

Linguistics
Summer 2009
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Final project

In class we will see beliefs about others who use some other variety of speech. Some of these beliefs can be negative, inaccurate, unfair, and harmful. Our task is to try to construct positive messages that dispel myths about the language used by particular social groups.

The **goal** is a positive public service message addressing judgments about how some particular social group speaks or should speak. This could be...

- a poster
- a video
- a website
- a Facebook/MySpace group
- a T-shirt campaign
- ...

The **judgements** you address may be about character, morality, intelligence, etc...

The **social group** could be men, women, members of an ethnic or racial group, people who speak English as a second language, deaf people, old people, young people, college students, people from a particular city or geographic region, athletes, computer users, text messagers, people who do not follow prescribed rules of grammar, etc...

Some possible beliefs to address:

- People who use languages other than English in the US are unpatriotic, lazy,
- People who speak Spanish are secretly talking smack about English speakers
- African American English is a poor excuse for proper language because its users are unintelligent, degenerate, lazy
- The way youngsters talk these days (slang, *like*, etc...) is incorrect and inexpressive because all of society is on the decline
- People who use words like *dude*, *stoked*, and *sick* are unintelligent stoners, surfers, slackers...
- People who use words like *like*, *totally*, and *super* are airheaded Valley Girls
- Texting and the Internet are leading to the decline of the English language because people who text are inexpressive and degenerate
- People who don't use standard English are stupid, uneducated, and unable to learn
- Only people from the South and Northeast have accents, everyone else is normal
- English is used across the world because it can express ideas other languages can't.

You will work in **groups of three** to produce your project.

Project timeline

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|-----------------------|--|
| Monday, July 27 | Turn in two possible ideas for your project (1 paragraph each), as well as 1-2 ideas for the format and (optional) who you would like to work with |
| Tuesday, July 28 | Groups assigned |
| Tues-Thurs July 28-30 | Each group must meet with me at some point to discuss the project plan |
| Mon/Tues Aug 3-4 | Project work days (possibly also Thurs July 23) |
| Tuesday, Aug 4 | Present in class, or... |
| Thursday, Aug 6 | Present at final showcase (extra credit!) |