

LANGUAGE, POWER & SOCIETY IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD

Intitulé du cours / Course title

Discipline <i>Academic field</i>	Sociolinguistics
Enseignant <i>Teacher</i>	Etienne Chasson
Contact <i>E-mail address</i>	etienne.chasson@sciencespo-aix.fr
Niveau de formation <i>Academic level</i>	2 ^{ème} année
Volume horaire <i>Hours</i>	20h
Langue <i>Language</i>	English

Description du cours / Course outline

This course will examine the emergence of English as the first global language, its interplay with the history of imperialism and globalisation, and its impact on the diverse societies that use it to varying degrees – as a majority mother tongue or as a second language for business, education or diplomacy.

If language is the ideal field in which to observe how power is constructed, exercised and contested, it is because it constitutes the most crucial component of identity – be it political, cultural or individual. This means that, by looking at bottom-up linguistic practices as well as top-down language policy across the English-speaking world, we can gain revealing insights into how a wide range of societies function and define themselves.

This course will ultimately aim to explore how the rules of English, despite their power to establish and reinforce dominant norms (related among others to gender, race and class), can equally be used as an effective tool to challenge those norms and effect profound social and cultural change.

Objectifs pédagogiques du cours / Course objectives

Students will gain insights into what makes English a global language, looking both at its changing practical applications and at its contested symbolic status around the world. They will add a new dimension to their understanding of such central phenomena as imperialism, globalisation and social domination. They will also become familiar with linguistic practices and policies across a wide range of societies, from the UK to South Africa and from Jamaica to India.



Compétences acquises / *Learning outcomes*

Students will learn to perceive and analyse the ways in which power dynamics play out in the field of language. They will be equipped to describe essential linguistic phenomena such as language change, standardisation or variation, and to interpret their social and political implications in context.

Plan de cours par séance / *Course content for each session*

We will explore some of the most fundamental questions in sociolinguistics, using case studies from around the English-speaking world to give nuance and context to the discussions:

- Language, imperialism and globalisation: What makes English a global language?
- English or Englishes: what differentiates a language from a dialect?
- Surviving English: the fate of other languages, from language death to revitalisation
- 'Talking back': postcolonial reassessments and reappropriations of English
- The use of English in nation-building and development policy
- 'Say it right': standard language and social perceptions of change and variation
- Can a language be sexist? How English expresses social norms, and how to challenge them

Références bibliographiques / *Bibliography*

- Laura M. Ahearn, *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012
- Janet Holmes, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 4th ed., Routledge, 2013
- Annabelle Mooney & Betsy Evans, *Language, Society & Power: An Introduction*, 4th ed., Routledge, 2015

Mini CV de l'enseignant / *Mini CV of the teacher*

Etienne Chasson is an English teacher at Sciences Po Aix. In addition to teaching courses focusing on the culture, literature, politics and societies of the English-speaking world, he has a background in musicology.

