Master in Educational Leadership and Management Development
PhD in Educational Leadership and Management Development

National Chung Cheng University

Seminar in Language, Culture and Society in Education (suitable for both MA and PhD levels)

Semester 2, 2026 Thurs/Time: 0910-1200
Venue: TBA, Education Building 2

Instructor: Prof. PHAN Le Ha

Office: TBA
Phone: TBA
Email: TBA

Course Description

Welcome to *Seminar in Language, Culture and Society in Education.* This seminar aims to explore the ways that language, culture and society relate to each other, and why it matters to education and to those working in school, universities, technical colleges, workplaces and policy roles around the world. The seminar is divided into three sections, and a combination of readings, movies and documentaries will be introduced throughout. The first section is concerned with the idea of language as social, political and cultural practice and the politics and practice of language and culture globally and in specific local settings. In this section we begin by reading some seminal works that examine the intertwined relationship of language, culture and identity, while engaging critically with key concepts including power, discourse, representation, and ethnicity. We will as well engage with in-depth understandings and discussions about the very notions of identity and cultural identity as they are played out in varied social and cultural contexts. Through these readings, we understand how language, operating as a representational system, could be used to discriminate, racialize, marginalize, disadvantage, empower, exclude, include and gain access to opportunities, power and status. We conclude this section by critically thinking about the role of language and identity and various associated implications for individuals and communities in global contexts. It is also hoped that students will gain a significant understanding of theories related to identity studies that may be useful for their own research and projects as well as professional growth.

The second section continues to delve further into the above foci, while also being particularly concerned with what all this means for language and educational policy and reforms, curriculum and pedagogy, and the various dimensions of identity politics in some specific instances in global contexts (for instance, critical pedagogy and its limitations, global education policy, the internationalization of education, English-medium education, and intercultural communication in the age of AI, etc.). The third section provides an opportunity to ask how we can best address the

issues we identify in the earlier parts of the course, whereby students are to make a complex connection between their (research) interests/topics and the readings and other documents presented in class. Members of the class will take specific ideas and theories and discuss and justify how useful they are in addressing their research. Students will also reflect on 'real world' dilemmas most relevant in their research, workplace, and disciplines.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this seminar, students should have:

1. developed an understanding of language as social, cultural and political practice;
2. developed an understanding of the social, cultural, historical and political contexts in which language is shaped in contemporary societies and the implications for education and training in a range of learning environments including schools and higher education, workplaces and community settings;
3. developed an understanding of the implications of varied language issues on educational policy and reforms, curriculum and pedagogy, and the various dimensions of culture, identity, diversity, intercultural interactions and representation in some specific instances in global contexts; and
4. explored how these understandings are relevant for themselves as teachers, educators, and professionals in general and in specific contexts and settings.

Course Schedule and Topics:

Week	Date	Topic
1	February 26 (unavailable due to prior commitment)	Introduction: Representation, Meaning, Language, and Discourse
	March 3	Makeup Class: Introduction: Representation, Meaning, Language, and Discourse
2	March 5	Representation, Meaning, Discourse, Language, and Discourse (continued)
3	March 12	Representation, Identity, and (Cultural) Difference
4	March 19	Identity, Representation, and Stereotyping
5	March 26	Self-directed Learning
6	April 2	Wrap-up: Students to Present their Videos in Class
7	April 9	Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy
8	April 16	Language, Culture, Education, Identity and Nation-building in Southeast Asia
9	April 23	Language, Culture, Identity and Diversity in Internationalization
10	April 30	Issues in English Language Education and English Medium Instruction
11	May 7	Intercultural Communication in the Age of AI
12	May 14	Self-directed Learning
13	May 21	Engagement with Your Chosen Authors

14	May 28	Students to Present and Discuss Specific Cases of Real-world Dilemmas
15	June 4	Students to Present and Discuss Specific Cases of Real-world Dilemmas (Continued)
16	June 11	Consultation Session & Final Term Paper Preparation

****

Course Schedule, Topics and Readings

(Please note the proposed topics and teaching materials are subject to change prior to and/or during the course where relevant; materials in different forms may be added and alternative materials can also be recommended where appropriate)

PART I (6 WEEKS)

Session 1, Thursday February 26 (Makeup Class on Tuesday 3 March): Introduction - Representation, Meaning, Language, and Discourse

We start the course with a short reading below. Students are to be introduced to key concepts discussed in the chapter:

- Hall, Stuart (1997). Chapter "Introduction". In Hall, S. (ed.) *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices.* London: SAGE Publication.

Session 2, Thursday March 5: Representation, Meaning, Language, and Discourse (continued)

- Hall, Stuart (1997). Introduction and The work of representation (Chapter 1). In Hall, S. (ed.) *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices.* London: SAGE Publication, pp. 15-69.

Session 3, Thursday March 12: Representation, Identity, and (Cultural) Difference

- Woodward, Kathryn (1997). Introduction. In Woodward, K. (ed.) *Identity and Difference*. London: SAGE Publication, pp. 8-56.
- Watch the movie "*My big fat Greek wedding 1*". Students are to relate the movie to several key concepts, issues and questions discussed in the readings assigned for all the previous weeks and the weeks that follow as well.

Session 4, Thursday March 19: Identity, Representation, and Stereotyping

- Evelyn Alsultany (2012). *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11*. NYU Press.

(https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.18574/nyu/9780814729175.001.0001/html)

- Watch the movie "*My name is Khan*" (2010).

***Students are to relate the movie to several key concepts, issues and questions discussed in the readings assigned up to this week.

Session 5, Thursday March 26: Self-directed Learning

- Each student is to identify three substantial readings and a movie or documentary that are relevant to the concepts, issues and questions introduced and discussed up to this point, and create a video (around 20-30 minutes) to introduce, discuss, and evaluate the main ideas and arguments in the readings and the movie or documentary.

Guided questions include:

- How is cultural identity defined in these three readings, and how is it similar to and/or different from what is discussed in the readings introduced in the course so far? Be as clear and specific as possible in answering this question.
- How is cultural identity demonstrated in the movie/documentary you have found?
- How are representation, identity, difference, culture, and language played out in this movie as well as in all the movies you have watched in class?
- In what ways can you relate to representation and the different ways of understanding cultural identity discussed in the readings and projected in the movies?

***The videos are to be played in class during Session 6. Students are required to provide comments on each other's videos.

Session 6, Thursday April 2: Wrap-up: Students to Present their Videos in Class

In class, students are to show their videos and to comment on each other's videos.

****The video task plus the comment exercise account for 20% of the assessment.***

PART II (6 WEEKS)

From session 7 to session 12: alongside the readings assigned for each week, before class and in class students will continue to watch movies highly relevant to the issues, theories, and topics introduced in the readings discussed in Part I and Part II.

Session 7, Thursday April 9: Critical thinking and Critical Pedagogy

Students can choose at least three of the readings below to read before class:

- Burbules, N.C. & Berk. R. (1999). Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy: Relations, Differences, and Limits. In T. S. Popkewitz & L. Fendler (eds.) Critical Theories in Education. NY: Routledge. [The chapter can be accessed from *http://faculty.education.illinois.edu/burbules/papers/critical.html*
- Ellsworth, E. (1989). "Why Doesn't this Feel Empowering? Working through the Repressive Myth of Critical Pedagogy." *Harvard Educational Review*, *59(3)*: 297-324.
- McLaren, P. (2009). Critical Pedagogy: a look at the major concepts. In Darder A., Baltodano, M.P, & Torres, A.D. (Eds.) (2009), 2nd Edition. T*he Critical Pedagogy Reader*. New York and London: Routledge, p. 61-83.
- Breuing, M**.** (2011). Problematizing critical pedagogy, *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 3 (3), p. 2-23. https://libjournal.uncg.edu/index.php/ijcp/article/viewFile/246/113.
- Noddings, N. (2015). Critical Thinking, *Journal of Educational Controversy*: Vol. 10: No. 1, Article 1. Available at: http://cedar.wwu.edu/jec/vol10/iss1/1.
- Phan, L. H. (2014). The Politics of Naming: Critiquing 'Learner-centred' and 'Teacher as facilitator' in English Language and Humanities Classrooms. *Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 42(4),* 392-405. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1359866X.2014.956048

In class, we will *also* watch one of the following movies and discuss in detail how the movie communicates with the readings introduced this week.

- Movie "*Dead Poets Society*" (1989).
- Movie "*Stand and Deliver*" (1988).

Session 8, Thursday April 16: Language, Culture, Education, Identity and Nation-building in Southeast Asia

This session examines matters of language, culture, education, identity and nation-building with a particular focus on various Southeast Asian contexts and settings, whereby a series of issues and case studies are introduced to offer students an overview as well as complex understandings of these elements.

Readings:

- Students are to read at least four chapters in this book: Sercombe, P. & Tupas, R. (Eds.) (2014). *Language, Education, and Nation-building: Assimilation and Shift in Southeast Asia*. UK: Palgrave MacMillan

Session 9, Thursday April 23: Language, Culture, Identity, Mobility and Diversity in Internationalization of Higher Education

Students are to read the Introduction essay (Editorial) and two articles from each of the Special Issues listed below:

- Special Issue: "Reconceptualising the Inter/national subject: Unsettling Equality an Interculturality in Higher Education"; Guest editors: Maria Tsouroufli & Giuliana Ferri; *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*, Volume 44, Issue 3, 2025. https://www.emerald.com/edi/issue/44/3
- Special Issue: "International Educational Mobilities and New Developments in Higher Education in Asia: Putting Transformations at the Centre of Inquiries" (Part 1); Guest editors: Phan Le Ha and Gerald Fry; *Research in Comparative and International Education,* September, Issue 16, Volume 3, 2021. https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/rcia/16/3

Session 10, Thursday April 30: Issues in English Language Education and English as Medium of Instruction

- Phan, L. H. (2018). Higher Education, English, and the Idea of 'the West': Globalising and Encountering a Global South Regional University. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 39(5), 782-797. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01596306.2018.1448704
- Chang, S. Y., & Kester, K. (2025). From the inside out and outside in: a duoethnographic reflection on the borderlands of English-medium instruction. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2025.2454287
- Irham, I. (2025). Negotiating Emotional Entanglements: The Role of Religion and Identity in English and Arabic Medium Instruction. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ijal.70045
- Xu, W. (2025), "They Prefer White People and American English": Racialized English Language Teaching, African English Teachers and Identity Insecurity in China. *TESOL Quarterly*. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3385

Session 11, Thursday May 7: Intercultural Communication in the AI Age

Students are to read at least three articles in the following Special Issue:

- Dai, David Wei and Hua, Zhu. "When AI meets intercultural communication: new frontiers, new agendas" *Applied Linguistics Review*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2025, pp. 747-751. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2024-0185 (please note that the links to the individual articles included in the Special Issue are embedded in this introduction essay).

Session 12, Thursday May 14 (Self-directed Learning):

During this week, students are to work in pair to do the following task:

- Each student (in a pair) is to choose three readings introduced in the course (between Session 7 and Session 11), identify three major issues/questions discussed/raised and examined in those readings, and then develop three questions for the other student to respond to. These responses will need to be commented on by the student who comes up with the questions. The responses and the comments need to be thorough and in-depth, showing evidence of critical engagement with the topics/issues/questions raised.
- Please note that each student in a pair should not choose the same three readings. Hence, it is a must that students communicate and inform each other of their reading choices as they work together for the task.

*****Then, each pair is to submit the mutual work by email to the instructor before Monday the following week. This task accounts for <u>20%</u> of the total assessment.**

PART III (4 WEEKS)

This third part of the course provides an opportunity to ask how we can best address the issues we identify in the earlier parts of the course, whereby students are to make a complex connection between their (research) interests/topics and the readings and other documents presented in class. Members of the class will take specific ideas and theories and discuss and justify how useful they are in addressing their research interests. Students will also reflect on 'real world' dilemmas most relevant in their research, workplace, and disciplines.

<u>Session 13, Thursday May 21: In-depth Engagement with Your Chosen Authors</u>

- For this week, students are required to study in-depth about the works of any two authors who have written on any of the topics/issues introduced in the course so far. In addition to their readings already included in the course, students will need to look for at least three other readings from the two authors they have chosen. Then, in class students are to share what they have learnt about these authors' works and why their works matter to our understanding of language, culture and society in education.

<u>Session 14, Thursday May 28: Students to Present and Discuss Specific Cases of Real-world Dilemmas</u>

- Each Student is to identify a real-world dilemma in their specific work/study context and (for example, assessment in the age of AI, mother-tongue education in the context of rising English and English medium instruction, etc) and discuss how such a dilemma can be explained and/or understood by the ideas, concepts and theories introduced in the course.

<u>Session 15, Thursday June 4: Students to Present and Discuss Specific Cases of Real-world Dilemmas (continued)</u>

- Each Student is to identify a real-world dilemma in their specific work/study context and (for example, assessment in the age of AI, mother-tongue education in the context of rising English and English medium instruction, etc) and discuss how such a dilemma can

be explained and/or understood by the ideas, concepts and theories introduced in the course.

Session 16, Thursday June 11: Consultation Session

- This session is for each individual student to meet with the instructor should students want to discuss, share and propose any ideas related to the course and the final assessment task.

Learning Activities

Students are expected to come to class well prepared and to participate in all the activities assigned for and generated during the course, which include individual initiatives, pair work and group work, and discussions. Following is an overview of learning activities and assessment percentage.

	Activities	**Percentage**
1	Seminar preparation and participation (throughout)	30%
2	Video Assignment (Due week 6)	20%
3	Pair-work Assignment (Due week 12)	20%
4	Final Term Paper (Due June ???)	30%

Assessment & Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on students' individual performance in the following three areas:

1. **Attendance and Participation throughout the course (30%,** including doing all the required readings and activities, participating, and leading in-class discussion);

2. **Video Assignment (20%): refer to the specific instructions provided in Week 6;**

3. **Pair-work Assignment (20%): refer to the specific instructions provided in Week 12;**

4. **Final Term Paper: Discussion paper and reflection on "Language, identity, discourse, and cultural difference" (5000 words, 30%, due June ???)**

Specific task for the Final Term Paper:

Read Stuart Hall (1997) and at least seven other substantial readings (i.e., books, research articles, book chapters) provided in the course and beyond, and then answer the following questions:

1. How and in what ways are language, identity, discourse and cultural difference closely connected? Summarise how these readings collectively discuss such connections.
2. Use an example from your own life, perhaps your own professional context, and/or from your own research interests, and/or examples from any of the movies you have watched in the course to illustrate such connections discussed in the readings. In particular,

describe in detail a specific context where the connections between language, identity, discourse and cultural difference have been important.

3. Discuss how and to what extent the readings from Hall and others help you interpret the events you describe in terms of the complex interrelationship between language, identity, discourse and cultural difference.

Criteria for the Final Term Paper:

- Provides a well- focused and comprehensive summary and discussion of the readings;
- Demonstrates a critical understanding of the complexities of Hall's argument, as well as of the arguments presented in the other readings;
- Identifies a significant context and provides a rich description;
- Provides an insightful and critical reflection with strong links to Hall's theory and the other readings you have cited;
- Provides a well-structured and clearly set out response with good presentation, appropriate writing strategies, and careful documentation of sources.

Your term paper must be written in good, clear English.

Format of final paper: MS Word Format in the APA (American Psychological Association) Manual Style, A4-size (Margin: 2.54cam on all sides), Times New Roman (Font size: 12 point), double spaced.

Please state clearly on the cover of your paper: (1) the course code & title of this course: (2) the title of your paper and (3) your name and student number.

Upload your final term paper on e-Course but please do a plagiarism check before uploading.

***It is advisable to keep a copy of your final paper for your own record.**

*****Grades for late submission will be deducted: one sub-grade per three days, one grade per week; lateness of submission up to TWO weeks will NOT be marked.***

Grade Descriptors

Grade	Overall Performance
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes
B	High performance on some learning outcomes
C	Good performance on some learning outcomes
D	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes
F	Unsatisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, or failure to meet specified assessment requirements

Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations.

If you have used AI/ChatGPT, you are to declare and explain how you have used it.

Every assignment handed in should be accompanied by a signed declaration as below.

I declare that the assignment here submitted is original except for source material explicitly acknowledged, and that the same or related material has not been previously submitted for another course.

I have/have not used ChatGPT. I use it for the purpose of ….

I also acknowledge that I am aware of University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and of the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations, as contained in the website.

_____	_____
Signature	Date
_____	_____
Name	Student ID
_____	_____
Course code	Course title