10-30	Q	BILINGUAL MIXED LANGUAGES <i>Definition and classification</i> <b>Case studies:</b> <i>Media lengua of Sarguro, Copper Island Aleut, and Michif in Manitoba</i>	WC6(2 <sup>nd</sup> h) BC9
10 11-4 11-6	Q	GROUP 2 <sup>ND</sup> LANGUAGE ACQUISITION & SHIFT <i>L1 influence on SLA</i> <i>Simplification in SLA</i> <i>L1 Attrition and Death</i>	WC7 BC10
11 11-11 11-13	Q	PIDGINS & PIDGINIZATION <i>Social contexts of pidgin formation</i>	WC8(1 <sup>st</sup> h) BC11
12 11-18 11-20	Q	PIDGINS & PIDGINIZATION <i>Structural characteristics of pidgins</i> <b>Case studies:</b> <i>Tok Pisin, Russenorski</i>	WC8(2 <sup>nd</sup> h) BC12
13 11-25		CREOLES & CREOLIZATION <i>Defining creoles</i> <i>Sociohistorical background to creole formation</i> <b>Case studies:</b> <i>European imperialism and the proliferation of Afro-Caribbean creoles – Papiamentu, Palenquero, and Haitian</i>	WC9 (1 <sup>st</sup> h) BC13
11-27	<b>No Class Thanksgiving Break</b>		
14 12-2	*Q Tues	CREOLES & CREOLIZATION <i>Aspects of creole grammar</i> <i>The emergence of radical creoles</i> <b>Case studies:</b> <i>Suriname</i>	WC9 (2 <sup>nd</sup> h) BC14
12-4	<b>NO CLASS – PROFESSOR ERKER AWAY</b>		
15 12-9		CREOLES & CREOLIZATION <i>Mechanisms, constraints, and principles in creole formation</i> <i>De-creolization</i> <b>Case studies:</b> <i>Afro-Bolivian Spanish</i> <b>SEMESTER PROJECT DUE</b> <b>LAST DAY OF CLASSES</b>	Prepare for Final exam