Understanding African-American English (AAE):
A Course in Language Comprehension and Cross-Cultural Understanding for
Advanced English Language Learners in the United States

"This African American Vernacular English shares most of its grammar and vocabulary with other dialects of English. But it is distinct in many ways, and it is more different from Standard English than any other dialect spoken in continental North America."

—William Labov

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Context and Course Description

Modern methods of second language instruction, such as communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language learning (TBLL), emphasize the importance of interaction in the second language acquisition and learning process and focus on the development of real-world language skills and the learner's ability to use language in authentic, meaningful contexts. Proponents of such methods generally claim that the ultimate goal of instruction is to allow the learner to develop global communicative competence in the target language and culture that encompasses not only a knowledge of grammar, lexis and phonology, but equally importantly, socially-constructed knowledge about how, when, where and why to use the language. Yet despite their ostensible emphasis on the importance of interaction and the learner's ability to successfully navigate communicative encounters in the target language, the dominant paradigms in the field of teaching English as a second language (ESL) have all but ignored dialects other than the standard. While such an approach may arguably be appropriate in some English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, in which learners may never actually interact with a native English speaker as they learn English primarily as an international lingua franca, refusal to acknowledge the importance, and necessity, of understanding dialects other than the standard fails to meet the real-world communicative needs of many English language learners in predominantly English-speaking countries such as the United States.

English language learners in wide swaths of the United States, from the rural South, which has seen large increases in the number of Spanish-speaking migrants during the last decade, to many of the nation's largest cities (especially in the urban Northeast, Midwest, Texas and California) regularly interact with native speakers of dialects other than Standard American English (SAE), particularly speakers of African-American English (AAE)[1]. In fact, in some large American cities, including Miami, native speakers of AAE may outnumber native speakers of SAE by

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[1] African-American English (AAE), which has been variously referred to as *Black English*, *Black Vernacular English* (*BVE*), *African-American Vernacular English* (*AAVE*), and *African-American Language* (*AAL*), among other terms, is a variety of American English spoken predominantly, but not exclusively, by African-Americans in the United States, historically in the South and since the middle twentieth century in large cities mainly in the American Northeast and Midwest and on the Pacific Coast. Since the early 1970s and famously in the mid-1990s, this variety of English has sometimes been called *Ebonics*, a term that has engendered a considerable amount of controversy, by non-linguists. (Green, 2002)

significant margins.[2] Clearly, for English language learners living in such areas, the ability to understand AAE and its sociocultural context is critical to their overall communicative success. Unfortunately, most ESL (and ESL teacher training) programs in the United States have virtually ignored the significance of dialects other than SAE. Perhaps due to the cultural (over)sensitivities involved, fear of dealing with difficult (or as some might feel, awkward) social and racial issues, as well as widespread ignorance of the history, structure, importance and sociocultural role of AAE in American society, English as a second language programs in the United States generally lack even the briefest mention or acknowledgment of this important dialect of American English.[3] Through this course, which will be described below, I seek to challenge the outdated notion that English language learners, especially those living in the American South and many of the country's largest urban centers, can truly acquire full interactional competence through instruction that addresses SAE alone. Although this particular course will focus on AAE, a fundamental shift in the dialectal focus of ESL curricula in the United States is required in order to address other important, but ignored, dialects of American English, including Appalachian, Southern and New York English. Simply put, the ESL syllabus must break free of the longstanding intellectual imperiousness of the standard to embrace instruction that encompasses the many Englishes that learners will encounter and thereby achieve the culturally responsive pedagogy so often advocated by leaders in the field.

The purpose of this course is to familiarize advanced English language learners with African-American English in its current and historical sociocultural context. Learners will acquire the ability to understand AAE in its spoken and written forms through exposure to and analysis of oral and written texts from multiple genres, including authentic examples of oral discourse, oral and written literature (both prose and poetry), and music. Learners will develop a basic

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[2] According to the United States Census Bureau, of the more than 2.5 million residents of Miami-Dade County, Florida, "Black persons" make up 19.3% of the population while "white persons not Hispanic" make up only 16.0% of the population. Both groups are numerically eclipsed by "persons of Hispanic or Latino origin," who comprise 64.5% of the population. Notably, a large majority of the total population (71.9%) speaks a language other than English (primarily Spanish, followed by Haitian Creole) at home. http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12/12086.html.

[3] After an extensive internet search, I could not find any published ESL curricular or course materials that included substantial information about AAE (viz., more than a passing reference or a few paragraphs).

understanding of the phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, and pragmatics of African-American English. In addition, the course will address important social, cultural and historical issues related to AAE and its use, including societal views of this dialect of English and its speakers. Although this course will not require learners to attempt to produce AAE for communicative purposes (the emphasis is on comprehension rather than production), students will be required to talk and write about AAE, its speakers and its use throughout the course.

This course will be an elective component of an intensive general (non-academic) English program at a private language institute in Miami, Florida, a large ethnically diverse metropolis and the largest urban area in the Southeastern United States.[4] The students in the course will likely range in age from 16 to 50 years and come from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, although the majority of students will probably originate from Latin America and be native speakers of Spanish or Portuguese. Some of the students may plan to eventually return to their countries of origin, while others may hope to permanently settle in the area. In order to enroll in this course, students must have successfully completed level three of the five-level intensive English program and will therefore (based on the structure of the program) have a proficiency level of at least 3 on the ILR proficiency scale. Although this course will be most useful for those learners who plan to settle (or have already settled) in the United States, enrollment will not be restricted to such learners, as all students can profit from developing awareness, understanding and appreciation of dialectal diversity in English along with the racial and ethnic diversity that exists among native English speakers.

Needs Assessment

In order to determine the needs of students who wish to enroll in the course, two forms of assessment will be conducted: (1) a subjective assessment conducted through a written questionnaire and (2) an objective assessment to measure students' current level of comprehension of spoken AAE. The subjective assessment questionnaire will ask students about their experiences with, understanding of and attitudes about AAE and language variation and use in general, while the objective assessment will consist of a short video clip of authentic use of AAE followed by a set of questions about the content of the video. These assessment instruments

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[4] See http://www.census.gov/popest/data/metro/totals/2011/index.html.

will also be used as a post-test administered on the last day of the course to measure the students' achievement of the course goals.

Subjective Assessment Tool

Questionnaire

Name _____   Country of origin _____   Native language _____

Current level in the program (please circle): 4   5

After you complete your English program, do you plan on remaining in the United States?

Yes _____   No _____   If yes, where do you plan on living? _____

Why are you interested in taking this course? _____

Please indicate how much you agree with each statement below.

(1 = You do not agree at all, 2 = you agree a little, 3 = you agree somewhat, 4 = you agree a lot, 5 = you completely agree, X = you do not know or you are unsure).

1. Most Americans speak the same type of English.   ____
2. A person's race or ethnicity is never related to how they speak.   ____
3. Some black (African-American) Americans speak English differently than many
    other Americans.   ____
4. I have sometimes found it difficult to understand some black (African-American)
    English speakers in the United States.   ____
5. In general, I can usually tell how intelligent someone is by the way they speak.   ____
6. I avoid talking to English speakers if I have difficulty understanding them.   ____
7. There is only one way to speak correct English.   ____
8. Most black (African-American) Americans speak the same type of English.   ____
9. Most white Americans speak the same type of English.   ____
10. I usually find it harder to understand black (African-American) Americans than
    other Americans.   ____
11. Everyone should speak the same type of English.   ____
12. Sometimes the same person speaks in different ways depending on the
    circumstances (where they are, who they are with, etc.).   ____
13. People should always speak the same way, no matter where they are or who they
    are with.   ____
14. Some ways of speaking English are better than others.   ____

The questions in this self-assessment questionnaire do not necessary have "right" or "wrong" answers, but are instead designed to provide the instructor with information about students' knowledge of and attitudes about SAE, AAE and language variation.

Objective Assessment Tool

After watching a short news video that aired on a local television station in Miami, Florida in late 2010 in which two native speakers of AAE (Marquis Krump, age 14 and Ellwood Toomer, age 11) from Miami were interviewed after witnessing a police-related shooting, students will complete an objective assessment tool designed to measure their ability to understand spoken AAE. This document will be referred to as an objective assessment *tool* instead of a *quiz* in order to minimize student anxiety. The students will be allowed to view the video as many times as they like before completing the assessment.

Objective Assessment Tool

Name _____   Country of origin _____   Native language _____

Current level in the program (please circle): 4   5

Please answer the following questions about the video you just watched. Do your best to answer each question, even if you are not sure of the answer (it is acceptable to guess).

1. Why were Marquis and Ellwood interviewed?

_____

2. What unexpected event took place in the neighborhood a few minutes before the interview?

_____

3. What do you think Marquis meant when he said "I wuh lea'in' Allapattah Middle"? (*Note*: "Allapattah Middle" is the name of a school).

_____

4. While being interviewed, Marquis said "All I seen wuh boy was walkin' and police done pull out a gun." What English word do you think "wuh" refers to here? _____

5. In the same sentence referred to in question (4) above, in the phrase "police done pull out a gun," what do you think the word "done" means in this context? _____

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6. What do you think Ellwood meant when he said "Police camed up on 'em"?

_____

7. Near the end of his interview, Ellwood said, "Dey kep on shoo'in 'em and shoo'in 'em and shoo'in 'em." In this sentence, who or what do you think the word "Dey" refers to? _____

8. What do you think "kep on" means here? _____

9. In the same sentence referred to in questions (7) and (8) above, the word "shoo'in," which appears three times, is a verb. In the variety of English that you are familiar with, what verb do you think this would be? _____

10. The last sentence spoken by Ellwood was "An' all da polices camed down." What do you think Ellwood meant by this? _____

11. Of the two boys interviewed (Marquis, the first boy, and Ellwood, the second boy). did you find one easier to understand than the other? _____ If yes, which boy was easier for you to understand? _____

12. If you found one boy easier to understand than the other, why do you think this was the case?
_____
_____

After reviewing and analyzing the students' responses to the self-assessment questionnaire and their answers to the questions in the objective assessment tool, I may need to adjust the relative emphasis placed on certain course elements accordingly. For example, if a high percentage of students strongly agree with the statement in the subjective assessment tool that "There is only one way to speak correct English," then additional emphasis may need to be placed on the concepts of language variation, register, diglossia and the sociocultural issues related to SAE. Similarly, if the average response to the statement "Most Americans speak the same type of English" is high (indicating strong agreement), then the lesson components on regional and social dialects of American English may require greater relative attention.

In a similar fashion, the students' responses to the questions in the objective assessment tool may or may not indicate relative strengths and weaknesses in their comprehension of spoken AAE. On the one hand, if students struggle with most or all of the questions, then the amount of class time dedicated to the lexicon, grammar and phonology of AAE as indicated in the tentative

course outline may not need to be adjusted. On the other hand, since each question has been designed to test for comprehension of a specific linguistic feature of AAE,[5] the students' relative performance on the questions or question types could necessitate modifications to the tentative course outline. For instance, if students generally fare worse on questions that measure comprehension of phonology than on other question types, then more class time would need to be devoted to this aspect of AAE, which has been scheduled for weeks eight, nine and ten of the course.

Consideration of Resources and Constraints

I anticipate that the most serious constraints on the successful implementation of this course will be related to the nature of the course content itself. It is an unfortunate fact that there is general and widespread ignorance and misunderstanding of African-American English, which has traditionally been a stigmatized dialect. Even among well-educated and appropriately-credentialed language instructors and language program administrators, many believe that AAE (or whatever conception of this variety they may hold) is not a systematic, rule-governed, full-fledged and legitimate dialect of English worthy of attention, study, appreciation and respect, but is instead somehow the result of African-American children's faulty attempts to acquire SAE or even an inherently poor language learning aptitude on the part of the speakers of this dialect.[6] Consequently, school administrators and instructors may be uncomfortable with the course's content and themes, as may some students, depending on their personal and cultural experiences.

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[5] Questions 1 and 2 are designed to measure global comprehension; questions 3, 4, 7 and 9 primarily measure comprehension of phonology; questions 5 and 8 primarily measure comprehension of specified lexical items; questions 6 and 10 measure sentence-level comprehension; and questions 11 and 12 are designed to determine whether students can discriminate between two idiolects of AAE that differ in their degree of accommodation to SAE (in my subjective opinion, the speech of the older speaker—fourteen year old Marquis—is characterized by grammatical and phonological features that suggest some degree accommodation to SAE and therefore may be easier for some students to understand, whereas the speech of the younger speaker—eleven year old Ellwood—lacks evidence of accommodation to the standard) and if so, whether they possess any insights into why the speech of the older speaker may be easier for them to understand.

[6] My own action research during many years as a language school program administrator and teacher trainer has revealed that the such misconceptions and biases are fairly widespread among language instructors, although probably not as widespread as among the general public. On more than one occasion during linguistics seminars I have conducted, I was publicly challenged by instructors who objected, at times stridently, to the notion that AAE is just as rule-governed and effective at conveying the complexity of human thought as is SAE.

Moreover, because most ESL/EFL instructors are not experts in AAE and lack communicative competence in this variety of English, this is a course that the majority of instructors in most instructional contexts, including the one for which it has been developed, would probably be unable to teach without substantial prior training, research and preparation. Some instructors may also be uncomfortable teaching this course due to its content, for the same aforementioned reasons. The lack of available textbooks and other materials specifically designed to meet this course's instructional goals and objectives is another significant constraint, which will be addressed in detail in the section entitled *Selecting, Adapting and Creating Materials and Activities*, infra.

Despite these considerable constraints, significant resources will also be available. The language institute where the course will be taught is modern, well-furnished and equipped with the latest multimedia technology, including sufficient numbers of computers with internet access and headsets in each classroom. The institute's upper administration is also generally innovating and open to new ideas and would likely agree to support the course if it were in fact proposed. In addition, the institute has sufficient financial resources available to purchase the many types of course materials (such as television series and movies on DVD, magazines and newspapers, music CDs, and books) that will be required for the course. In this particular instructional context, students do not pay for their course materials; instead, all required materials are provided to the students by the school free of charge. The great ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity among the students in the program is another valuable resource. Given the highly culturally-situated nature of the course content, the diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds among the students will be of particular value during the course, as students will be able to share their individual, culturally-informed perspectives on the subject matter and will therefore serve as learning resources for each other and their instructor.

Course Goals and Objectives

The primary goals of this course are to help English language learners at high-intermediate to advanced levels of proficiency (ILR levels 3-4) living in Miami, Florida *comprehend* spoken African-American English (AAE) and *understand* the historical, social and culture contexts in which this variety of English is used. Thus, this course has both a *linguistic* and *sociocultural*

component. Both components will be integrated into each daily lesson and will be given approximately equal emphasis during class and in activities and assignments.

Although students will use Standard English to speak and write about AAE and will be exposed to listening and reading materials in both Standard English and AAE, the main linguistic goal of the course is for students to develop listening comprehension skills in AAE in order to achieve interactional competence when communicating with speakers of this dialect. A secondary linguistic goal of the course is for students to develop reading comprehension skills in AAE in order to understand written texts composed in this variety of English. Students will at times be required to produce examples of AAE in order to talk about its linguistic features; however, this course is not designed to prepare students to produce this variety of English, although they will be free to do so if they wish. The primary sociocultural goal of this course if for students to develop an awareness and appreciation of the many important historical, cultural and social issues related to AAE, its speakers and its use. Students will come to understand the complexity of the relationship between Standard English and AAE, the intrinsic value of this dialect of English, its historical importance, and many of the social and cultural facets of its speakers and its use.

In order for students to reach these course goals, the following are the primary *instructional objectives* that will be achieved throughout the course:

1. Students will be able to identify the lexical features of AAE and contrast the ways in which meaning is expressed in AAE and Standard English.
2. Students will compare the grammatical (morphological and syntactic) structure of AAE and Standard English in order to explain the fundamental differences between the grammars of the two varieties.
3. Students will distinguish between the sound systems of AAE and Standard English and will be able to accurately identify the most important phonological features of AAE.
4. Students will be able to identify, talk and write about the following: (a) the speakers of AAE, (b) geographical areas where and social situations in which AAE is used, (c) attitudes and beliefs about AAE, (d) theories on the origin and development of AAE, (e)

the role that AAE has played in education, housing and employment in the United States, and (f) the ways AAE has been characterized and depicted in the media (including film, television, music and written mass media).
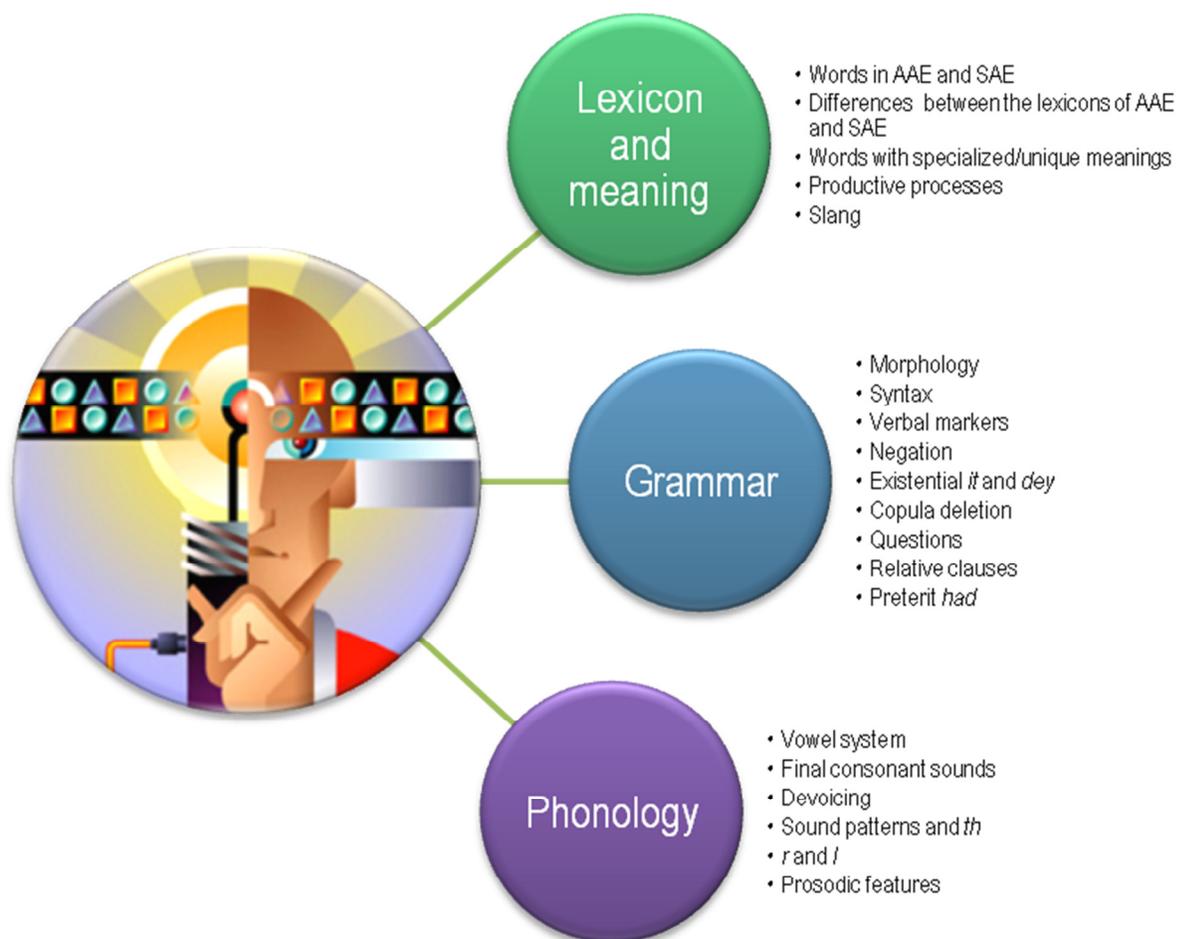
5. Students will compare and contrast the linguistic features and use of varieties of AAE spoken by individuals of different genders, ages, locations and socioeconomic statuses.

6. Students will identify, categorize and distinguish the various spoken and written varieties of AAE.
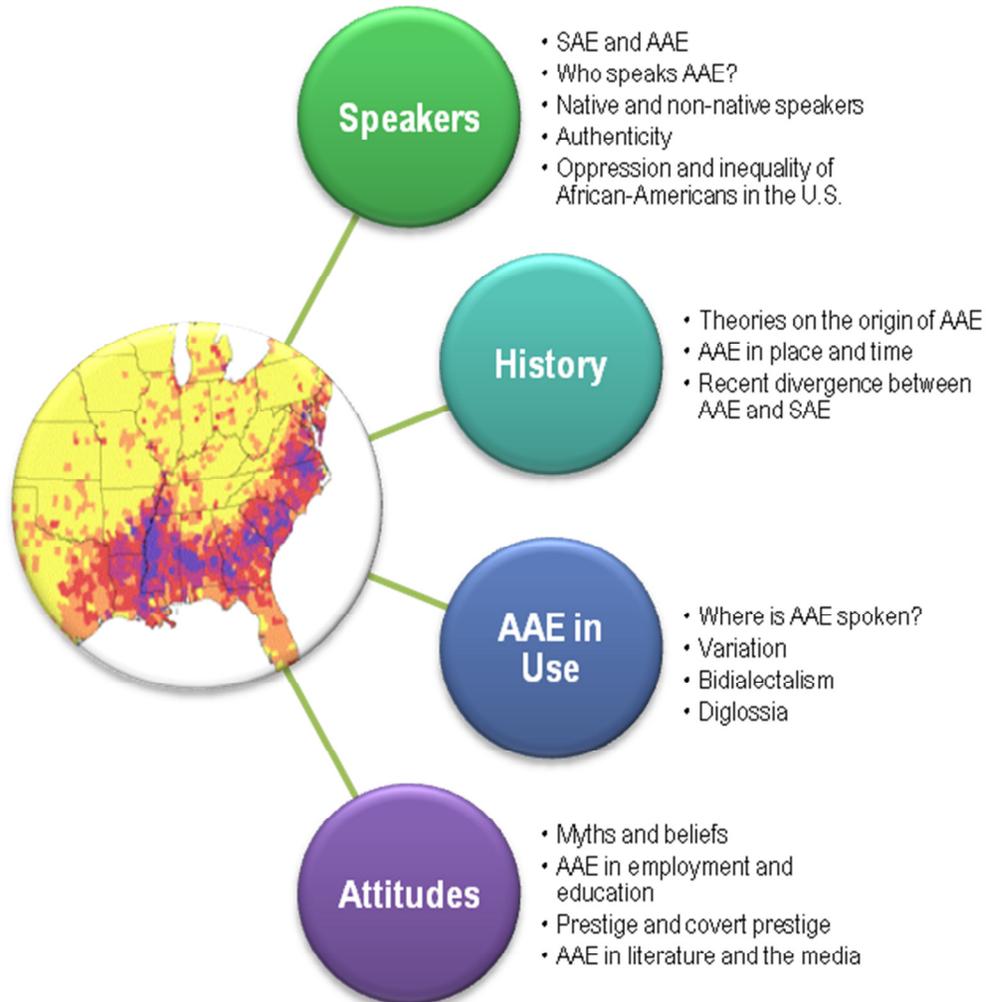
Conceptualizing Content

In conceptualizing the course content, I have divided the content into two broad categories: content about the *linguistic features* of AAE (such phonology, morphology, syntax, and the lexicon) and content about the *social and cultural factors* related to AAE, its speakers and its use.

During each week of the ten week course, class time will be devoted to both content categories. However, because language and culture are inextricably intertwined, some content (e.g., registers and levels of formality in AAE; so-called "Standard AAE;" bidialectalism, code-switching and diglossia) may pertain to both categories. To the extent possible, content will be presented through the use of materials that illustrate and exemplify the target concepts.

Conceptualization of content about the linguistic features of AAE

Lexicon and meaning
- Words in AAE and SAE
- Differences between the lexicons of AAE and SAE
- Words with specialized/unique meanings
- Productive processes
- Slang

Grammar
- Morphology
- Syntax
- Verbal markers
- Negation
- Existential *it* and *dey*
- Copula deletion
- Questions
- Relative clauses
- Preterit *had*

Phonology
- Vowel system
- Final consonant sounds
- Devoicing
- Sound patterns and *th*
- *r* and *l*
- Prosodic features

Conceptualization of content about the social and cultural factors related to AAE

Speakers
- SAE and AAE
- Who speaks AAE?
- Native and non-native speakers
- Authenticity
- Oppression and inequality of African-Americans in the U.S.

History
- Theories on the origin of AAE
- AAE in place and time
- Recent divergence between AAE and SAE

AAE in Use
- Where is AAE spoken?
- Variation
- Bidialectalism
- Diglossia

Attitudes
- Myths and beliefs
- AAE in employment and education
- Prestige and covert prestige
- AAE in literature and the media

Selecting, Adapting and Creating Materials and Activities

Selecting materials for this course has been a significant and unique challenge in part because no commercially available textbooks that specifically address the purpose and content of the course have been published, as far as I am aware. I have therefore drawn on my own teaching and life experiences and linguistic expertise in selecting, adapting and developing materials for this course. Despite exhaustive research efforts, I have been unable to find any textbooks or other materials for teaching AAE to English language learners. In fact, I have been unable to find any course materials whatsoever (or even theoretical references to them) for teaching AAE to anyone, with two possible exceptions: (1) proposed but as-yet undeveloped dialect readers for use with AAE-speaking youth[7] and (2) AAE vocabulary flashcards whose authenticity I have been unable to verify (the video in which they appeared may have been a hoax).[8] Although some materials do exist for teaching SAE to native speakers of AAE (such materials in large part formed the basis of the well-known Ebonics debate that began in central California in the mid-1990s, a topic that will be addressed in week 8 of the course), these materials are generally inappropriate for teaching AAE to native speakers of SAE or to English language learners.

I have adapted portions of Lisa Green's (2002) excellent primer *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction* for use during the course and will also use portions of Marcyliena Morgan's (2002) *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture*. However, the bulk of the course materials will be comprised of (1) authentic materials that illustrate AAE in use and (2) primary and secondary sources relevant to the various sociocultural themes that will be taken up during the course. These primary sources will consist of audio, video and textual samples, such as video clips of interviews of AAE speakers, contemporary music (which has been a rich source of AAE prose and poetry in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries) and informal prose. I will also rely on secondary sources that comment on AAE, its speakers and its use, as well as those that deal with the many important social and cultural issues surrounding AAE, including the films *Akeelah and the Bee* and *Do the Right Thing*, the television series *The Wire*, magazine and newspaper articles of diverse genres and perspectives (from the hip-hop

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[7] http://africanamericanenglish.com/2010/04/16/dialect-readers/

[8] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leau1eGZW7Q

magazines *Vibe* and *Latin Beat* to academic-oriented publications like *Freakonomics* and respected periodicals such as *The New York Times*), and educational sources such as ABC News and the PBS series *Do You Speak American?*

The fact that this course will mainly address the *comprehension* of AAE and not its *production* as a language skill[9] is also an important consideration in the materials selection process; this fact necessarily places the emphasis on materials that exhibit AAE in use rather than those that prepare students to speak it, which apparently do not exist in any case. While students will learn about AAE, its use and its speakers throughout the course, they will talk about it in whatever variety of English they have acquired (likely interlanguages that approach SAE more than any other dialect), and so the course will involve an inherent dialectal asymmetry in that the language variety that is the subject of the course will not be the same variety that students will normally use to discuss the subject, except when quoting or referencing examples of AAE as the *academic content* of the course. This means that for secondary sources used during the course (i.e., curricular materials that talk *about* AAE rather than *exemplify* it), both AAE and SAE will be at play, but in different ways.

Evaluation/Assessment

Each student's progress in the course will be formally assessed based on his or her completion of (1) ten weekly assignments (all constructed-response performance assessments, mostly involving narrowly-defined tasks with a moderate degree of student choice of themes and content), (2) three major projects (all performance assessments involving broadly-defined tasks with a greater amount of student choice in selecting the theme and content of the response) and (3) attendance and class participation. Students will receive qualitative and quantitative feedback from the instructor in all three areas of evaluation regarding the degree to which they have demonstrated mastery of the instructional objectives. Students will also be informally assessed throughout the course based on their completion of in-class activities, exercises and worksheets, which relate to

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[9] Due to the complex social, cultural and to a lesser extent geographically-situated nature of AAE, few if any students will likely find themselves in situations when it would be appropriate to attempt to produce AAE. Nevertheless, students will find in this course an open and safe space in which to explore AAE and will therefore be free to attempt to produce AAE for communicative purposes if they so choose.

specific instructional objectives and will involve a combination of selected-response, constructed-response and personal-response items, but will not be graded.

In the instructional context where this course will be taught, courses are either ungraded or are graded on a pass/fail basis (neither numerical scores nor final qualitative grades are awarded, although quantitative measures are used to determine whether the student has passed or failed the course). If this course is graded (this decision is made by the language institute's administration), then students must attend at least 75% of all class sessions and earn a final composite score of 60% on all graded assignments in order to pass the course.

- **Weekly assignments:** Each week, students will complete and orally present an assignment related to the course content for the week in question. Some assignments will require students to complete out-of-class research, while others will ask students to review and reflect on one or more aspects of the material covered during the week and/or to analyze and present data. Students must prepare the assignments in writing (in script, summary, outline or other format, according to their preferred learning styles) and orally present their work to the rest of the class. Oral presentations must last from ten to fifteen minutes and students must be prepared to answer questions about their work from their classmates and the instructor. The title and requirements of each weekly assignment can be found in bold at the end of the *Activities/Assignments* column in the tentative course outline, infra.

- **Major presentations**: In addition to the ten weekly assignments, students will complete three independent research projects (one each in weeks 4, 7, and 10), which they will orally present during class. These presentations will last between twenty and twenty-five minutes, and students must be prepared to answer questions about their work. Each major presentation must include either an audio or visual (textual, pictorial or symbolic) component to support the material presented and discussed. The purpose of this evaluative component is to provide students with opportunities to explore topics of special interest related to the lexicon, grammar and phonology of AAE. The first major presentation, *The Words of AAE*, must address a topic of the student's choice related to

the lexicon of AAE, the ways AAE expresses meaning, or differences in the ways AAE and SAE express meaning. The second major presentation, *The Structure of AAE*, must take up a topic related to the grammar (morphology and/or syntax) of AAE or a point of contrast between the grammar of AAE and SAE. The third and final major presentation, *The Sounds of AAE*, may consider any issue related to the phonetics or phonology of AAE or differences in the sound systems of AAE and SAE. In line with the course's overarching philosophy, the topics selected by the students may be primarily linguistic, primarily sociocultural, or some combination of the two.

Each weekly assignment and major presentation will be graded according to the following assessment rubric (*source*: adapted from syllabi of courses taught in the Pennsylvania State University Department of Applied Linguistics and the TOEFL iBT).

Points	Evaluation	Grading Criteria
5	Excellent	• The assignment or presentation is accurate, relevant (on topic and task) and clearly incorporates one or more issues brought up in the listening activities, readings or other assignments for the week (for weekly assignments) or course module (for major presentations). • The assignment or presentation demonstrates depth of thinking and consideration of the topic. • While the student's language may contain lexical, grammatical and/or serious pronunciation errors, those errors do not prevent the student from adequately expressing his or her intended meaning.
4	Good	• The assignment or presentation lacks one or more of the qualities above, but still demonstrates above-average thinking about the issues. • The student's language contains lexical, grammatical and/or serious pronunciation errors that may occasionally obscure meaning or the connection of ideas. • For major presentations, the presentation is less than the required 20 minutes in length.
3	Satisfactory	• The assignment or presentation lacks two or more of the

	(minimum passing score)	above qualities, but demonstrates average thinking about the issues. • The student's language contains substantial lexical, grammatical and/or serious pronunciation errors that interfere with meaning. • For major presentations, the presentation is less than 15 minutes in length.
2	Developing	• The assignment or presentation presents little relevant information and/or demonstrates only superficial thinking and consideration of the topic. • The student's language contains serious and frequent lexical, grammatical and/or serious pronunciation errors that interfere with meaning throughout most of the presentation. • For major presentations, the presentation is less than 10 minutes in length or fails to include the mandatory audio or visual component.
1	Minimal	• The assignment or presentation adds little value to our consideration of the topic. It is either off-topic or off-task, inaccurate or too brief to be of help in furthering our thinking and understanding of the issues. • The student's language contains such serious and frequent errors that little meaning can be derived from the presentation. • For major presentations, the presentation is less than 5 minutes in length and fails to include the mandatory audio visual component.
0	Unacceptable	• The student did not present the assignment or attempt the major presentation.

- **Class attendance and participation**: In accordance with the institution's attendance policy, students must attend at least 75% of all scheduled class sessions in order to pass the course (students who attend fewer than 75% of all scheduled class sessions, not counting excused absences, will automatically fail the course). In addition, students will receive a class participation grade (on a scale from 1 to 5) based on the overall quality of their contributions to the classroom interactions.

- **Calculation of final grade**: Each student's final grade will be calculated as follows.

  Weekly assignments (10): 50% (50 points, 5 points each)
  Major presentations (3): 40% (15 points, 5 points each)
  Class attendance and participation: 10% (5 points)

  Pass (P): 60% - 100%   **Fail (F):** 0% – 59%

The effectiveness of the course will be measured with a post-test, which will consist of the same short video the students watched at the beginning of the course, followed by a second administration of the subjective and objective assessment tools. The post-test will be administered on the last day of the course. By comparing the students' end-of-course responses to each of the items in the subjective assessment questionnaire and the objective assessment tool to their pre-course responses, the instructor will be able to measure, in broad terms, the degree to which students have attained the course goals, both individually and in the aggregate.

Organization of Course Content and Activities: Tentative Course Outline

Part 1: Introduction to AAE and its speakers				
Week	**Classes**	**Language Topics**	**Sociocultural Topics**	**Activities/Assignments**
1	**1-5**	• Standard American English (SAE) and other English varieties • What is African-American English (AAE)? • On the naming of the variety • Language variation: Bidialectalism, diglossia and code-switching	• Who speaks AAE? • Native and non-native speakers of AAE • African-Americans, oppression and inequality in the United States • The concept of "authenticity" in the use of AAE	• Activity 1.1 (Listening): *Identifying Standard American English (SAE) and other varieties* • Activity 1.2 (Listening): *Do You Speak American?* segment on African American English • Activity 1.3 (Reading): *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction* (Preface and introduction) • Activity 1.4 (Reading): *What is Ebonics (African American Vernacular English)?* (Article by linguist John Rickford, published by the Linguistic Society of America on the variety, its history and various names that have been used to refer to it) • **Week 1 Assignment:** *What's in a name?* Instructions to students: Prepare and orally present a short essay on whether you believe the name of the variety of English we are studying in this course is important. Support your position with relevant evidence and/or examples.
2	**6-10**	• Theories on the origin of AAE • Where is AAE spoken? • Why is AAE spoken where it is? • Contextual variation in the use of AAE and accommodation to the standard • Regional, social and generational variation in AAE	• The "Great Migration" • Language and power in the United States • Beliefs and opinions about AAE	• Activity 2.1 (Listening): *Noticing regional differences in AAE: The South, Northeast, Midwest and West* (examples of regional varieties of AAE) • Activity 2.2 (Listening): *African-American perspectives on AAE* (examples of African-Americans sharing their views on AAE) • Activity 2.3 (Listening): *Non-African-Americans on AAE* (several examples of non-African-Americans sharing their views on AAE)

| | | | | • Activity 2.4 (Reading): *The African American Migration Experience* (website of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture)

 • **Week 2 Assignment:** *Comparing and contrasting views on AAE*. Instructions to students: What is your current understanding of how different ethnic and racial groups in the United States view AAE? Be sure to discuss why you believe such racially and/or ethnically-based differences exist. |

Part 2: Lexicon and meaning in AAE

Week	Classes	Language Topics	Sociocultural Topics	Activities/Assignments
3	**11-15**	• What is the lexicon? • Difference between the lexicon of AAE and SAE • Words with unique meanings in AAE • Words that exist in AAE but not in SAE • Content words (nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives) in AAE	• Registers and levels of formality in AAE • "Standard AAE" • Stereotyped words and phrases from AAE in the SAE speech community	• Activity 3.1 (Listening): *Noticing and identifying words with unique meanings in AAE* (examples of AAE in use, in which students identify words they know from SAE but that seem to have different meanings in AAE) • Activity 3.2 (Listening): *What is "Standard AAE"?* (Examples of well-known African-Americans using English in a variety of settings) • Activity 3.3 (Reading): *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction* (chapter 1: "Lexicons and Meaning") • **Week 3 Assignment:** *African-Americans in the media and "Standard AAE."* Instructions to students: Think about famous African-Americans you know from the media and identify at least two who speak what has been referred to as "Standard AAE." Explain why you believe these individuals speak "Standard AAE." Describe at least two examples (for each speaker) of the linguistic features of their speech that you have used to make this determination. (Note: This activity has been adapted from Exercise 5 of chapter 4 in *African American*

Week	Classes	Language Topics	Sociocultural Topics	Activities/Assignments
				English: A Linguistic Introduction.)
4	16-20	• Ways of adding new words to the lexicon • Productive processes of adding to the lexicon • Function words and verbal markers • Slang	• AAE in the media: AAE as depicted on television • Regional and generational vocabulary • Labeling people, money and actions	• Activity 4.1 (Listening): *AAE on Television* (examples of the use of AAE in television programs, in which students identify and discuss slang terms) • Activity 4.2 (Listening): *AAE from the 1970s to today* (examples of the use of AAE in television programs in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s in which students recognize generational slang used in AAE) • Activity 4.3 (Reading): 1990 *Vibe* article (interview with music artist Black Rob on the term "woah") • **Week 4 Assignment: *Getting your noun on.*** Instructions to students: Identify, present and discuss the meaning and use of ten examples of the productive AAE formula *get + possessive pronoun + noun + on* that you learned about this week. • **Major Presentation I: *The Words of AAE***

Part 3: The grammar of AAE

Week	Classes	Language Topics	Sociocultural Topics	Activities/Assignments
5	21-25	• Introduction to verbal markers in AAE • Auxiliaries in AAE and SAE • Aspectual markers: *be*, *been*, *done* • Habitual *be* • Emphatic *I'm is*	• Speech events and rules of interaction • Speech communities • Participation and *call-response* • Expressions in non-verbal communication in the AAE speech community	• Activity 5.1 (Listening): *NCLLP Films Video on AAE and the African-American Community* (African-Americans discussing the use of AAE in their community and their opinions and beliefs about AAE and SAE) • Activity 5.2 (Listening): *We Be Talkin': The Structure and Complexity of African-American English* (Presentation on AAE by an American of non-African ancestry) • Activity 5.3 (Reading): "The African-American speech community: Culture, language ideology and social face" (chapter 1 in *Language,*

				Discourse and Power in African American Culture) • **Week 5 Assignment:** *Sharing views on AAE.* Instructions to students: Reflect on what you have learned so far in this course about AAE, its speakers and its use. What two or three facts about or features of AAE have you found most striking? Be sure to explain why you have selected these facts or features.
6	26-30	• Preverbal markers: *finna*, *steady*, *come* • Negation • Negative concord • Preterit *had*	• Gender-based differences in the use of AAE • "Talking White" (an exploration of what this term means in the AAE speech community) • AAE from the "Harlem Renaissance" to the mid twentieth century	• Activity 6.1 (Listening): *Stop Talking White!* (An African-American woman's perspective on her speech and the reactions of her peers to the way she talks) • Activity 6.2 (Listening): *Gender differences in the use of AAE* (Examples of women and men speaking AAE) • Activity 6.3 (Reading): "When women speak: how and why we enter" (chapter 4 in *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture*) • **Week 6 Assignment:** *Talking white.* Instructions to students: What is your reaction to what you have learned this week about the concept of "talking white?" Do you believe that this is a valid concept? Why or why not?
7	31-35	• Double modals • Questions • Relative clauses • Morphosyntactic patterns in AAE • Copula deletion	• *Who dat?* and *bad-mouthing*: The influence of AAE on other varieties of American English • Language and racial identity	• Activity 7.1 (Listening): *Michelle Obama Sounds Off on Race* (ABC News video; original air date: March 20, 2009) • Activity 7.2 (Listening): *The Wire* episodes illustrating the use of AAE in Baltimore, Maryland as depicted in the media • Activity 7.3 (Reading): "First Lady Michelle Obama Reflects on Talking 'Like a White Girl'" (companion article to ABC news video)

| | | | | • **Week 7 Assignment:** *To be or not to be.* Instructions to students: Research, analyze and present five authentic examples of sentences with "habitual *be*" and five authentic examples of sentences illustrating copula deletion produced by speakers of AAE. For each example, provide an approximate equivalent sentence in SAE.

 • **Major Presentation II:** *The Structure of AAE* |

Part 4: The Pronunciation of AAE

Week	Classes	Language Topics	Sociocultural Topics	Activities/Assignments
8	36-40	• The AAE vowel system • Monophthongization of /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/ • Lowering of /ɪ/ before /ŋ/ • Lack of "happy tensing" • Merger of /ɪ/ and /iː/ before liquid consonants • Merger of /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ before nasal consonants • Stress and intonation in AAE	• Racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE (part 1) • AAE and education in the United States • The Oakland, California Ebonics controversy of 1996	• Activity 8.1 (Listening): *Do the Right Thing* (1989 film directed by Spike Lee, used to illustrate the variety of AAE spoken in New York City as well as racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE) • Activity 8.2 (Reading): "Language, discourse and power: outing schools" (chapter 6 in *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture*) • Activity 8.3 (Listening): *Do You Speak American?* segment on the use of AAE in the classroom • Activity 8.4 (Reading): *Original Oakland Resolution on Ebonics* and *Amended Resolution* (original text of resolutions of the Oakland, California School Board of December 18, 1996) • Activity 8.5 (Reading): "Black English Is Not a Second Language, Jackson Says" (*New York Times* article of December 23, 1996) • Activity 8.6 (Exercise): Vowel mergers in AAE • **Week 8 Assignment:** *Identifying the vowel features of AAE.* Instructions to students: Research, identify,

				present and explain examples of five different vowel features of AAE that you have learned about this week. Of the five features you have identified, which single feature do you believe poses the greatest challenge to your ability to understand spoken AAE? Be sure to explain why.
9	**41-45**	• Final consonant sounds • Consonant cluster reduction • Aphaeresis in specific words • Realization of final /ŋ/ as [n] • Word-final devoicing • Metathesized forms of final /sk/ and /sp/ • Word-initial *thr* before back vowels	• Racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE (part 2) • AAE in music • Hip-hop music and culture (part 1) • Discrimination against speakers of AAE	• Activity 9.1 (Reading): *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction* (chapter 4: "Phonology of AAE") • Activity 9.2 (Exercise): Final consonant sounds in AAE • Activity 9.3 (Reading): "Aks yourself" • Activity 9.4 (Listening): *AAE: The Language of Hip-Hop* (various examples of AAE as the vehicle of hip-hop music, from the 1980s to the present) • Activity 9.5 (Reading): "Urban youth language: black by popular demand" (chapter 5 in *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture*) • Activity 9.6 (Reading): "Latinos in Hip Hop to Reggaeton" (article in *Latin Beat Magazine*) • Activity 9.7 (Reading): "How Much Does It Cost You in Wages if You 'Sound Black?'" (*Freakonomics* article of July 7, 2008) • **Week 9 Assignment: *Recognizing racial and ethnic diversity among speakers of AAE***. Instructions to students: Research, identify and describe speakers of AAE of three different racial or ethnic backgrounds. What have you learned this week about the complex relationships among race, ethnicity, identity and AAE?
10	**46-50**	• Sound patterns and *th*	• Hip-hop music and	• Activity 10.1 (Listening):

- Syllable-final and word-final realization/loss of /r/

- Liquid vocalization (realization of syllable-final and word-final /l/ as [w])

- Loss of word-final fricatives /s/, /z/, and /v/

- Word-initial /spr/, /str/, and /skr/

culture (part 2)

- Written AAE

- Prestige and covert prestige in the SAE and AAE speech communities

- Stigmatized phonological features of AAE within the AAE speech community

Akeelah and the Bee (movie used to illustrate socially-contextualized differences in the pronunciation of AAE)

- Activity 10.2 (Listening): *Variation in the pronunciation of final /r/ among speakers of AAE* (examples of variation in the realization of syllable-final and word-final /r/ among speakers of AAE)

- Activity 10.3 (Listening and reading): *Hot in Herre* by Nelly

- Activity 10.4: Exploration of *XXL Magazine* website (a popular magazine of hip-hop music and culture www.xxlmag.com)

- Activity 10.5 (Listening and reading): *Stunt 101* by G-Unit

- *Miami Herald* video of interview with two adolescent speakers of AAE, used for the objective assessment tool (post-test)

- **Week 10 Assignment: "***Hot in Herre.***"** Instructions to students: Find, listen to and describe ten examples of the pronunciation or deletion of final *r* in different hip-hop songs. How do you think this phonological trait is related to the concepts of prestige and covert prestige in the AAE speech community that you have learned about this week? (Note: The title of this week's assignment is taken from a well-known song by recording artist Nelly that reached the top spot on the *Billboard* Hot 100 singles chart in 2001.)

- **Major Presentation III:** *The Sounds of AAE*

Course Syllabus and Schedule

The course syllabus and schedule are provided below in the format used in the instructional context where this course will take place.

Course:	**Understanding African-American English (AAE)**
Program:	General Purpose Program Elective **Language:** English
Level:	Advanced **Length:** 1 Academic Quarter (10 weeks)
Schedule:	Monday – Friday (1:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.)
Location:	Downtown Miami campus (fourth floor)
Instructor:	
Prerequisites:	In order to enroll in this course, students must have successfully completed (earned a passing grade) in APP/GPP English 3B or GPIP English Level 3, Part 2.
Materials:	All required course materials will be provided by your instructor.

Course Description

Understanding African-American English (AAE) is a General Purpose Program Elective for students who wish to learn about and understand African-American English (AAE), an important dialect of English spoken in the United States. This course will provide you with the necessary tools to understand AAE in its spoken and written forms. During this course, you will learn about the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation of AAE. You will also learn about the speakers and history of AAE, where and how AAE is used, attitudes and beliefs about AAE, and other social and cultural issues related to this dialect of English.

Learner Outcomes

After completing **Understanding African-American English (AAE)**, students will be able to:

1. Identify, talk and write about the speakers of AAE, where and how AAE is used, common attitudes and beliefs about AAE, theories on the origin and development of AAE, the role that AAE has played in employment and education in the United States, and how AAE has been characterized and depicted in the media (including film, television, music and written mass media). Upon your successful completion of the course, you will be able to answer the following questions:
   - What are Standard American English (SAE) and African-American English (AAE)?
   - Who are the speakers of AAE? In what ways are they similar and in what ways are they different?
   - How, why, when and where have African-Americans been oppressed and experienced inequality in the United States? Why and how is this relevant to understanding AAE and its use?
   - Where did AAE originate? Where is AAE currently spoken, and why is it spoken there?
   - What is the relationship between language and racial and ethnic identity among speakers of AAE and SAE?
   - How does AAE vary (exist in different forms) based on location and the speaker's age, gender and sociocultural situation?
   - How have AAE and its speakers been portrayed in movies, television, music, books, newspapers and magazines?
   - What types of beliefs do African-Americans and non-African-Americans hold about AAE and its use?

- What role has AAE played in the development of American culture? How has AAE helped to shape hip-hop music and culture?

2. Identify the lexical features (vocabulary) of AAE and contrast the ways in which meaning is expressed in AAE and Standard American English (SAE), the dialect of English with which you are already familiar. Upon your successful completion of the course, you will be able to answer the following questions:
   - What words exist in AAE that do not exist in SAE, and what do they mean?
   - How does the meaning of words that exist in both SAE and AAE differ in AAE?
   - How are new words added to the lexicon (vocabulary) of AAE?
   - What is slang?
   - How do speakers of AAE label people, money and actions?
   - What words and phrases from AAE have been stereotyped in the SAE speech community?

3. Compare the grammatical structures of AAE and SAE in order to explain the fundamental differences between the grammars of the two varieties. Upon your successful completion of the course, you will be able to answer the following questions:
   - How is verbal meaning expressed in AAE?
   - How does the use of auxiliary verbs differ in AAE and SAE?
   - What is the difference between verb tense and aspect? How are both expressed in AAE and SAE?
   - How are the aspectual markers *be, been* and *done* used in AAE?
   - What is "habitual *be*" and how is it used in AAE?
   - How are the preverbal markers *finna*, *steady* and *come* used in AAE?
   - How are verbs negated in AAE and what is negative concord?
   - How are questions and relative clauses formed in AAE?
   - What is copula deletion?

4. Distinguish between the sound systems of AAE and SAE and gain the ability to accurately identify the most important phonological (pronunciation) features of AAE. Upon your successful completion of the course, you will be able to answer the following questions:
   - How do the sounds of AAE and SAE differ? In what ways are they the same?
   - What are the most important vowel features of AAE?
   - How do stress and intonation differ in AAE and SAE?
   - What final consonant sounds and combinations exist in AAE?
   - How and when are syllable-final and word-final *r* and *l* pronounced in AAE?
   - How is *th* pronounced in AAE?
   - How is word-final *ng* pronounced in AAE?
   - How are *sp*, *st*, and *sk* pronounced at the beginning of words in AAE?
   - How and when are *s, z* and *v* pronounced at the end of words in AAE?

Course Requirements

Weekly assignments: During each week, students will be required to complete and orally present an assignment related to what they have learned during the unit. Some assignments will require students to complete out-of-class research, while others will ask students to review and reflect on one or more aspects of the material covered during the unit and/or to analyze and present data. Students must

prepare their assignments in writing and orally present their work to the rest of the class (oral presentations will take place on Fridays). Oral presentations must last from ten to fifteen minutes, and students must be prepared to answer questions about their work from their classmates and the instructor. The instructor will give students the assigned topic at the beginning of each week.

Major presentations: In addition to the ten weekly assignments, students will complete three independent research projects (one each in weeks 4, 7, and 10), which they will orally present during class at the end of the week. Each presentation will last between twenty and twenty-five minutes, and students must be prepared to answer questions about their work. Each major presentation must include either an audio or visual (textual, pictorial or symbolic) component to support the material presented. The first major presentation, *The Words of AAE*, must address a topic of the student's choice related to the lexicon (vocabulary) of AAE, the ways AAE expresses meaning, or differences in the ways AAE and SAE express meaning. The second major presentation, *The Structure of AAE*, must cover a topic related to the grammar (morphology and/or syntax) of AAE or a point of contrast between the grammar of AAE and SAE. The third and final major presentation, *The Sounds of AAE*, may consider any issue related to the sounds of AAE or differences in the sound systems of AAE and SAE. The focus of each presentation may be primarily linguistic, primarily sociocultural or some combination of the two, according to the student's interests.

Class attendance and participation: Students are expected to attend and participate meaningfully during each scheduled class session.

Evaluation

The instructor will evaluate your progress throughout the course to ensure that you are meeting the course objectives. Additionally, the instructor will provide feedback regarding your performance and progress on all oral and written assignments completed during the course.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- **Weekly assignments** (10): 50% (50 points, 5 points each)
- **Major presentations** (3): 40% (15 points, 5 points each)
- **Class attendance and participation**: 10% (5 points)

Pass (P): 60% - 100%   **Fail (F):** 0% – 59%

Attendance requirement: In accordance with the school's attendance policy, students must attend at least 75% of all scheduled class sessions in order to pass the course. Students who attend fewer than 75% of all scheduled class sessions (not counting excused absences) will automatically fail the course.

Course Materials

The materials used during each week of the course are described in the table below. Where appropriate or available, hyperlinks are included for access to materials available or described on the internet. In accordance with the institution's policy on course materials, all materials will be provided to the students at no charge.

Week/Unit	Course Module	Materials
1	**Introduction to AAE and its speakers**	• *Miami Herald* video of interview with two adolescent speakers of AAE, used for the objective assessment tool (pre-test) • Audio and video clips illustrating Standard American English (SAE) and other major dialects, including New York English, New England English, Pittsburgh English (often referred to as Pittsburghese), varieties of Southern English, Appalachian English, the English of the Upper Midwest (especially areas affected by the Northern Cities Vowel Shift), and Hawaiian English • *Do You Speak American?* segment on African-American English (http://www.pbs.org/speak/about/guide/) • *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction* (Preface and introduction) • *What is Ebonics (African American Vernacular English)?* (Article by linguist John Rickford, published by the Linguistic Society of America on the variety, its history and various names that have been used to refer to it. Available at http://www.lsadc.org/info/pdf_files/Ebonics.pdf)
2	**Introduction to AAE and its speakers**	• Audio and video clips illustrating AAE as spoken in each major region of the United States, with an emphasis on the Southeast (which exhibits the greatest degree of linguistic variation), the urban Upper Midwest, the Northeast Corridor and large cities in California • Audio, video and written examples of African-Americans and non-Africa Americans sharing their views on AAE, including O'Neil, Wayne (1998), "If Ebonics isn't a language, then tell me, what is?", in Perry, Theresa; Delpit, Lisa, *The real Ebonics debate: Power, language, and the education of African-American children*, Boston: Beacon. • *The African American Migration Experience* (website of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture: http://www.inmotionaame.org/home.cfm)
3	**Lexicon and meaning in AAE**	• Audio and video clips of AAE in use in a variety of settings, including radio and television interviews of

		AAE speakers and popular music
		• Audio and video clips of well-known African-Americans (including President Obama) using English in a variety of settings
		• *American English: A Linguistic Introduction* (chapter 1: "Lexicons and Meaning")
4	**Lexicon and meaning in AAE**	• Audio and video clips illustrating the use of AAE in television programs
		• Audio and video clips illustrating the use of AAE in television programs in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and 2010s
		• "Word from the hood: the lexicon of African-American English" (chapter 7 in *African-American English: Structure, history and use*)
		• 1990 *Vibe* magazine article: interview with music artist Black Rob on the term "woah"
5	**The grammar of AAE**	• *NCLLP Films Video on AAE and the African-American Community* (African-Americans discussing the use of AAE in their community and their opinions of and beliefs about AAE. Available at http://www.teachertube.com/viewVideo.php?video_id=56110&title=African_American_English)
		• *We Be Talkin': The Structure and Complexity of African-American English* (Presentation on AAE by an American of non-African ancestry. Available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVvoIveLYFc)
		• "The African-American speech community: Culture, language ideology and social face" (chapter 1 in *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture*)
		• *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction* (chapter 2: "Syntax part 1: verbal markers in AAE")
6	**The grammar of AAE**	• *Stop Talking White!* (An African-American woman's perspective on her speech and the reactions of her peers to the way she talks. Available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0j8disIFWo)
		• *Black People That Talk White – What does talking white mean?* (An African-American man sharing his experiences about how language has played a role in his life and the reactions others have had to the way he speaks. Available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1w4NaMu_5s)
		• Audio and video clips illustrating differences and similarities in the speech of male and female speakers of AAE
		• "When women speak: how and why we enter" (chapter 4 in *Language, Discourse and Power in*

		African American Culture)
7	**The grammar of AAE**	• *Michelle Obama Sounds Off on Race* (ABC News video; original air date: March 20, 2009. Available at http://abcnews.go.com/Video/playerIndex?id=7130594)
		• *The Wire* (television series) episodes illustrating the use of AAE in Baltimore, Maryland as depicted in the media
		• "First Lady Michelle Obama Reflects on Talking 'Like a White Girl'" (companion article to ABC news video. Available at http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Story?id=7130988&page=2#.UAsbEMWa2eY)
		• *Who Dat?* (Wikipedia article about the history and use of this phrase. Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Who_Dat_Nation#Who_Dat_Nation)
		• *Who Dat?* (J. Cole song. Described at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Who_Dat_%28J._Cole_song%29)
		• *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction* (chapter 3: "Syntax part 2: syntactic and morphosyntactic properties of AAE")
		• University of Pennsylvania "Language Log" entry on *finna* and *tryna* (http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/languagelog/archives/002378.html)
8	**The Pronunciation of AAE**	• *Do the Right Thing* (1989 film directed by Spike Lee, used to illustrate the variety of AAE spoken in New York City as well as racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE. Described at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Do_the_Right_Thing)
		• *Original Oakland Resolution on Ebonics* and *Amended Resolution* (original text of resolutions of the Oakland, California School Board of December 18, 1996. Available at http://linguistlist.org/topics/ebonics/ebonics-res1.html and http://linguistlist.org/topics/ebonics/ebonics-res2.html)
		• *Do You Speak American?* segment on the use of AAE in the classroom (Available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xX1-FgkfWo8)
		• "Black English Is Not a Second Language, Jackson Says" (*New York Times* article of December 23, 1996. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/23/us/black-english-is-not-a-second-language-jackson-says.html)
		• "Language, discourse and power: outing schools"

		(chapter 6 in *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture*)
9	**The Pronunciation of AAE**	• *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction* (chapter 4: "Phonology of AAE") • Audio and video clips containing examples of AAE as the vehicle of hip-hop music, from the 1980s to the present • "Urban youth language: black by popular demand" (chapter 5 in *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture*) • "Latinos in Hip Hop to Reggaeton" (*Latin Beat Magazine* article of March 1, 2005) • "Talking black and talking white: A study in variety imitation" (see citation in *References*) • "Aks yourself" (Article published in *Word, The Online Journal of African American English*. Available at http://africanamericanenglish.com/2009/04/27/aks-yourself/) • "How Much Does It Cost You in Wages if You "Sound Black?" (*Freakonomics* article of July 7, 2008. Available at http://www.freakonomics.com/2008/07/07/how-much-does-it-cost-you-in-wages-if-you-sound-black/)
10	**The Pronunciation of AAE**	• *Stunt 101* (song by G-Unit. Described at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stunt_101) • *Hot in Herre* (song by Nelly. Described at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hot_in_herre) • Audio and video clips illustrating variation in the realization of syllable-final and word-final /r/ among speakers of AAE • *Akeelah and the Bee* (2006 film directed by Doug Atchison. Described at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akeelah_and_the_Bee) • *XXL Magazine* website (www.xxlmag.com) • *Miami Herald* video of interview with two adolescent speakers of AAE, used for the objective assessment tool (post-test)

Lesson Plans and Sample Activities

The following lessons plans and sample activities pertain to the course's final three-week module, *The Pronunciation of AAE*, which focuses on the phonology of AAE, how the sound systems of AAE and SAE differ, the role AAE has played in education in the United States, discrimination against speakers of AAE, racial and ethnic diversity among the dialect's speakers, and the instrumental role AAE has played in the development of hip-hop music and culture, among related topics. Although the handouts and activities provided below are not an exhaustive collection of those that would be used during the full three-week module, they do provide a representative sample of the types of activities and materials that would take place and be used during this portion of the course. Except where attribution to an outside source is specifically noted, the content of all sample activities is my original work. Lesson planning takes place primarily at the weekly level, with tentative daily lessons, topics, procedures and activities scheduled.

Lesson Plans 8.1-8.5 (Week 8, class sessions 36-40)
Course Module: *Part 4: The Pronunciation of AAE*

A. Main Goals:
- Present the vowel system of AAE
- Compare and contrast the vowel systems of AAE and SAE
- Present and discuss the following specific features of the vowel system of AAE:
  - monophtongization of /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/
  - lowering of /ɪ/ before /ŋ/
  - lack of "happy tensing"
  - merger of /ɪ/ and /iː/ before liquid consonants
  - merger of /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ before nasal consonants
- Present and discuss stress and intonation in AAE
  - stress patterns involving aspectual markers *been* and *done*
- Compare and contrast stress and intonation in AAE and SAE
  - intonational differences at the phrase and sentence level
  - words in AAE with different stress patterns than in SAE
- Explore the role of AAE in education in the United States
- Present and discuss the Oakland Ebonics controversy of 1996
- Introduce issues of racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE

B. Overview of Daily Lessons:
Day 1:   (1) Introduction to the vowel system of AAE
              (2) Introduction to the role AAE has played in public education in the United States

Day 2: (1) Comparison and contrast of the vowel systems of AAE and SAE
        (2) Presentation and discussion of specific vowel features of AAE
        (3) Continuation of discussion of AAE and education in the United States
        (4) Presentation and discussion of the Oakland Ebonics controversy
Day 3: (1) Continuation of presentation and discussion of specific vowel features of AAE
        (2) Introduction to racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE
Day 4: (1) Presentation and discussion of stress and intonation in AAE
        (2) Comparison and contrast of stress and intonation in AAE and SAE
        (3) Continue discussion of racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE
Day 5: (1) Review material presented in days 1-4
        (2) Student presentations and question/answer sessions for week 8 assignment

C. Materials and Activities

- Activity 8.1: *Do the Right Thing* (viewing and discussion) and companion activity
- Activity 8.2: "Language, discourse and power: outing schools" (reading and discussion)
- Activity 8.3: *Do You Speak American?* segment on the use of AAE in the classroom (viewing and discussion) and companion activity
- Activity 8.4: *Original Oakland Resolution on Ebonics* and *Amended Resolution* (reading and discussion)
- Activity 8.5 "Black English is Not a Second Language, Jackson Says" (reading and discussion) and companion activity
- Activity 8.6: *Vowel Mergers in AAE* (in-class exercise)
- Week 8 Assignment: *Identifying the vowel features of AAE* (Instructions to students: *Research, identify, present and explain examples of ten different vowel features of AAE presented and discussed during this week's lesson*)

Week 8 (class sessions 36-40), Part 4: The Pronunciation of AAE			
Day	**Topic**	**Procedure**	**Activity**
1	1. Introduce the vowel system of AAE	• Ask students what they have already observed about the vowel system of AAE based on the examples of authentic usage they have been exposed to so far during the course. • Present an overview of the vowel system of AAE with authentic examples and instructor modeling. • Watch and discuss the movie *Do the Right Thing*.	○ Movie: *Do the Right Thing* ○ Activity 8.1
	2. Introduce the role AAE has played in public education in the United States	• Ask students about the relationship between AAE and public education in the United States (what types of experiences do they think AAE speakers have had in	

|			
		school). • Ask students if they know anything about how AAE has been addressed or considered by school systems in the United States.	
2	1. Compare and contrast the vowel systems of AAE and SAE	• Ask students what differences in the vowel systems of AAE and SAE they have noticed up to this point in the course. • Present an overview of the most salient differences in the vowel systems of AAE and SAE.	
	2. Present and discuss specific vowel features of AAE	• Present and discuss examples of monophtongization of /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/ (e.g., *my* pronounced as [ma:] and *boil* pronounced as [bʊ:w]). • Present and discuss examples of lowering of /ɪ/ before /ŋ/ (e.g., *thing* pronounced as [θæ:ŋ]).	
	3. Continue discussion of AAE and education in the United States	• Present and discuss the role of AAE and education in the United States (themes: cultural discontinuity hypothesis, lack of access to educational opportunities for AAE speakers, teacher attitudes toward AAE, controversies regarding AAE in the public schools).	o Activity 8.2 o Activity 8.3
	4. Present and discuss the Oakland, California Ebonics controversy of 1996	• Present and discuss the Oakland Ebonics controversy. • Distribute text of original school board resolutions for students to read. • Ask students what they think about what they have read (Do they believe the outcome was fair? Why do they believe this issue caused such great controversy?)	o Activity 8.4 o Activity 8.5
3	1. Continue to present and discuss specific vowel	• Present and discuss examples of lack of "happy tensing"	o Activity 8.6

	features of AAE	(e.g., *money* pronounced as [ˈmʌ-nɪ] and *Randy* as [ˈræ̃:dɪ]). • Present and discuss examples of merger of /ɪ/ and /i:/ before liquid consonants (e.g., *real* pronounced as [rɪ:w] and *feeling* pronounced as [ˈfɪ-lən]). • Present and discuss examples of merger of /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ before nasal consonants (e.g., *pen* pronounced as [pʰɪ:n] and *send* pronounced as [sɪ:n]).	
	2. Introduce the issue of racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE	• Ask students if they think only African-Americans speak AAE (both natively and non-natively). Why or why not? • Present examples of ethnically-diverse speakers of AAE (African-American, Latino, white). • Ask students to think of other examples. • Ask students why they think non-African-Americans would speak AAE (both natively and non-natively). • Present the concept of language identity.	
4	1. Present and discuss stress and intonation in AAE	• Ask students if they have noticed any interesting features of stress and intonation in the examples of AAE they have been exposed to during the course. • Have students explore what they may have noticed. • Present and discuss examples of word-level stress and phrase-level and sentence-level intonation patterns in AAE.	
	2. Compare and contrast stress and intonation in AAE and SAE	• Explain to students that word-level stress is usually similar in AAE and SAE.	

		• Explain to students that intonation patterns at the sentence level often differ in AAE and SAE. • Present and model examples of intonational differences between AAE and SAE. • Present, model and discuss stress patterns involving aspectual markers *been* and *done*. • Present, model and discuss examples of words in AAE that have a different stress pattern than in SAE (e.g., *police*, *Detroit*, *hotel*, *July*).	
	3. Continue discussion of racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE	• Have students discuss and react to what they have learned this week about racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE.	
5	1. Review material presented in days 1-4	• Review main concepts and material presented in days 1-4. • Ask students if they have any questions or comments they would like to share about what they have learned this week	
	2. Have students present and discuss their week 8 assignments	• Each student presents his or her completed week 8 assignment. • Conduct a brief question and answer session after each presentation.	o Week 8 Assignment

Activity 8.1: Do the Right Thing

During this activity, you will work in pairs to discuss the following questions about the movie "Do the Right Thing." After you have answered the questions, you will have the chance to present your answers to the rest of the class for further discussion and review.

1. Did you find certain characters in the movie easier to understand than others? Why do you think this is the case?

2. What did you notice about the ethnic and racial diversity of the characters who speak AAE?

3. Were you surprised to see persons of Latino (Hispanic) ancestry speaking AAE in the movie? Why or why not?

4. One of the main characters in the movie is named *Mister Señor Love Daddy*. What significance do you believe the presence of the word *Señor* (which means "mister" in Spanish) in this name has?

5. The character who was constantly trying to talk to *Mother Sister* was known as *Da Mayor*. What feature of AAE that you have already encountered during the course is illustrated in this name?

6. One of the characters in the movie is named *Buggin' Out*. Based on what you now know about AAE and what you heard and saw in the movie, what do you think this name means?

7. When this movie was originally released in 1989, many reviewers protested the movie because they believed that it would cause black audience members to riot. However, no such riots ever occurred. What might this suggest about the reviewers? What, if anything, does it suggest about race relations in the United States at the time?

8. During the mob scene, the Korean store owner named Sonny shouted out to the crowd, "I no White! I Black! You, me, same! We same!" This caused the mob to spare his store. What was your reaction to this? In what ways do you think Sonny was "the same" as the members of the mob?
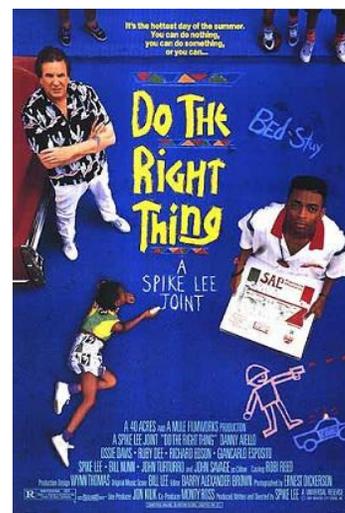
Activity 8.3: "Do You Speak American?"

Based on the video you just watched, answer the following questions.

1. What did you notice about the racial and ethnic diversity of the students in Mr. Russell's fifth grade class?

2. About what percentage of the students in Mr. Russell's class appeared to be African-American?

3. What did Mr. Russell mean when he asked Marisol "how do you code-switch this into mainstream American English?"

4. In the example sentence "He funny," what grammatical feature that you learned about a few weeks ago was being illustrated?

5. How would you code-switch the sentence in (4) into Standard American English?

6. When Mr. Russell asked the class to analyze the sentence "We don't have nothin' to do," a student volunteered the following answer: "We don't having nothing to do," emphasizing the pronunciation of the final sound of the word *nothing*. However, Mr. Russell told the student that this was not a correct translation into mainstream American English. What feature of AAE was the student focusing on when giving his answer?

7. Why do you think the student noticed or focused on this feature instead of the feature of negative concord, which you learned about in week 6?

8. What might this tell you about the relationship between the sounds of AAE, the grammar of AAE, and the features that native speakers of AAE are most likely to notice?

9. The final AAE sentence that Mr. Russell showed the class was "Last night, we bake cookies." What linguistic feature of AAE does this sentence illustrate?

10. Do you think that this feature is part of the grammatical system of AAE or the sound system of AAE (or both)? Provide a rationale for your answer.

Activity 8.5: "Black English Is Not a Second Language, Jackson Says"

Black English Is Not a Second Language, Jackson Says   The New York Times
By NEIL A. LEWIS
Published: December 23, 1996

The Rev. Jesse Jackson said today that the school board in Oakland, Calif., was both foolish and insulting to black students throughout the nation when it declared that many of its black students speak a language distinct from traditional English.

Speaking on the NBC News program "Meet the Press," Mr. Jackson waded into the explosive racial and educational issue thrust into prominence this week by the Oakland decision. "I understand the attempt to reach out to these children, but this is an unacceptable surrender, borderlining on disgrace," he said. "It's teaching down to our children."

Mr. Jackson's comments were seconded by the other guests, William J. Bennett, a former Secretary of Education and commentator on contemporary culture, Mario M. Cuomo, the former New York governor, and Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, Democrat of Connecticut.

On Wednesday, the Oakland school board declared that many of its 28,000 black students, who make up a little more than half the district's pupils, did not speak standard English. Rather, they said, the students conversed in a distinctive language spoken by American blacks called Ebonics, a name taken from the words ebony and phonics.

In making the decision, the board effectively equated students speaking Ebonics with students whose first language is Chinese or Spanish.

Mr. Jackson said the Oakland school board had become a national laughing stock, and he urged its members to reverse their decision, which he said was a misguided attempt to win extra Federal money.

He said that black youths in Oakland and around the nation need to be challenged to speak proper English or else they will not "get in the University of California."

"They cannot get a job at NBC or CBS or ABC unless they can master this language," Mr. Jackson said, "and I'll tell you they can master it if they are challenged to do so."

Carolyn M. Getridge, Oakland's school superintendent, has said the board's resolution was an effort to acknowledge that, "African-Americans have a different language system and we want to recognize that and build on that."

Mr. Jackson compared the move to lowering the height of basketball rims. "We demand that the goals be 10 feet high and the rims have the same circumference," he said. "We're not going to teach basketball down and don't teach English and science and literature down."

Questions for discussion and review:

1. Mr. Jackson stated that while he understood the Oakland, California school board's actions were intended to reach out to children, they were in fact "borderlining on disgrace." Do you agree or disagree with his opinion? Why or why not?

2. Based on what you now know about AAE, do you believe that Mr. Jackson was correct in his characterization of the school board's actions as declaring that AAE is a "distinct language from traditional English"? Provide evidence and/or examples to support your answer. If Mr. Jackson had instead characterized the school board's action has declaring that AAE is a "distinct dialect" instead of a "distinct language," would that cause your answer to change? Why or why not?

3. According to the article, Mr. Jackson believed that the school board "equated students speaking Ebonics [AAE] with students whose first language is Chinese or Spanish." Do you believe that this statement is entirely correct, entirely incorrect, or somewhere in between? In what ways do you believe that this statement is correct and/or incorrect?

4. Mr. Jackson said that "black youths in Oakland and around the nation need to be challenged to speak proper English" or else they will be denied educational opportunities. First, do you believe that this is true? Why or why not? Second, what do you believe that Mr. Jackson meant by "proper English"? Do you believe that one type of English is more "proper" than another? Why or why not?

5. Mr. Jackson's statement focused on "black youths" in California and other parts of the country. However, as you have already learned during this course, not all native speakers of AAE are African-American (or black). Do you believe that this fact is relevant to Mr. Jackson's comment? Why or why not?

6. Mr. Jackson essentially said that in order for black youth to get professional jobs, they must master [Standard English]. Do you believe that this is true? Do you believe that there are any people working in professional jobs in the United States who have not mastered Standard English? (Provide some examples, if possible). If so, do you believe that any of them are native speakers of AAE? Why or why not?

Activity 8.6: Vowel mergers in AAE

All languages and dialects change over time. This is equally true for Standard American English (SAE), African-American English (AAE) and all other dialects of English. Because of sound changes that have taken place in the history of AAE but not in SAE, certain vowels that are pronounced as separate sounds in SAE are pronounced the same way in AAE. These changes, which are known as *vowel mergers* (because two vowel sounds have *merged* into one), have occurred in specific environments involving neighboring sounds that by their nature tend to cause changes in the way vowels are pronounced.

The pin-pen merger

One of the most important vowel mergers that has taken place in AAE, known as the *pin-pen merger* because it has caused these two common words to sound alike (they are pronounced as *pin*), affects many other pairs of words like *tin* and *ten*, and *since* and *sense*. In AAE (and in some other dialects of North American English, including the English that is spoken in most of the southern United States, but *not* in Standard American English), the merger of these two vowel sounds has caused many words that are distinct in SAE to sound the same in AAE. It also means that the *e* sound of *let* and *test* cannot occur before certain consonant sounds (specifically, *n*, *m* and *ng*, a class of consonant sounds known as "nasals") at the end of a syllable. In this environment, this vowel is always pronounced like the *i* sound in *pin* (or in some varieties of AAE, as a diphthong, which your teacher will explain and illustrate).

Although the following pairs of words are pronounced distinctly in SAE (this means that they do not sound the same), they are *homophones* in AAE—they are pronounced identically. Try to pronounce each pair, first in SAE and then in AAE.

Ben	been
center	sinner
cents	since
ends	inns
enter	inner
gem	Jim
hem	him
lend	Lynn
many	mini
rents	rinse
meant it	minute
tents	tints

Can you think of any other pairs of words or phrases like these that are distinct in SAE but sound the same in AAE?

The feel-fill merger

Another important vowel merger that has taken place in most varieties of AAE is known as the *feel-fill* merger because the *ee* vowel of *feel* has come to be pronounced just like the *i* vowel of *fill*. This means that the "long e" sound of *feel* (as pronounced by speakers of SAE) does not occur before the *l* sound at the end of syllables and words in AAE. Like the *pin-pen* merger, this change has also taken place in some other dialects of English, but not in SAE.

The following pairs of words are pronounced in the same way in SAE, but in AAE they are homophones. How would each pair be pronounced by speakers of SAE and speakers of AAE?

Hint: for all of the words written in white letters, do not forget to think about other features of the pronunciation of AAE that you have learned about or may have noticed.

meal	mill
seal	sill
teal	till
eel	ill
feeling	filling
deal	dill
kneel	nil
peel	pill
heal	hill

Spend a moment to think about how each of the words or phrases in the lists above would be pronounced in AAE. Now, how do you think each of the following words be pronounced by speakers of AAE?

reveal
zeal
congeal
unseal
really
ceiling
repealed
for real
wheel

Lesson Plans 9.1-9.5 (Week 9, class sessions 41-45)
Course Module: *Part 4: The Pronunciation of AAE*

A. Main Goals:
- Present an overview of the consonant system of AAE
- Compare and contrast the consonant systems of AAE and SAE
- Present and discuss the following specific features of the consonant system of AAE:
    - final consonant sounds that can exist in AAE
    - consonant cluster reduction
    - realization of final /ŋ/ as [n]
    - word-final devoicing
    - metathesis of final /sk/ and /sp/
    - word-initial *thr* (/θr/ as /θ/) before back vowels
- Present and discuss aphaeresis in specific words (e.g., *supposed* as *pose*)
- Continue presenting and discussing issues of racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE
- Present and discuss the role of AAE in music (20th century and contemporary)
- Introduce the relationship between AAE and hip-hop music and culture
- Present and discuss historical and continuing discrimination against speakers of AAE

B. Overview of Daily Lessons:
Day 1:   (1) Introduction to the consonant system of AAE
         (2) Comparison and contrast of the consonant systems of AAE and SAE
         (3) Continuation of discussion of racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE that began the prior week
Day 2:   (1) Presentation and discussion of specific consonant features of AAE
         (2) Presentation and discussion of aphaeresis in specific words in AAE
Day 3:   (1) Continuation of presentation and discussion of specific consonant features of AAE
         (2) Presentation and discussion of the role of AAE in music (20th century and contemporary)
         (3) Introduction to the relationship between AAE and hip-hop music and culture
Day 4:   (1) Continuation of presentation and discussion of specific consonant features of AAE
         (2) Continuation of discussion of the relationship between AAE and hip-hop music and culture
         (3) Presentation and discussion of historical and continuing discrimination against speakers of AAE
Day 5:   (1) Review material presented in days 1-4
         (2) Student presentations and question/answer sessions for week 9 assignment

C. Materials and Activities
- Activity 9.1: *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction (*chapter 4: "Phonology of AAE") (reading and discussion)
- Activity 9.2: *Final Consonant Sounds in AAE* (in-class exercise)
- Activity 9.3: "Aks yourself" (reading and discussion) and companion activity

- Activity 9.4: *AAE: The Language of Hip-Hop* (various authentic audio and video examples of AAE as the vehicle of hip-hop music, from the 1980s to the present)
- Activity 9.5 "Urban youth language: black by popular demand" (reading and discussion)
- Activity 9.6 (Reading): "Latinos in Hip Hop to Reggaeton" (article in Latin Beat Magazine) (reading and discussion)
- Activity 9.7: "How Much Does It Cost You in Wages if You 'Sound Black?'" (*Freakonomics* article of July 7, 2008) (reading and discussion) and companion activity
- Week 9 Assignment: *Recognizing racial and ethnic diversity among speakers of AAE* (Instructions to students: *Identify and describe speakers of AAE of three different racial or ethnic backgrounds. Then, present your own beliefs about the complex relationships among race, ethnicity, identity and AAE.*)

Week 9 (class sessions 41-45), Part 4: The Pronunciation of AAE			
Day	Topic	Procedure	Activity
	1. Introduce the consonant system system of AAE	• Ask students what they have already observed about the consonant system of AAE based on the examples of authentic usage they have been exposed to so far during the course. • Present an overview of the consonant phonemes and distributional patterns of AAE with authentic examples and instructor modeling.	
1	2. Compare and contrast the consonant systems of AAE and SAE	• Ask students what differences they have noticed in the consonants of AAE and SAE (do those differences mainly occur at the beginning of words, the middle of words or the end of words? Why do they think this is the case?). • Ask students if they have noticed any consonant sounds that exist in AAE but not SAE. If so, have them explore and discuss what they have noticed. • Ask students if they have noticed any consonant sounds that exist in SAE but not AAE. If so, have them explore and discussed what they have noticed.	○ Activity 9.1

	3. Continue discussion of racial and ethnic diversity among the speakers of AAE	• Ask students to think about the characters from the movie *Do the Right Thing*, which they watched the prior week. What race or ethnicity were most of the speakers of AAE who were not African-American? (Answer = Latino/Hispanic). Ask students why they believe this was the case (i.e., why were most the speakers of AAE in the movie either African-American or Latino but not other races or ethnicities?). • Ask students whether they think that, proportionally, there are more Latino or white speakers of AAE (Answer = Latino). Why do they think this is the case? • Ask students whether they believe there are any/many native speakers of AAE who are white. (Note: there are many white native speakers of AAE). Why or why not? • Now, ask students whether they believe there are any/many non-native speakers of AAE who are white (Note: there are many non-native white speakers of AAE). Why or why not? • Ask students how they think non-native speakers of AAE may have acquired their proficiency in this dialect. (Answer = in most cases, naturalistically; i.e., through exposure to the dialect and experience using it to communicate).	
2	1. Present and discuss specific consonant features of AAE	• Present and discuss examples of final consonant sounds that exist in AAE.	o Activity 9.2

| | | | • Present and discuss examples of consonant cluster reduction in AAE (e.g., final /sp/, /st/ and /sk/ → [s]; final /ft/ → [f]; final /pt/ → [p]; final /kt/ → [k]; final /ld/ → [l] or [w] if vocalized; final /nd/ → [n]).
• Explain to students that consonant cluster reduction also takes place in SAE, especially in less formal contexts, although not to the same degree as in AAE (have students try to pronounce words like *eighths*, *clothes* and *lengths*; explain that many native English speakers reduce/simplify the final consonant clusters in these and similar words when speaking English in most casual situations).
• Ask students why they think consonant cluster reduction happens at all (in any language or dialect). (Answer = it is a natural/universal linguistic process).
• Ask students what implications consonant cluster reduction has on their ability to understand AAE (e.g., many words that are distinct in SAE are homophones/sound the same in AAE). Ask students how they can determine the meaning of such homophones (Answer = context). | |

	2. Present and discuss aphaeresis in certain words in AAE	• Present examples of aphaeresis in certain words in AAE (e.g., *about* → *bout*, *supposed* → *pose*) and ask students what they notice about this pronunciation. • Explain that this process is not predictable and that students must individually learn each word in which this process has occurred.	
3	1. Continue to present and discuss specific consonant features of AAE	• Present and discuss examples of realization of final /ŋ/ as [n] (e.g., *running* pronounced as [ˈrʌ-nən] and *spending* pronounced as [ˈspɪ-nən]). • Explain that the realization of final /ŋ/ as [n] takes place in other varieties of English, including lower registers of SAE (i.e., informal or "everyday" spoken English). • Present and discuss examples of word-final devoicing (e.g., *David* pronounced as [ˈde-vət] and *cab* pronounced as [kʰæp]). • Present and discuss examples of metathesis of final /sk/ and /sp/ (e.g., *ask* pronounced as [æks] and *grasp* pronounced as [græps]). • Use Activity 9.3 to help students understand why speakers of AAE pronounce the word *ask* as [æks].	○ Activity 9.3
	2. Introduce the role of AAE in American music in the 20th and 21st centuries	• Ask students if they know anything about the role AAE has played in American music in the 20th and 21st centuries. • Ask students if they have heard of musical genres such as jazz and rhythm and blues (R&B). • Explain to students that AAE has played a foundational role	

		in the development of these musical genres.	
	3. Introduce the relationship between AAE and hip-hop music and culture	• Ask students if they know what hip-hop is (Answer = a musical and cultural genre or movement). • Ask students if they are aware of the role AAE has played in the development of hip-hop (Answer = AAE is the traditional language of hip-hop). • Ask students what role hip-hop has played in American culture since the 1980s. • Present an overview of the history of hip-hop music and culture.	o Activity 9.4 o Activity 9.5
4	1. Continue to present and discuss specific consonant features of AAE	• Present and discuss examples of word-initial *thr* (/θr/ as /θ/) before back vowels (e.g., *through/threw* pronounced as [θuw] and *throw* pronounced as [θow]).	
	2. Continue to discuss the relationship between AAE and hip-hop music and culture	• Ask students if they know anything about the influence that hip-hop music and culture have had on the cultures of countries/societies outside of the United States. • Ask students if they have heard of a musical form known as *reggaeton* (note: reggaeton is a type of Puerto Rican popular music that combines reggae rhythms with hip-hop influences and includes rapping in Spanish). • Explain the influence that AAE has had on reggaeton. • Ask students what this influence says about the cultural importance and value of AAE as a form of communication.	o Activity 9.6
	3. Present and discuss the	• Ask students if they believe	o Activity 9.7

	historical and continuing discrimination against speakers of AAE	speakers of AAE have experienced discrimination due to their speech. Does this discrimination still exist? Why or why not? • Have students explore this discrimination and its implications (themes: racial/ethnic discrimination vs. linguistic discrimination—is there or can there be a difference?; the relationships among racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity; discrimination against speakers of AAE in housing and employment).	
5	1. Review material presented in days 1-4	• Review main concepts and material presented in days 1-4. • Ask students if they have any questions or comments they would like to share about what they have learned this week.	
	2. Have students present and discuss their week 9 assignments	• Each student presents his or her completed week 9 assignment. • Conduct a brief question and answer session after each presentation.	o Week 9 Assignment

Activity 9.2: Final consonant sounds in AAE

Final consonant sounds in AAE

Part 1: *Recognizing words that sound the same*

In each set of three words below, speakers of AAE usually pronounce two of the words the same way and one word differently, even though all three words have a distinct pronunciation in SAE. Circle the word that is usually pronounced differently and explain how it and the other two words are pronounced in AAE. *Note*: All of the words are written in Standard English orthography.

Teacher's edition only: the correct answers are shaded in gray.

1	mask	max	mass
2	test	text	Tess
3	Ann	and	ant
4	bolt	bold	bowl
5	rushed	Russ	rush
6	toll	told	tolls
7	mix	miss	mist
8	packs	pass	passed
9	ban	band	bank
10	cold	colt	coal

Part 2: *Recognizing words that rhyme*

In each set of three words below, two of the words rhyme (end in the same vowel and consonant sounds) in AAE. Circle the two words that rhyme in each set and explain how they and the other word are pronounced in AAE. *Note*: All of the words are written in Standard English orthography.

1	post	close	pokes
2	wasp	tops	lost
3	friend	men	tint
4	ask	act	back
5	spend	win	lint
6	makes	haste	race
7	speck	inspect	pecks
8	best	Lex	desk
9	roll	sold	bolt
10	face	raised	phase

Part 3: *Recognizing plural forms*

In each set of words below, two of the words are usually pronounced the same way by speakers of AAE. Circle the pair of words in each set that sound the same. Explain why the words you have selected in each pair sound the same.

1	mists	miss	misses
2	Texas	Tess's	tests
3	masks	masses	Max's
4	pastes	paces (noun)	paste
5	writs	wrists	risks

Part 4: *Pronunciation practice*

Practice pronouncing the following words and phrases as a speaker of AAE would. After you have completed this exercise, think about the words and phrases you just practiced. Were some more difficult than others? Why or why not?

1	toast
2	blind
3	hosts
4	wind
5	posting up
6	fold
7	that's a fact
8	owned
9	casts
10	kiosk

Activity 9.3: Aks yourself

The following article was published in the online journal *Word, The Online Journal on African American English* on April 27, 2009.

Aks yourself

Have you ever had anyone 'aks' you a question? Have you ever 'aksed' anybody for something? Do you think it's annoying or 'bad English' when you hear the word pronounced like that?

Pronouncing 'ask' as 'aks,' (like axe) is a linguistic phenomenon known as **metathesis**, or the reversal in order of two adjacent letters. It's not wrong, and it doesn't mean somebody is stupid, either. It's just another way of pronouncing a word.

The (now) non-standard pronunciation of 'aks' is a recognizable feature of African American English, but its roots can be traced back throughout the evolution of the English language.

Similarly, the history of African American English can be traced back to a multitude of sources, both English and African in origin. Differences in the way people talk aren't necessarily wrong, just *different*, and oftentimes there's a a concrete historical precedent for it.

In fact, the pronunciation of the word 'ask' has a long and fascinating history in the English language. The two pronunciations were at one time both spoken in different dialects of English 1000 years ago in England. Consider an example from the Medieval text of Chaucer's 'The Knight's Tale,' when the knight Palemon says: "Yow loveris, **axe** I now this questioun." It just happened that due to political circumstances, the people who spoke the dialect of English with the 'ask' pronunciation became the more dominant social group. And thus, 'ask' prevails as the standard today. So, lovers of language, I axe you to reconsider your thoughts and attitudes on the usage of this non-standard pronunciation of 'ask.' [*End of article*]
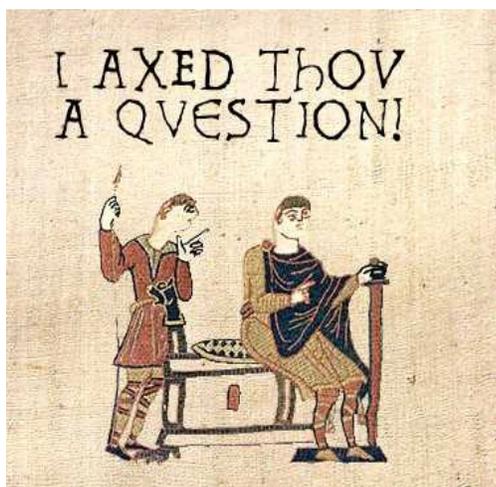
Aks: Points for reflection and discussion

The pronunciation of the word *ask* as *aks* (or *axe*) in AAE is one of the most **stereotyped** and **stigmatized** (well-known and disapproved of) features of AAE among speakers of other dialects of North American English, including SAE.

Do you believe that most speakers of SAE are aware of the reason why speakers of AAE pronounce the word this way? Do you think they would be surprised to learn that this is one of the original pronunciations of the word, going back over one thousand years? Why or why not?

Activity 9.7: How Much Does It Cost You in Wages if You "Sound Black?"

How Much Does It Cost You in Wages if You "Sound Black?"

Freakonomics
July 7, 2008

Fascinating new research by my University of Chicago colleague, Jeffrey Grogger, compares the wages of people who "sound black" when they talk to those who do not.

His main finding: blacks who "sound black" earn salaries that are 10 percent lower than blacks who do not "sound black," even after controlling for measures of intelligence, experience in the work force, and other factors that influence how much people earn. (For what it is worth, whites who "sound black" earn 6 percent lower than other whites.)

How does Grogger know who "sounds black?" As part of a large longitudinal study called the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, follow-up validation interviews were conducted over the phone and recorded.

Grogger was able to take these phone interviews, purge them of any identifying information, and then ask people to try to identify the voices as to whether the speaker was black or white. The listeners were pretty good at distinguishing race through voices: 98 percent of the time they got the gender of the speaker right, 84 percent of white speakers were correctly identified as white, and 77 percent of black speakers were correctly identified as black.

Grogger asked multiple listeners to rate each voice and assigned the voice either to a distinctly white or black category (if the listeners all tended to agree on the race), or an indistinct category if there was disagreement.

Then he put this measure of whether a voice sounded black into a regression (the standard statistical tool that economists use for estimating things), and came up with the finding that blacks who "sound black" earn almost 10 percent less, even after taking into account other factors that could influence earnings. One piece of interesting good news is that blacks who do not "sound black" earn essentially the same as whites.

(It turns out you don't want to sound southern, either. Although pretty imprecisely estimated, it is almost as bad for your wages to sound southern as it is to sound black, even controlling for whether you live in the south.)

So what does this all mean?

The first question to ask is whether the impact of speech on wages is a causal one. It is possible that there are many other characteristics that differ between blacks who do or do not "sound

black" that Grogger cannot control for in his regressions. It does seem likely that the biases at work would make his estimate an upper bound. (Although it should also be noted that his estimates are for young people, and the importance of speech may become important with age, in which case his results might underestimate the long-run effects.)

If one believes Grogger's effects are causal, then investing in the ability to not "sound black" looks to have a huge return — roughly of the same magnitude as getting one more year of schooling.

Of course, there is the issue of one's identity. There may be personal costs associated with being black and not sounding black. But these costs would have to be pretty large. (When I have Asian Ph.D. students go on the job market in the United States, I tell them that I think there is rampant discrimination against non-English speakers and encourage them to adopt Americanized first names for the job market. Very few of my students choose to do so — either a testimony to the identity cost of pretending to be someone you aren't, or possibly their lack of faith in my assessment of the amount of discrimination.)

I was talking with one of my colleagues about this study. He thinks it will be a very important and influential one.

My response, "Tru dat."

Questions for discussion and review:

1. According to the article, blacks (African-Americans) who "sound black" earn less money on average than blacks (African-Americans) who do not "sound black." Based on what you have learned in this course, what do you think it means to "sound black"?

2. Now, think about the two videos you watched in unit 6, in which two African-Americans shared their experiences of being told that they "sound white." Based on what you now know, what do you think it means to "sound white"?

3. Why do you think African-Americans who "sound black" earn less money that those who do not?

4. Interestingly, the research cited in the article also demonstrated that white people who "sound black" earn less money than white people who do not "sound black." Does this fact surprise you? Why or why not?

5. During the research conducted for this study, the participants were able to correctly guess the race (black or white) of the speaker between 77% and 84% of the time. What do you think this means about the importance of a person's dialect and race in the United States?

6. One of the researchers cited in the article believes that African-Americans who have the ability to not "sound black" are able to earn higher incomes than African-Americans who either do not have this ability or choose not to use it. How do you think that African-Americans who are able to not "sound black" gained this ability?

7. Do you think that different African-Americans may have the ability to not "sound black" for different reasons? If so, what are some of those reasons?

8. Why do you believe that an African-American who has the ability to not "sound black" might choose to not use that ability?

9. Why do you believe that a white American who has the ability to not "sound black" might choose to "sound black," even though it might cause him or her to earn a lower income?

10. According to the article, research has shown that it is "almost as bad for your wages to sound southern as it is to sound black." What do you think this implies about the relative importance of race and the way a person speaks in the United States?

11. The author ended the article with the phrase *Tru dat*. What do you think this means? Why do you think the author placed this phrase in quotation marks? Why do you think the author spelled the phrase this way?

Lesson Plans 10.1-10.5 (Week 10, class sessions 46-50)
Course Module: *Part 4: The Pronunciation of AAE*

A. Main Goals:
- Present and discuss the following specific features of the consonant system of AAE:
  - sound patterns and *th* (realization of /ð/ as [d] and [v]; realization of /θ/ as [f])
  - variation and deletion of /r/ in syllable-final and word-final position
  - liquid vocalization (realization of /l/ as glide [w] in syllable-final and word-final position)
  - loss of highly sonorant word-final fricatives (/s/, /z/, and /v/) and variation of this phonological phenomenon
  - word-initial /spr/, /str/, and /skr/
- Continue discussion of hip-hop music and culture (part 2)
- Introduce written forms of AAE
- Introduce and discuss the concepts of prestige and covert prestige in the SAE and AAE speech communities
- Present and discuss stigmatized phonological features of AAE within the AAE speech community
  - realization of initial /str/ as [skr] or [ʃkr]
- Measure student achievement of course goals with post-test

B. Overview of Daily Lessons:
Day 1: (1) Presentation and discussion of specific consonant features of AAE
        (2) Continuation of discussion of hip-hop music and culture
Day 2: (1) Continuation of presentation and discussion of specific consonant features of AAE
        (2) Introduction and discussion of written forms of AAE
Day 3: (1) Continuation of presentation and discussion of specific consonant features of AAE
        (2) Introduction and discussion of prestige and covert prestige
        (3) Presentation and discussion of stigmatized phonological features of AAE
Day 4: (1) Review material presented in days 1-3
        (2) Student presentations and question/answer sessions for major presentation III
Day 5: (1) Student presentations and question/answer sessions for week 10 assignment
        (2) Administration of post-test

C. Materials and Activities
- Activity 10.1: *Akeelah and the Bee* (viewing and discussion)
- Activity 10.2: *Variation in the pronunciation of final /r/ among speakers of AAE* (audio and audiovisual examples of variation in the realization of syllable-final and word-final /r/ among speakers of AAE) and companion activity/exercise
- Activity 10.3 *Hot in Herre* (song by Nelly: listening and discussion)
- Activity 10.4: *Exploration of XXL Magazine website* (listening, reading and discussion)
- Activity 10.5: *Stunt 101* (song by G-Unit: listening and discussion) and companion activity

- Post-test: *Miami Herald* video of interview with two adolescent speakers of AAE (viewing) and exercise (objective assessment instrument used as a post-test to measure student achievement of course goals)
- Week 10 Assignment: "Hot in Herre" (Instructions to students: *Find, listen to and describe ten examples of variation in the pronunciation of final /r/ in different hip-hop songs. Relate this phonological trait to the concepts of prestige and covert prestige in the AAE speech community that you learned about this week*.)
- Major Presentation III: *The Sounds of AAE* (Instructions to students: *Research, prepare and orally present a twenty to twenty-five minute research project on any issue related to the pronunciation of AAE or differences in the sound systems of AAE and SAE. The focus of your presentation may be primarily linguistic, primarily sociocultural, or some combination of the two, according to what interests you most. Be sure to follow the major presentation guidelines described in the course syllabus*.)

Week 10 (class sessions 46-50), Part 4: The Pronunciation of AAE			
Day	**Topic**	**Procedure**	**Activity**
1	1. Present and discuss specific consonant features of AAE	• Watch and discuss the movie *Akeelah and the Bee* (before playing the movie, ask students to pay particular attention to how the same characters speak in different ways depending on the context, location, their interlocutors, etc.). • Present, model and discuss examples of sound patterns and *th* (realization of /ð/ as [d] in word-initial position in words like *this* and *then* and [v] in intervocalic and word-final position in words like *mother* and *breathe*; realization of /θ/ as [f] in syllable-final and word-final position in words like *math* and *teeth*). • Explain to students that some of these phenomena, especially the realization of /ð/ as [v], may be variable in the speech of individuals. Let students know that this sound pattern is very sensitive to context (speakers of AAE tend to be aware of it and it is	○ Activity 10:1 (Movie: *Akeelah and the Bee*)

	therefore subject to accommodation to the standard and diglossic situations). • Ask students why they think AAE speakers might be more aware of this difference between AAE and SAE than certain others (one reason might be that it is a particularly stereotyped feature of AAE among members of the SAE speech community).	
2. Continue discussion of hip-hop music and culture	• Ask students which linguistic features of AAE they have noticed in hip-hop music. Have students explore and these linguistic features. Which of these features have students learned about so far during the course? Why do students believe they have noticed these particular features? • Ask students if they generally find hip-hop music more or less difficult to understand than spoken AAE. If so, why? (Note: most students will find music more difficult to understand than spoken language in general, for all dialects of English and for all foreign languages. Typical reasons include fast speaking/singing rates, atypical language use for stylistic purposes and the increased use of slang with which students are unfamiliar). • Remind students that some of the terms they hear in hip-hop music may not be appropriate for use when speaking	

		English. Emphasize that before using any new vocabulary word, students should be certain that the word is appropriate for use in professional/scholastic settings and is not considered obscene. • Have students brainstorm ways of finding out whether new vocabulary words are "safe" (some examples include asking their teacher, looking up the word in the dictionary and using the internet to research the term).	
2	1. Continue presentation and discussion of specific consonant features of AAE	• Present and discuss examples of variation and deletion of /r/ in syllable-final and word-final position (e.g., *before* pronounced as [bə-ˈfo:] and *here* as [hɪ:]). • Ask students how they can distinguish words like *more* and *mow*, which are pronounced identically by many speakers of AAE (Answer = context). • Ask students why they think social and regional variety exists in how native speakers of AAE pronounced syllable-final and word-final /r/ (have students explore various possibilities: accommodation to the standard, language change, diglossia, etc.). • Present and discuss examples of liquid vocalization: realization of /l/ as glide [w] in syllable-final and word-final position (e.g., *sold* pronounced as [so:w] and *wall* pronounced as [wa:w]). *If there are any Portuguese-speaking students in the class, ask students if this process seems familiar to them*	○ Activity 10.2 ○ Activity 10.3

		(Note: a similar liquid vocalization process takes place in many dialects of Portuguese).	
	2. Introduce and discuss written forms of AAE	• Ask students to brainstorm contexts in which AAE might be written (examples include poetry, prose, informal writing such as text messaging, e-mail, social networking and other websites, including one they will explore tomorrow). • Ask students if they think there is a "correct" way to write AAE. Why or why not? • Explain that, unlike SAE, there is no "correct" AAE orthography, although there are tendencies in how AAE speakers tend to represent their speech in writing. • Have students explore why they think there is no "correct" way to write AAE. Might there be any "incorrect" ways to write AAE? (Answer = probably not, although some renderings would seem odd to speakers). Ask students why they think this is so.	o Activity 10.4
3	1. Continue to present and discuss specific consonant features of AAE	• Present, model and discuss examples of loss of highly-sonorant fricatives /s/, /z/ and /v/ in word-final position (e.g., *these* pronounced as [dii:] and *believe* pronounced as [bə-ˈlii:]). • Explain to students that this phenomenon is most common among younger speakers, especially males, who may even delete less sonorant consonants (ask students to recall the pre-test video in which the young speaker did not pronounce the final /t/ of	o Activity 10.5

	shoot). Ask students why they think this phenomenon might be more common among younger males than other speakers. • Present, model and discuss examples of word initial *spr*, *str* and *skr* (which may be pronounced with initial palatal [ʃ] or apical or retroflex [ʂ] instead of [s]). Explain to students that this phenomenon is also most common among younger speakers (especially males) and that it has also been observed among younger male speakers of SAE and other North American English dialects. Finally, explain to students that this is actually a natural process, conditioned by the retroflexion of the *r* sound in the sequence.	
2. Introduce and discuss the concepts of prestige and covert prestige in the AAE and SAE speech communities	• Ask students which dialect of English (AAE or SAE) is more "prestigious" within American society at large. Why do they think this is this the case? (Answer = the historical social relationship between speakers of SAE and AAE) • Explain to students that in multidialectal societies, the prestige dialect (in our case, SAE) has more linguistic influence on other dialects than the other way around. Ask students why they think this is so. • Have students explore their beliefs about prestige dialect(s) in their native languages and ask them to relate that understanding to the relationship between AAE and	

	SAE. • Explain to students what covert prestige is and have them explore the concept as it relates to AAE and SAE. • Ask students to recall prior discussions about "talking black" and "talking white." Ask them why speakers of AAE who have the ability to "sound white" (i.e., use SAE) still choose to "sound black" (i.e., use AAE) (Answer = covert prestige). • Recalling the *Freakonomics* article from last week (Activity 9.7), ask students why white speakers would choose to "sound black" (i.e., use AAE) even if they also speak SAE (Answer = covert prestige).	
3. Present and discuss stigmatized phonological features of AAE	• Ask students if they know what is meant by "stigmatized" (if no one knows, review Activity 9.3, in which the term was defined). • Ask students if they believe AAE is a stigmatized dialect of English. Why or why not? • Explain that within the AAE speech community, certain linguistic features (including specific vocabulary and pronunciations) are stigmatized (make sure students understand that this refers to judgments *within* the AAE speech community). • Present and discuss examples of realization of word-initial *str* as [skr] or [ʃkr] (e.g., *straight* pronounced as [skreit] and *strip* pronounced as [skrɪp]). • As students why such a feature	o Activity 9.7 (as review)

		(seemingly no more different from SAE than any other they have learned about) might be stigmatized in the AAE speech community (Answer = the relative social position within the community of those who use this phonological feature). • Ask students if they see any parallels between this relationship *within* the AAE speech community and the broader relationship between AAE and SAE. • Ask students why AAE speakers might use this phonological feature, even if they know that it will bring about disapproval from others within the community (try to have students relate this concept with the concepts brought up in Activity 9.7 and covert prestige, presented earlier in the class).	
4	1. Review material presented in days 1-3	• Review main concepts and material presented in days 1-3. • Ask students if they have any questions about what they have learned this week.	
	2. Have students present and discuss their major presentations	• Each student presents his or her completed Major Presentation III. • Conduct brief question and answer session after each presentation.	o Major Presentation III
5	1. Have students present and discuss their week 10 assignments	• Each student presents his or her completed week 10 assignment. • Conduct brief question and answer session after each presentation.	o Week 10 Assignment
	2. Administer course post-test	• Play video. • Administer post-test (objective assessment tool).	o Video o Post-test

Activity 10.2: Variation in the pronunciation of final /r/

Many speakers of AAE, especially those who live in the South, do not strongly pronounce the *r* sound at the ends of syllables and especially at the ends of words, unless the next syllable or word starts with a vowel sound. This is also true of speakers of other English dialects in the United States (including those who live in parts of the Northeast and South), as well as most native English speakers in England and Australia. Many speakers of AAE do not pronounce the *r* sound at all when it is the last sound of a syllable or word. In some parts of the United States such as Arkansas and Missouri, speakers of AAE may pronounce the *r* sound in this environment but with neutralization of the preceding vowel (neutralized vowels in English sound like the ***a*** of the words ***a****bout* and ***a****go* or the ***io*** of words like *nat**io**n* and *stat**io**n*), while in others, including some parts of California, speakers of AAE may pronounce the final *r* more or less like speakers of SAE do.

When speakers of AAE do not pronounce the final *r* sound, the preceding vowel (that is, the one that comes right before the *r*) usually becomes longer if the syllable is stressed, as in the phrase *fa sho* ("for sure" in SAE). In the phrase *fa sho*, the word *sho* may be pronounced exactly like the word *show*. Similarly, in the phrase *close da do'* ("close the door" in SAE), the word *do'* may be pronounced like the words *dough* and *though* (remember that the soft *th* sound is pronounced as *d* when it occurs at the beginning of a word or stressed syllable in AAE).

You should remember that speakers of AAE may adjust their speech, including their pronunciation, depending on the social circumstances, their location, the people they are speaking with, and other factors, as you learned in units 1 and 2 of the course. The same speaker of AAE who does not pronounce the final *r* sound at all when interacting with other members of the AAE speech community in informal situations may adjust his or her pronunciation so that in more formal situations or when interacting with those who do not speak AAE, the final *r* sound is pronounced almost the same or the same as in SAE. In fact, research has shown that the pronunciation of the final *r* sound is one of the most variable features of the pronunciation of AAE.

Because of these facts, when interacting with speakers of AAE, you should always consider the possibility that a word that ends in a vowel sound may end in *r* in SAE if you find yourself having difficulty understanding a word or phrase.

Practicing syllable-final and word-final r

Try pronouncing the following pairs of words and phrases, first as a speaker of SAE would and then as a speaker of AAE who does not usually pronounce final *r* would. Do you notice any patterns?

store	stow
letter	let a
corn	cone
door	doe
more	mow
tore up	toe up
wire	why
swore	swole *

Note: *Swole* is not a word in SAE. In AAE, *swole* means "muscular" (example sentence in AAE: *Dat boy swole*. Approximately equivalent sentence in SAE: *That young man is muscular*). It may also be the past tense form of the verb *to swell* for some speakers of AAE.

Now try pronouncing the following words and phrases (written in SAE orthography) as an AAE speaker who does not usually pronounce final *r* would.

1	hold the door
2	butter
3	no more
4	forty-four
5	power
6	court
7	score
8	forever more*
9	internet
10	before

Note: In the word *forever*, the first *r* is actually the *first* sound of the second syllable, not the last sound of the first syllable. How does this affect how a speaker of AAE would pronounce this word?

Activity 10.5: Stunt 101

Stunt 101
By G-Unit

Third verse
(Sung by recording artist Young Buck)

Chain so icy, you don't have to like me.
In a throwback jersey, with the throwback Nikes.
I know you probably seen me with Cash Money from back in
the days.
The only thing changed is the numbers on the range.
I bought me an old school and blew out the brains.
The Roc the Mic tour, I threw off my chain.
My Sprewells spinning man, I'm doing my thing.
And whodi now in trouble now that you in the game.
Come on now, we all know gold is getting old.
The ice in my teeth keep the Cristal cold.
G-Unit homie, actin' like y'all don't know.
Look, I can't even walk through the mall no more.
I just pull up, get out, and get all the hoes.
They never seen doors lift up on a car before.
Don't be mad at me dog, that's all I know.
That's how to show these fougaisies how it's supposed to go.

Key vocabulary

Words in red do not exist in Standard English

1. **icy**: filled with diamonds (slang)
2. **throwback**: from an older time (referring to a previous version or style of clothing)
3. **Cash Money**: the name of another musical group
4. **range**: Range Rover (a type of vehicle) (slang)
5. **old school**: here, a vehicle from many years ago; this term generally refers to something from a prior time or generation (slang)
6. **to blow out the brains**: to remove the top of a car, so as to turn it into a convertible (slang)
7. **Roc the Mic**: the name of a concert series
8. **Sprewell**: the brand name of a type of wheel rim of a car, named after a well-known professional basketball player (slang) This word does not exist in SAE (in SAE it is only a surname).
9. **whodi**: friend, homeboy (slang). This word does not exist in SAE.
10. **ice**: here, referring to diamonds embedded in the singer's teeth (slang)
11. **Cristal**: the name of a brand of expensive champagne

12. **homie**: friend (more or less synonymous with *whodi*) (slang) This word does not exist in SAE.
13. **hoes**: a derogatory (very negative) and offensive term for women, considered obscene by most people (slang). This spelling represents the AAE pronunciation of SAE *whore*, which is also an obscene term referring to women. Note: you should <u>never</u> use either term.
14. **dog**: here, synonymous with *whodi* or *homie* (slang)
15. **fougaisy** (plural: **fougaisies**): a person who is inauthentic or fake in some way (slang). This word does not exist in SAE.

Read the lyrics as you listen to the song again. Which pronunciation features that you have learned about during this module do you notice in the following lines? Hint: the relevant features are in **bold**.

1. In a **thr**owback jersey, with the **thr**owback Nikes
2. The only thing ch**a**nge**d** is the numbe**r**s on the range
3. The Roc the Mic tou**r**, I **thr**ew off my ch**ai**n
4. M**y** Sprewells spinning man, I'm doi**ng** my th**i**ng
5. And whodi now in trouble now **th**at **y**ou in **th**e game
6. The ice in my tee**th** keep the Cristal cold
7. G-Unit homie, ac**t**in' like y'all don't know
8. Look, I can't even walk **thr**ough the ma**ll** no m**o**re
9. **Th**ey never seen d**oor**s lif**t** up on a ca**r** befo**r**e

Teacher's edition only: the elicited answers are provided below (but in much more technical detail than what would be expected by the students).

1. **thr**owback: reduction of initial *thr* (/θr/) to *th* (/θ/)
2. ch**a**nge**d**: vowel lowering of /ɛi/ to /ai/; final consonant cluster reduction
3. tou**r**, numbe**r**s: deletion of word-final /r/
4. **thr**ew: reduction of initial *thr* (/θr/) to *th* (/θ/)
5. ch**ai**n: vowel lowering of /ɛi/ to [ai]
6. M**y**: /ai/ monophthongization (neutralized here since unstressed)
7. doi**ng**: realization of final /ŋ/ as [n]
8. th**i**ng**:** realization of /i/ as [ɛi] or [æ] before word-final [ŋ]
9. **th**at, **th**e: realization of word-initial *th* (/ð/) as [d]
10. tee**th**: realization of word-final *th* (/θ/) as [f]
11. ac**t**in': consonant cluster reduction (/kt/ to [k])
12. **thr**ough: reduction of initial *thr* (/θr/) to *th* (/θ/)
13. ma**ll**: vocalization of word-final /l/ to [w]
14. m**o**re: deletion of word-final /r/ with compensatory vowel lengthening
15. **th**ey: realization of word-initial *th* (/ð/) as [d]
16. d**oor**s: deletion of word-final /r/ with compensatory vowel lengthening
17. lif**t**: consonant cluster reduction (/ft/ to [f])
18. ca**r,** befo**r**e: deletion of word-final /r/ with compensatory vowel lengthening

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