

L160S08.H01
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LING/ AFAM 161: The Sociolinguistics of Reading
Spring 2008



Monday 3:30-5:30 pm

Linguistics Lab, 3700 Market Street, 3rd floor

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This academically based community service (ABCS) course enrolls students in the university's tutoring program aimed to raise literacy levels in West Philadelphia schools. Students in the course will form a core group engaged in the development, implementation and evaluation of a model program of tutor training and school partnerships that can be applied across Penn's various tutoring programs.

The course investigates the social structure of the community, beginning with struggling readers in elementary school, their peers, families and neighbors, and the ways in which they are affected by the Penn partnership program. Students will tutor a minimum of two hours a week. Course members will carry out bi-weekly assignments designed to evaluate, develop and improve current methods of tutoring. They will also participate in the three training sessions that will be provided for a large group of tutors not enrolled in the course who are working in three West Philadelphia schools, and monitor the general progress in acquiring tutoring skills.

The course meetings will focus on three central topics: (1) knowledge of how the English alphabet codes linguistic forms, and how the acquisition of this knowledge affects tutors and readers, and (2) principles of interest, motivation and engagement that drives the learning process, and (3) the construction of games and activities that focus learning in conjunction with physical movement. Course members will use sociolinguistic techniques of interviewing to learn about the interests and life experience of the students they are tutoring. They will apply similar techniques to trace the experience of a sample

of Penn tutors outside the course and project their future involvement in university/community partnerships.

General Info

Tutoring: Two sessions/week, approx 1 hour each.

Attendance: This class involves full participation and commitment to students in our local schools. If you're too sick to tutor, please call us ASAP so that we can replace you.

Tutor Logs

To be turned in every Monday at the beginning of class. We will read and comment on them, and return them by the end of class.

The tutor logs are reports of your child's progress in each of your tutoring sessions. This includes detailed notes on your child's strengths and weaknesses during each session, in addition to any suggestions you have for their improvement in reading. If you have more than one child, you only need one tutor log per session. You can just write both of their names (not their initials, please) and make any relative comments.

Homework assignments

Due Monday before class (via Blackboard Digital Dropbox)

Term Assignments

1. Training: We will all attend 3 levels of training sessions: one in February, one in March, and one in April. There will be a 4th meeting that is a general "debriefing." This will help us keep in touch with our afterschool tutoring partners. Further dates TBA.
2. After-school program check-in: We'll have groups that occasionally visit one of the area after-school programs and interview tutors there. We'll discuss this further in class.
3. Parent Relations: Because this is a sociolinguistics course, we'll get involved not only with the children, but also with their families and communities. We'll discuss this further in class.

Final paper

Worth 60% of your final grade. This paper will be based on your tutor logs, your observations of the after-school programs, and involvement with children/parents/communities