

Designing a language-specific course in raciolinguistics: Theory to practice

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This course centers raciolinguistics (Flores & Rosa, 2015) as a guiding theoretical framework for understanding how language and race are co-naturalized, providing language and linguistics teachers with a critical framework to analyze how systemic discrimination is manifested in how we perceive people and their language use. This course focuses on US Spanish language environments, but the themes and course structure are widely applicable.

Why a course on raciolinguistics? Why now?

A raciolinguistic perspective provides an intersectional framework to understand how systemic power relations underpin language use and identity. Decolonization requires that we understand how standard language ideologies are legacies of colonialism that are used to marginalize racialized groups and subject them to systemic injustice. As these conversations come to the forefront in our language and linguistics departments, we can dismantle oppressive policy and ideologies through the acknowledgement, learning, and practice of raciolinguistics.

Course goals

- Be able to **identify, explore, and critique** how the [neo]colonial underpinnings of [Spanish] language ideologies in the United States and beyond **pave the way for raciolinguistic ideologies**.
- **Critically examine** how notions of “correct” language must be examined intersectionally (i.e. in analysis with race, gender, ethnicity, etc.) and use a social constructivist approach to **unsettle concepts of *standard, academic, and (in)appropriate language***.
- **Recognize** subtle instances of **language discrimination** and synthesize them with forms of blatant discrimination to **reimagine oppressive [linguistic] systems**.
- **Develop empathy** and a **compassionate respect** for those whose identity and language expression is different than our own.

Course overview: Building a raciolinguistic analysis

Linguistic Colonialism	Raciolinguistic Theory	Raciolinguistics & Systems	(De)Colonial Approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lines of invisibility (de Sousa Santos, 2007)• Linguistic othering & erasure (Vitar, 1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language subordination (Lippi-Green, 2012)• Raciolinguistic theory (Flores & Rosa, 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intersections with education, politics, labor market, disability, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Translanguaging• Limits of named languages• Language as social justice

Sample activities

Exploring themes

- Examining colonial legacies
- Language textbook analysis
- Linguistic autobiography
- Close reading of case studies

Locating raciolinguistic ideologies

- Evaluating policy
- Critiquing Academy prescriptivism
- Deep analysis of overt and covert examples
- Production of an original podcast

Reimagining new worlds

- Including language equity in DEI initiatives and creating a plan of action
- Public service announcement for language + social justice

Benefits of learning raciolinguistics

- Raciolinguistic and decolonial theories allow students to examine the everyday, naturalized occurrences of [language] discrimination that are often minimized in comparison with other forms.
- Facilitates reflexivity as teachers and researchers in language, linguistics, and beyond.
- Raciolinguistics is relevant everywhere – how can this course be modified to fit your classroom context and cultural setting?

Acknowledgements: Thank you to the Berkeley Language Center and students who took this course.