

Supervisors: Jeremy Heis & Rudi Berkelhammer

Instructor: Roshan Sharma (rsharma1@uci.edu)

!@\$-ING SYLLABUS

WHAT IS THIS CLASS ABOUT?

EXPLORING CONTEXT: Throughout this we will work to understand the contextual elements surrounding swear words. This includes etymological/historical understanding, relevant linguistic phenomena, psychological dimensions, legal/political impact, insight into the taboo of swear words, the effect of media, and lastly the philosophical/ethical aspects of these words. In understanding context surrounding these words, *our goal will be to acquire a better sense of what these words mean, why we use them, and when to use them.*

HOW SHOULD YOU CONDUCT YOURSELF?

BE RESPECTFUL: Maintaining a civilized public forum that deals with potentially offensive language is essential to keeping this class fun and informative. Nobody benefits from calling each other a @\$%-head or an ^&*-wipe to connote derogation, as it detracts from the purpose of the course. This being said, it's essential that we refrain from using these words to inflict harm on others and to be aware of the meanings we imply.

DISCLAIMERS

KEEPING AN OPEN MIND: As is evident in the title, this course is about swear words, so expect there to be the verbalizing of swear words in class. We might be required to say these words out loud at times to foster interactive dynamic, and while compliance is not mandatory it is encouraged, so as to facilitate greater understanding and absorption of the material.

POLICIES TO CONSIDER

NO TECHNOLOGY: There is a strict no laptop/cellphone policy. We will not be having any readings or online assignments, hence there's no need to bring either of these devices out. Please refrain from using any type of cellular devices during class as well. Those who are seen texting with recurring frequency will be asked to step outside. If you must take a call please take it outside of class in a discrete and polite fashion. We only have 50 minutes once per week, so be wary of your phone usage.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

MANDATORY ATTENDANCE: Although there are required no readings, it is necessary that you come to class and participate. 100% attendance is mandatory to pass, and while this is only a 1 unit course we only have 10 classes total out of the 70+ days in the quarter, so missing our 50 minutes per week is unacceptable. If an emergency forces you to miss a class, contact me so we can work out an activity or assignment which will help you catch up with the content you missed.

ASSIGNMENTS

- 1) **SWEAR JOURNAL:** Additionally, you will be responsible for a “Swear Journal” which documents your everyday experience with swear word use. For every week each person is expected to have at least one paragraph’s worth of writing (5-6 sentences) documenting how they noticed others, or themselves, using swear words. Try to have well formulated and opinions, as we will be sharing them at the beginning of every class and basing discussions off them. Please print these out before class as digital copies are not accepted.
- 2) **ATTENDANCE:** Please see above
- 3) **PARTICIPATION:** Will be observed on a holistic basis. About half of our class time will be based on class discussion, so participation is highly encouraged. In signing up for this course it’s understood that you will be participating in offering opinions, reiterating previous material from past classes, and building on class dialogue. Those who refrain from active participation may be called on periodically to share their insight.
- 4) **COMPLETION OF SPRING QUARTER EVALS:** To advance the progress of this course, course evaluations are a necessary component. Evaluation checks will be held 2 weeks prior to our last class and will be requested for completion by the end.

GRADING

To pass this class you must attend class and keep your swear journal updated

- 1) Attendance
- 2) Swear Journal Upkeep
- 3) Participation
- 4) Completion of Spring quarter evaluation

COURSE PROGRESSION

Week 1: Introduction and Intro to “Swear Words as a Language”: Distinctions & Categorizations (Swearing & Cursing, Attempts to categorize, & Function)

Week 2: Continuation of “Swear Words as a Language”: Forms of swearing, themes, and linguistic phenomena.

Week 3: “History of Swearing”: Swearing across the globe and how it got started.

Week 4: Continuation of “History of Swearing”: Modern swearing and how words + culture have evolved.

Week 5: “Swearing and Your Brain”: Swearing as a coping method, an expressive tool, and a response to pain.

Week 6: Continuation of “Swearing and Your Brain”: Tourettes, Aphasia, Cerebral Laterality, and Non-literal language

Week 7: “Swearing and the Law”: Protected/unprotected speech, Fighting words, Miller standard, the FCC, and George Carlin.

Week 8: “Swearing and Taboo”: Origins of a taboo, cultural universalities, types of taboo, function of taboo, and enforcement.

Week 9: “Swearing and the Media”: FCC, the BBC standards council, free speech on TV, and the effect of swearing on society.

Week 10: “Swearing and Philosophy” - Ethics of swearing. Where do we go from here?