This class takes as its starting point the idea that identity is a process of “becoming” rather than a mode of “being.” It examines how speakers enact different subject positions, such as gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and socioeconomic class, through their everyday conversations, narratives, performances, literacy activities, and public debates. It also explores the moral and political consequences of identification strategies by examining how people’s beliefs about language reinforce or contest normative power structures and social relations. Readings will explore the relationship between bilingual education and accent discrimination, multilingualism and youth counterculture, migration and code-switching, media and religious publics, linguistic nationalism and xenophobia, and literacy and neo/liberal policies in different areas of the world. This course will also analyze domestic and foreign policies and current events with regards to linguistic minorities and apply linguistic analysis to reflect on our own and our neighbors’ diverse experiences of symbolic capital.

Prerequisite: “Human Society and Culture” or one at least course in sociolinguistics.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance/Participation (10%): You are expected to attend all classes, read all assigned texts (approximately 70 pages per week), and participate actively in all class activities. Proper documentation is required for excused absences (illness and emergencies).

Discussion Facilitator (5%): You will work in pairs to facilitate ONE class discussion. You should create a handout with 1 to 2 bullet point summaries of each reading’s main points and come up with 5-6 discussion questions (you may draw from the weekly reading questions). Send your summaries and questions to Prof. Das by 5pm the Wednesday or day before discussion. You will receive feedback and suggested changes by 8pm. You should make the recommended changes and bring 30 copies to class on Thursday. During class, you will organize students into small and large groups and keep group discussions on track.

Reflection Essay: Before and After (10%): You will write TWO essays (2-3 pages) at the beginning and another at the end of the semester reflecting on how language has played an important role in forming your identities up until this point. The second essay should demonstrate how this course has changed the way you think about language and identity.

Current Event Analysis (10%): Choose an article from a credible news source to discuss a current event pertaining to language, identity, and power. Critique this article from an anthropological standpoint by writing an essay (3-4 pages) discussing its content, identifying biases in the author’s understanding of language and identity formation, and analyzing hidden power dynamics. You can also provide an alternative explanation of the event.

Original Research Project (25%): By October 16th you should choose a group to work with to conduct an original research project on a topic dealing with problems or issues of communication between ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, class, and/or religious-identifying groups in New York City. After collecting data, choose a methodology discussed in class to analyze how power operates in the assertion and contestation of these social identities through language. Each group should prepare a 20 min. multi-media presentation of their research project on December 11th. Individual students will also submit a final paper (8-10 pages) discussing a particular theme and analyzing a smaller data set. Final research papers are due by 5:00pm on December 15th. Further instructions are posted on NYU Classes.

Reading Questions (20%): Weekly reading questions are posted on NYU Classes. You are expected to submit answers (1-2 paragraphs per question) to any FIVE sets of reading questions. Post your responses on NYU Classes by Thursday 11am the day of discussion.

Scheduled Quizzes (20%): There will be TWO in-class quizzes (multiple choice, definitions, essay) on Mitzvah Girls and Homegirls. Study guides are posted on NYU Classes.
POLICIES AND GRADING

All essays should be double-spaced and typed in 12-point font. Please consult the style guide of the American Anthropological Association (http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.pdf) for citation standards. Plagiarism will be dealt with most severely. When in doubt, cite.

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<td>Research Presentation</td>
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<td>Research Paper</td>
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COURSE SCHEDULE

September 2-4: Introduction to Course Topics

September 9-11: Ethnicity and Multilingualism
FILM: Being Myself (Hazuki 1995)

| Due September 9: Reflection Essay – Before |

September 16-18: Gender, Sexuality, and Performance (65)


FILM: Selections from Paris is Burning (1990)

September 23-25: Religion and Discourse


FILM: Selections from Jesus Camp (2006)

| ETHNOGRAPHY #1: Mitzvah Girls |

September 30 – October 2


FILM: Selections from Jesus Camp (2006)

| Due October 2: Current Event Analysis |
October 7-9


October 16 (No class on October 14)


Due October 16: Research Topics Approved

October 21


**QUIZ #1: Mitvzah Girls (October 23)**

October 28-30: Race and Style


November 4-6: Class and Accent


**FILM: Selections from Akeelah and the Bee (2006)**

**ETHNOGRAPHY #2: Homegirls**

**November 11-13**


**FILM: Selections from Do You Speak American? (2005)**

Due November 13: Reflection Essay: After

**November 18-20**


**November 25 (No class on November 27) (80)**


**December 2**


**QUIZ #2: Homegirls (December 4)**

**December 9-11: Group Project Presentations**

Due December 15: Final Papers