

# BAD WORDS AND TABOO TERMS

LING 1069

Spring 2023

## Instructor: Randall Eggert

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### Course Description

This class is an introduction to linguistic study through the lens of taboo language, a pervasive part of all languages. We will survey topics in modern linguistics by studying taboos in various languages. Students sensitive to obscene words are discouraged from enrolling, as are students with only a prurient, non-scholarly interest in taboo language.

Intellectual Explorations-Humanities Requirement Designation

This class is designated as fulfilling the Humanities Exploration requirement, and is thus designed to “help students achieve a critical understanding of human thought, culture, and society through the study of big questions, both contemporary and enduring” (<http://ugs.utah.edu/general-education/requirements/hf.php>). As part of this designation, the course has the following Essential Learning Objectives:

1. Inquiry and analysis
2. Critical thinking
3. Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

### Specific Course Objectives

All of language is uniquely human, but taboo language can tell us even more about what it means to be human. Linguists use language as a window to the mind, and that is my primary goal with this class. More specifically, by the end of the course you should be able to

- **Identify**
  - What parts of vocabulary taboo words are most likely to be drawn from
  - How taboo words are used to swear
  - The three aspects of meaning
  - The processes that create and change taboo words
  - Where in the brain language in general is processed
  - Where in the brain taboo words are processed
  - The three parts of a speech act
- **Describe**
  - The social and emotional aspects of a word that identifies it as taboo.
  - How taboo words are similar to other words.
  - How taboo words differ from other words.
  - How taboo words are created
  - How taboo words cease to be taboo
  - What swearing does to a person physiologically
  - How one’s sociological background can shape how one swears
  - How society and culture can shape what is or is not taboo
  - How swearing in one’s first language is different from swearing in one’s second language
  - How context affects whether swearing is acceptable
- **Explain**
  - What makes a word taboo
  - Why taboo words exist in a language
- **Analyze**
  - Questions about language from an objective point of view

## Required Course Materials

Eggert, Randall. 2020. *This Book is Taboo*, second edition. Kendall-Hunt. Accessible through the Bookshelf link in the left column of Canvas. (You've already paid for the book through student fees.)

## Course Policy

All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook; this extends to the online classroom. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Section II of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Section III, A) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, and I will do so, beginning with warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.

## [Student Code](#)

## Grading

Your Grade will be based on quizzes (25%), two exams (25% each), and class participation (25%). There will be **no deadline extensions**, except in the case of a severe illness, a death in the family, or a catastrophic act of nature or nation. In all cases, I expect a letter explaining the situation. The same goes for incompletes. Unless you make special arrangements with me to receive an incomplete, I will not give one. Special arrangements should be in the form of a statement that we write up and sign. University regulations prohibit the use of the "INC" grade unless the student has completed 80% of the course work. **Plagiarism is not tolerated** and may result in a zero for the plagiarized assignment. You are not to use--or even read--other students' exams (from this semester or from previous semesters) when working on your exam; doing so may result in a zero for the assignment. Late exams **may be accepted at my discretion**, but up to 10% of the grade will be deducted for each day it is late.

## Extra Credit

In this course students can earn up to two extra credits for participation in Linguistics studies this semester; you will receive one credit for each study you participate in (up to a maximum of two points). For more information and to sign up for linguistics studies,

please visit <https://sites.google.com/view/speech-acquisition-lab/participate-in-experiments>.

If you need accommodation of any kind, have a question about accommodation, and/or prefer to complete an alternative assignment for any reason, please create a Sona account and then email [speechacquisitionlab@gmail.com](mailto:speechacquisitionlab@gmail.com). Arrangements for alternative assignments must be made before the current semester's add/drop deadline. If no study appointments are available, check back later, as new appointments are added periodically. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Linguistics Study Pool or the Sona sign-up system, please contact the Linguistic Study Pool coordinators at [speechacquisitionlab@gmail.com](mailto:speechacquisitionlab@gmail.com).

## **Posses**

The word *posse* comes from Latin and originally meant 'to be capable', or, as a noun, 'capability, power' (the word *possible* comes from the same root). In order for you to be capable—or for you to have power—you will be assigned to a posse with other students. You will work with each other and learn from each other throughout the semester.

## **Modules**

The class is divided into two-week modules. During each module, you will need to complete reading assignments from the text-book, watch multi-media presentations, take quizzes, and participate in class discussions. All course material is intended to be accessed through [Modules](#).

## **Exams**

The two exams are essay based. The first exam should be two pages long. The second exam builds on the first exam and should be four pages long. You should provide examples to illustrate your points and cite any sources that you use in your answer.

## **Class Participation**

You are expected to contribute to discussions within your posse. You are expected to contribute examples from your own observation of phenomena, suggest possible analyses of data, and help design hypothetical studies that would help to resolve any outstanding questions that come. Class participation points are calculated based on active participation within your posse and completion of assignments. Contributions that do not contribute meaningfully to assignments will not receive credit.

## Quizzes

Each module ends with a quiz. We are strict with the deadline on quizzes and will only extend them in situations that rise to the level of an emergency. With the exception of the first two quizzes ([Syllabus Quiz](#) and Mention, Mention, Mention Quiz) students are given two attempts on each quiz.

## Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Our classrooms provide opportunities to embrace diversity and promote equity. As educators, we commit to engaging all students in higher education. This commitment requires that we are willing to listen, learn and change; that our classrooms challenge assumptions; and that all members of our community are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe space for learning and growth. Respectful debate and civil disagreement are encouraged and expected; mocking, belittling, and bullying will not be tolerated.

## University Policies

1. ***The Americans with Disabilities Act.*** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability and Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability and Access.
2. ***Addressing Sexual Misconduct.*** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).
3. ***University Safety Statement.*** The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a

courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [safeu.utah.edu](https://safeu.utah.edu).

## Mental Health

I, along with the entire university, am committed to your mental health. We are living in stressful times. Anytime you feel overwhelmed, please reach out to me and take advantage of the resources that the U provides to students: <https://studentaffairs.utah.edu/mental-health-resources/index.php>.

## Canvas

Canvas is our classroom. You can access it through the CIS ([gate.acs.utah.edu](https://gate.acs.utah.edu)) or through [utah.instructure.com](https://utah.instructure.com). At the beginning of the semester, you need to familiarize yourself with the intricacies of the site (it is a powerful course tool and, therefore, complicated); if you need help navigating Canvas the kind folks at TLT ([classhelp@utah.edu](mailto:classhelp@utah.edu) or (801) 581-6112) can help you. You need to set aside several hours during the week that you dedicate to participating in our class, just as you would in a face-to-face class.

## Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Mon Jan 9, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Introduction to the Class: You Can't Use Words Like That</a>	12am
	Assignment <a href="#">1.0 Read: Preface &amp; Ch. 5</a>	due by 11:59pm
Tue Jan 10, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">1.7 Get to Know Your Posse</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">1.8 Name Your Posse</a>	due by 11:59pm
Thu Jan 12, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">1.10 What's Your Threshold?</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">1.9 Do You Have to Use Words Like That?</a>	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jan 13, 2023	Quiz <a href="#">1.5 Student Information</a>	due by 11:59pm

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Due</b>
	Quiz <a href="#">1.6 Data Collection: Tabooness</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Jan 16, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Martin Luther King Jr. Day</a>	12am
Tue Jan 17, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Complete response for 1.10 What's Your Threshold</a>	12am
Thu Jan 19, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">1.12 Sounds are just sounds</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Calendar Event <a href="#">Last day to add/drop classes</a>	12am
	Quiz <a href="#">1.14 Data Collection: Aspects of Meaning</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz <a href="#">1.15 Data Collection: Infixation in States</a>	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jan 20, 2023	Quiz <a href="#">1.16 Data Collection: Slurs for Men and Women</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz <a href="#">1.17 Data Collection: Tabooness in Context</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz <a href="#">1.18 Syllabus Quiz</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Jan 23, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Taboo Words &amp; Swearing</a>	12am
	Assignment <a href="#">2.0 Read: Chapters 1 &amp; 3</a>	due by 11:59pm
Tue Jan 24, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">2.2 Taboos</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Calendar Event <a href="#">Complete response for 2.2 Taboos</a>	12am
Thu Jan 26, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">2.4 Notation for the 3 Types of Mention</a>	due by 11:59pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">2.5 Stroop Test</a>	due by 11:59pm

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Due</b>
Fri Jan 27, 2023	Quiz <a href="#">2.6 Mention, Mention, Mention Quiz</a>	due by 11:59pm
Tue Jan 31, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">2.9 Tabooness</a>	due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 2, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Complete response for 3.3 Aspects of Meaning Survey Results</a>	12am
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">2.11 Practice for Quiz 1</a>	due by 11:59pm
Fri Feb 3, 2023	Quiz <a href="#">2.12 Quiz 1</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Feb 6, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Meaning, Meaning, Meaning</a>	12am
	Assignment <a href="#">3.0 Read: Chapters 4 &amp; 14</a>	due by 11:59pm
Tue Feb 7, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">3.3 Aspects of Meaning Survey Results</a>	due by 11:30pm
Thu Feb 9, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">3.4 Response Cries</a>	due by 11:30pm
Tue Feb 14, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">3.8 Tabooness in Context</a>	due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 16, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">3.9 The Context of a Slur</a>	due by 11:30pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">3.11 Practice for Quiz 2</a>	due by 11:59pm
Fri Feb 17, 2023	Quiz <a href="#">3.12 Quiz 2</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Feb 20, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Presidents' Day</a>	12am
	Calendar Event <a href="#">Swearing and the Brain</a>	12am
	Assignment <a href="#">4.0 Read: Chapter 12</a>	due by 11:59pm



<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Due</b>
Tue Feb 21, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">4.3 Tourette Syndrome</a>	due by 11:30pm
Thu Feb 23, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">4.6 The Taboo Stroop Test and the Brain</a>	due by 11:30pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">4.7 Practice for Quiz 3</a>	due by 11:30pm
Fri Feb 24, 2023	Quiz <a href="#">4.8 Quiz 3</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Feb 27, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Grammar, Grammar, Grammar</a>	12am
	Assignment <a href="#">5.0 Read: Chapters 2, 8, &amp; 9</a>	due by 11:59pm
Tue Feb 28, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">5.3 Prescriptivists</a>	due by 11:30pm
Thu Mar 2, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">5.6 Results from Infixation of States</a>	due by 11:30pm
	Quiz <a href="#">Honor Pledge: Exam 1</a>	due by 11:30pm
Fri Mar 3, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Last day to withdraw</a>	12am
	Assignment <a href="#">Exam 1</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Mar 6, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Spring Break</a>	12am
Tue Mar 7, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Spring Break</a>	12am
Wed Mar 8, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Spring Break</a>	12am
Thu Mar 9, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Spring Break</a>	12am
Fri Mar 10, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Spring Break</a>	12am
Tue Mar 14, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">5.8 Linguistic Versatility</a>	due by 11:30pm

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Due</b>
Thu Mar 16, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">5.9 Practice for Quiz 4</a>	due by 11:30pm
Fri Mar 17, 2023	Quiz <a href="#">5.10 Quiz 4</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Mar 20, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Adapting and Changing Language</a>	12am
	Assignment <a href="#">6.0 Read: Chapters 6 &amp; 7</a>	due by 11:59pm
Tue Mar 21, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">6.2 Euphemisms</a>	due by 11:30pm
Thu Mar 23, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">6.4 X-phemism triplets</a>	due by 11:30pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">6.7 Asterisks</a>	due by 11:30pm
Tue Mar 28, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">6.10 Oxford English Dictionary</a>	due by 11:30pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">6.13 Degeneration</a>	due by 11:30pm
Thu Mar 30, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">6.14 Practice for Quiz 5</a>	due by 11:30pm
Fri Mar 31, 2023	Quiz <a href="#">6.15 Quiz 5</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 3, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Swearing in Other Languages</a>	12am
	Assignment <a href="#">7.0 Read: Chapters 11 &amp; 10</a>	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 4, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">7.5 Teaching about taboo words in the classroom</a>	due by 11:30pm
Thu Apr 6, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">7.6 ESL swearing</a>	due by 11:30pm
Tue Apr 11, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">7.12 Taboo words in a foreign language</a>	due by 11:30pm

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Due</b>
Thu Apr 13, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">7.13 Practice for Quiz 6</a>	due by 11:30pm
Fri Apr 14, 2023	Quiz <a href="#">7.14 Quiz 6</a>	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 17, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Swearing and Society</a>	12am
	Assignment <a href="#">8.0 Read: Chapters 13 &amp; 15</a>	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 18, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">8.4 Appropriateness of women swearing</a>	due by 11:30pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">8.5 Slurs for Men and Women</a>	due by 11:30pm
Thu Apr 20, 2023	Discussion Topic <a href="#">8.11 Practice for Quiz 7</a>	due by 11:30pm
	Discussion Topic <a href="#">8.9 Censorship Online</a>	due by 11:30pm
Fri Apr 21, 2023	Quiz <a href="#">8.12 Quiz 7</a>	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 25, 2023	Quiz <a href="#">Honor Pledge: Exam 2</a>	due by 11:59pm
Wed Apr 26, 2023	Calendar Event <a href="#">Reading Day</a>	12am
Thu Apr 27, 2023	Assignment <a href="#">Exam 2</a>	due by 11:59pm