It is only through an analysis of variation that the reality and meaning of a norm can be established at all.
-Edward Sapir, 1938.

The notion of a social fact – that language exists in the community exterior to the individual – is our central theme. The way in which this social pattern is grasped by the individual speaker and the way it changes over time is our central problem.

Course Description:
This course is an introduction to the study of Hispanic sociolinguistics from a variationist perspective. Main theoretical and methodological issues will be discussed based on examples drawn from studies of variation in Spanish. Our main focus will be on the role of Spanish in its social context as the basis for understanding issues central to observation, description, and explanation of linguistic variation and change across time. This approach allows for a close examination of the straight correlations between linguistic variation (phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical) and external constraints (pragmatic, social, and stylistic). Readings, exercises, and discussions will center on methods of data collection (e.g. sociolinguistic interview), variable rule analysis, and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data. Students will write a final research paper based on original data collection and analysis.

Course Objectives:
This course has 3 main objectives: 1) to introduce students to theoretical models and research findings in the field of variational sociolinguistics, 2) to expand students’ awareness of social aspects of language and their implication to linguistic analysis, 3) to provide students with the necessary tools to develop their own research agenda on a specific topic on Spanish variation.

Required readings:
Recommended readings:

The following books are excellent introductions to the field of sociolinguistics. You should consult them to seek clarification and bibliographical references on specific topics that interest you:


Journals:

Language Variation and Change
Journal of Sociolinguistics
International Journal of the Sociology of Language
During the semester, we will work on tips on oral presentations and abstract writing. Please feel free to come to my office on a regular basis in order to discuss your presentation, research paper, or your progress in the course.

**Attendance policy:**
If you stop attending class, it is your responsibility to drop the class. All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion. In addition, absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean’s designee) will be honored. You may miss one class for any reason. The second absence and every subsequent absence after that will occasion the loss of 3 points of your final grade. In addition, students should arrive on time and stay until the end of class.

**Make-ups:** If you wish you make up any work you must notify your instructor as soon as possible, and you must provide appropriate documentation.

**Cell phones:** Unless you discuss an emergency situation with your instructor in advance, **NO CELL PHONES**, pagers or other electronic communication devices are to be on or used during class. They are entirely prohibited during exams.

**Code of Academic Integrity:** The instructor and the Program Director will initiate an academic integrity case against students suspected of cheating, plagiarizing, or aiding others in dishonest academic behavior. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the Code of Academic Integrity, please refer to: [http://studpubs.web.arizona.edu/policies/cacaint.htm](http://studpubs.web.arizona.edu/policies/cacaint.htm). Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, and aiding and abetting dishonesty. If the instructor suspects that a Code of Academic Violation has occurred, she/he in accordance with the Program Director shall impose any one of the following or a combination of the following sanctions: (1) Loss of credit for work involved, (2) Reduction in grade for the entire course, (3) Failing grade, (4) Disciplinary probation. For policies against threatening behavior by students, please visit: [http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml](http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml).
**Disability:** Those students who are registered with the Disability Resource Center must submit appropriate documentation to the instructor if they are requesting reasonable accommodations. Please refer to: [http://drc.arizona.edu/instructor/syllabus-statement.shtml](http://drc.arizona.edu/instructor/syllabus-statement.shtml).

**Threatening Behavior is Prohibited.** “Threatening behavior” means any statement, communication, conduct or gesture, including those in written form, directed toward any member of the University community that causes a reasonable apprehension of physical harm to a person or property. A student can be guilty of threatening behavior even if the person who is the object of the threat does not observe or receive it, so long as a reasonable person would interpret the maker’s statement, communication, conduct or gesture as a serious expression of intent to physically harm.

The information contained in this course syllabus, except for grades and course policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

**Course Grade:**
Individual grades for this course will be based on the following:

- Presentation (15%)
- Class discussion (10%)
- Weekly response papers (25%)
- Original research on a sociolinguistic variable in Spanish, including written proposal 5%, data collection and data transcription 10%, oral presentation 10%, and a final written version 25% (50%)

1. **Presentation (15%)**:

   Students will choose one of the weekly topics to present. In each presentation, the student will:
   - (1) introduce the week’s reading by presenting the main points of each reading (research questions, methods, results and conclusions);
   - (2) pinpoint weak and strong points;
   - (3) explain how the readings contribute to our understanding of the week’s topic;
   - (4) take questions from the audience
   - (5) present questions that still remain in the field.

   The student in charge of the presentation should formulate questions and guide the subsequent class discussion about the readings. The student should also provide everyone in the class with a handout, containing an outline of the presentation and a bibliography in case other sources are cited. Although everybody is expected to read all the assigned articles, this rotation will allow each student to read very closely some of the articles during the semester. Since the best way to learn something is by teaching it, these presentations will give everybody the opportunity to think more profoundly about some of the readings. The presentations should be in Spanish and last around 30-45 minutes. Please consult with your instructor before your presentation about questions and comments you may have about the topic and the readings you
will have to cover. It is your responsibility to make sure you understand well the material you will present. Be well prepared!!

2. **Class Discussion (10%)**: 

Students are expected to come to class prepared and ready to participate in class discussion. All readings assigned for the week must be done prior to class. Every student is expected to contribute to class discussion through oral questions and comments every class. I don’t like to teach to a silent audience – it is not good for my teaching or your learning – so you need to ask and answer questions voluntarily, to contribute when you have an observation, and to voice your questions or uncertainties. If you have difficulty speaking up or being heard in class, for any reason, you need to let me know. It is extremely important, however, that your participation is based on previous reading and preparation for the class. Sporadically students will be assigned exercises and extra classroom activities, which will also count towards participation.

3. **Weekly response papers (25%)**:

In order to facilitate class discussion, students will write a response to the weekly readings. The response will include:

(1) A paragraph for each article that includes:
   a. A brief (1-2 sentence) summary;
   b. a brief (1-2 sentence) comment;
   c. a question;

(2) A paragraph linking the articles to each other and to other readings and class discussion;

These comments and questions will be typed (in Spanish, however, I recommend that you write them in English if you are a Spanish native speaker) and e-mailed to me on the day before class (Monday night, at the latest). I will read them before class, and during class I will pass some of them around to initiate class discussion. These written comments will not be accepted after the deadline, and will be graded as $\sqrt{+}$ (excellent), $\sqrt{}$ (good), or $\sqrt{-}$ (needs improvement). Response papers should not exceed one typewritten page.

4. **Research paper (50%)**

You will write a 10 to 15-page double-spaced research paper. I suggest that you write the paper in English if your native language is Spanish and in Spanish if your native language is English, in order to practice academic writing in a second language. This paper will be on a sociolinguistic variable of your choice. The paper’s final grade will be distributed as following:

- **Human Subject Protection – Training due on Sept 7**
The Human Subject Protection Program at the University of Arizona helps us, investigators, protect the participants in our research. **Training** is now available for individuals conducting Social/Behavioral research through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). Simply go to [www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org) and register with a user name and a password of your choice. Read the required modules for either Social/Behavioral research and answer the 3-6 questions in the quiz at the end of each module. The system automatically keeps track of your progress. The system also updates the Human Subjects Protection Program regarding your completion of the CITI training.

**10 % data collection**

- **Week 7**

You will interview one local-born Spanish-speakr following the guidelines of the sociolinguistic interview. The interview will last at least one hour. Do not use minicassettes. Make sure you try your recording equipment before, during, and after recording sessions.

Finding a participant - some possibilities:
- A- A family member
- B- Friends and their relatives
- C- UA students and their relatives
- D- Teachers and their relatives
- E- UA staff and their relatives

Tips for the interview:
- Contact the participant and make an appointment
- Test the tapes and your tape-recorder prior to the interview.
- Explain to your participants that you are doing a study for your class.
- Tell them that their identities will be kept anonymous.
- Ask for permission to tape record your participants before you begin.
- Feel free to take written notes during the conversation.
- Maintain eye contact (and try to ignore the presence of the tape-recorder).
- Let the participant ask you questions too.
- Make sure you obtain all information necessary about each participant

- **Transcriptions due on Oct 12**

Following the interviews, you will transcribe them according to the symbols proposed by Silva-Corvalán (pg. xi). Although your transcription will be basically orthographic, you will represent phonological processes such as the aspiration of /f/ with a J, aspiration of /s/ with an H, the dropping of /d/ with a 0, and the fricatization of /ʧ/ with SH. The tapes will be turned in with the transcriptions. The transcriptions should be single-spaced and use font size 10. Use both sides of the paper when printing a copy to turn to me for
grading. E-mail me an electronic copy as well. Do not use the participants’ names; instead, give them nicknames that only you will recognize.

5% proposal - due on Nov 9

Based on several readings of all transcriptions, you will decide on a specific linguistic variable for quantification. In your proposal, you will:
1. specify the variable,
2. describe the linguistic contexts it may appear (based on transcriptions and previous works on the variable),
3. include your hypothesis or research questions, including any social factor you will consider in your analysis
4. present a preliminary bibliography with at least four sources exclusively about this linguistic variable, each source followed by a brief summary (3-4 sentences).
5. include any other pertinent information necessary to show that you have a well thought out project and you are on your way to completing it by the due date. You will then meet with your instructor to discuss your project.

10% presentation – due on Nov 30, Dec 7

You will present the results of your research to class (in Spanish). In this presentation, you will include your research questions, methods, data analysis, and interpretation. Your presentation will be 15 minutes long (exactly 7 double-spaced pages), so time it ahead, be concise, and use visual aids (hand-outs, transparencies, etc.)

25% written version - due on Dec 14, 2010, before 5 pm.

Your final paper should contain the results of your original research, including:
1) research questions,
2) literature review,
3) methods of data collection,
4) data summary,
5) data analysis,
6) interpretation,
7) conclusion.

An abstract should also be enclosed. Please follow the MLA or the LSA guidelines for the format (be consistent). Don’t forget to number the pages. The paper should be double-spaced in Times New Roman font size 12 with 1” margins. If you would like your professor to read and comment on preliminary versions, discuss a schedule with her.

Course Program and Bibliography

WEEK 1 — AUG 24

Introduction & Rationale for the study of linguistic variation.
• What is variational sociolinguistics?
• Course outline
• Objectives
• Ethics and the Human Subject Protection protocol

Readings:
1. SPE¹ – Capítulo 1: Lengua, variación y dialectos
2. Interview with Labov
3. The social stratification of /r/ in NY Department Stores.

WEEK 2 — AUG 31

Methods of data collection in the study of linguistic variation.

1. SPE: Capítulo 2: Metodología 38-71
2. ASV²: Chapter 2 – Data Collection
3. ASV: Chapter 3 – The sociolinguistic interview

WEEK 3— SEPT 7 Human Subject Protection Training due!

The linguistic variable: circumscribing the variable context and constraints hierarchies

1. SPE: Capítulo 2: Metodología 71-84 & Capítulo 3: 85-96
2. ASV: Chapter 4 – Data, data and more data
3. ASV: Chapter 5 – The linguistic variable
4. Hands-on activity: analyzing data, circumscribing the variation envelope

WEEK 4 — SEPT 14

Individual variation - Stylistic conditioners of variation

1. SPE 116-128

WEEK 5 — SEPT 21

Variation and change

How can we study language changes as they are taking place? When is variation not a sign of change? Apparent time versus real time. Linguistic change vs. stable variation.

1. SPE 101-103 & Capítulo 6: Variación y cambio

WEEK 6 — SEPT 28

Variation and aging.


WEEK 7 — OCT 5

No class (interview and transcription)

WEEK 8 — OCT 12 ***TRANSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE TODAY***

Variation and social class

The changing tendencies in variational sociolinguistics

1. SPE: 103-115

**WEEK 9 — OCT 19**

**Variation and gender**
- How, why, and to what extent variation patterns differ among men and women
- Differences between sex and gender in sociolinguistics


Or


**WEEK 10 — OCT 26**

**Phonological variation: Migration, prestige, mobility, and frequency**


**WEEK 11 — NOV 2**

**Pragmatic variation**

1. SPE -- 214-238.


4. ……………

WEEK 12 — NOV 9 – subject pronoun expression ***PROPOSALS ARE DUE TODAY***

**Morphosyntactic and Syntactic Variation**

1. SPE – Capítulo 4

WEEK 13 — NOV 16

**Varbrul – Entering tokens, running tests, interpreting results**

1. ASV, Chapter 7: The variable program: theory and practice
2. ASV, Chapter 8: The how-to’s of a variationist analysis
3. ASV, Chapter 9: Distributional analysis
4. ASV, Chapter 10: Multivariate analysis
5. ASV, Chapter 11: Interpreting the results
6. ASV, Chapter 12: Finding the story

WEEK 14 - NOV 23 - Varbrul run due today!!!

No readings:

- **How to report your data analysis day**

WEEK 14 – NOV 30

**PRESENTATIONS**

WEEK 15 — DEC 7

**PRESENTATIONS**
Research paper due on December 14, before 5 pm.

We may not follow the syllabus strictly: new readings may be added and discussion topics may take more or less time than scheduled. You will be informed of schedule changes by your instructor. Allow some time for flexibility.