A language dies every two weeks. With it die worlds of cognition, unique patterns of talking and thinking. Most of the languages dying today are being replaced by a language whose speakers control economic and political power. While some indigenous groups have chosen to let their languages pass into history, rather than corrupt them with neologisms, non-indigenous words and concepts, most speakers of indigenous languages want not only to preserve their cultural heritage but also their linguistic heritage. The Tunica, a Native American group, once controlled commerce and the salt trade for the Gulf South. Now amalgamated with the Biloxi, their tribal headquarters and reservation are in Marksville, Louisiana. Since 2009, Tulane has been collaborating with the Tunica to bring back their language, the last speaker, Sesostrie Youchigant having died over fifty years ago. This course addresses the processes of language death, as well as methods and initiatives for language revitalization. Students will learn effective second language teaching methods and elementary Tunica. They will then apply what they have learned, serving as teaching assistants during the tribe’s Language Summer Camp. The Tunica tribe will host the course in Marksville for the week of the Summer Camp.

**Course objectives:**

a. arrive at a definition of language endangerment and language death;

b. determine symptoms, both cultural and in terms of language structures, that are indicative of language shift and/or death;

c. determine which measures influence language sustainability and revitalization

d. become familiar with the laws, national and international, that govern language rights;

e. learn about and be able to implement effective methods of second language teaching;

f. gain FSI level two competence in spoken Tunica;

g. assist the Tunica nation in their revitalization efforts through serving as teachers aids for the Tunica Language Summer Camp.

**Outcomes:**

a. students will be familiar with the major scenarios of language death as an on-going process

b. students will understand the particular history of the Tunica-Biloxi nation and will have knowledge of the local processes that lead to the demise of the language

c. the student will be familiar with means to counteract language shift

d. the student will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of language planning, both state and local

e. the student will become adept at employing second language teaching methods to work with Tunica educators and children

f. the student will gain an elementary speaking knowledge of the Tunica language

g. the student will work alongside a Tunica elder and an educator at the Tunica Language Summer Camp in Marksville, teaching Tunica language and cultural practices

**Program goals:**
Language Revitalization & Louisiana’s Sleeping Language  
Summer 2020 Syllabus

a. give students broad exposure to the field and to a variety of theoretical and research perspectives. This course enhances the Linguistic program theoretical offerings in the areas of language death, language revitalization, and language pedagogy. The research perspective of “salvage” linguistics, an underdeveloped area in our offerings, is presented, both through the use of archival materials and analysis of the language community as documented by Gatschet in 1888 and by Haas in 1933.

b. work with real language data, gaining skills in analysis and field techniques, as well as technical knowledge of theoretical frameworks within which to explore the diversity and universality of human language(s) and language acquisition. This course will give the student hands-on (lips-on) experience with language learning and teaching, as well as strengthening their knowledge of field techniques, transcription, language documentation and revitalization.

Textbooks:

- Mary Haas (1955) Tunica. J.J. Augustin: New York. (out of print, we will use a digital copy by permission)
- Mary Haas (1953) Tunica Dictionary. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles. (out of print, in public domain, we will use digital copy)
- Tunica working group (n.d.) Our Tunica Language: a grammar to learn by. digital resource.
- Tunica working group (n.d.) Wor’itik’ahcha: We will learn. Lessons in the Tunica Language. Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana: Marksville
- Judith M. Maxwell (2013) Kojtijon: Let’s Teach. Universidad Rafael Landívar: Guatemala. translation used with permission. All digital resources will be made available through Blackboard.

Note:

This is a two week course. You cannot afford to be absent, as you will lose an entire section of the coursework. Please stay healthy. The course syllabus will be posted online and pre-distributed via e-mail to all enrolled students and tribal participants. You must do reading for and before the first day of class. Readings on the syllabus are listed for the day they will be discussed. You must read them before you come to class to discuss effectively.

Logistics:

The first week of the course will be on Tulane’s campus. We meet three hours each day 9-noon. You will be reading a book a day and writing for this course in preparation for each day’s class time. This is an intensive course. The second week of the course, we will be in Marksville from Sunday night through Friday afternoon. The Tribe will put us up in the casino hotel and give us meal vouchers for three meals a day. The Language Summer Camp will occupy us from 8-5 p.m. You will assist Tunica language teachers, who are also just learning the language. They will have lesson plans, but you will be asked to
work independently in small groups with the students. We will leave Friday after the showcase performances for the parents. Marksville is a 3.5 hour drive from New Orleans. You should NOT plan on returning to campus until the Language Camp ends. The theme for this year's camp is "Light" Tawehani.

Service Learning:

Each student will assist a Tunica elder or educator from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during the Tunica Language Summer Camp in Marksville, teaching the language and engaging in cultural activities with Tunica children. The "campers" are divided into five age groups: 6-8, 8-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16. Each Tulane assistant will work with a single age group, but participate in group craft and sports activities with others. (45 hours of service).

Week One:

**Monday – Language Death**
Reading:
- Wor’itik’ahcha, Lessons 1-5
- Judith M. Maxwell (2013) Kojtijon: Let’s Teach. Universidad Rafael Landívar: Guatemala. translation used with permission

**Tuesday – Language Rebirth**
Reading: Wor’itik’ahcha Lessons 6-10
Writing: Hand in an outline of a lesson on weather verbs, showing activities for all five learning steps.

**Wednesday – Language Teaching**
Reading: Wor’itik’ahcha Lessons 11-15
Writing: outline of two lessons, one for verbs of shining, one for objects that emit light

**Thursday – The Tunica Language**
Reading:
- Wor’itik’ahcha Lessons 16-20
- Mary Haas (1955) Tunica. J.J. Augustin: New York. (out of print, we will use a digital copy by permission)
- Mary Haas (1953) Tunica Dictionary. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles. (out of print, in public domain, we will use digital copy)
- Tunica working group (n.d.) Our Tunica Language: a grammar to learn by. digital resource.
- Note: Mary Haas’ grammar uses many grammatical categories that may be unfamiliar. Use her work as a reference. Concentrate your reading on the two Tunica working group publications.
Writing: Describe a game that can be played to reinforce the vocabulary of light. Be sure to consider how many people can play at a time. Suggest ways to modify the game for larger groups, with several ages participating, as well as ways to adjust for a select age-group.

**Friday – How to teach Tunica, or any other spoken language**

Writing: outline a lesson on a semantic domain of Tunica: make each of the five steps explicit. Due. We will review the five step process in class. The rest of the class will then be spent in preparation and practice teaching Tunica lessons.

We will use the lessons from: Tunica working group (n.d.) Wor’itik’acha: We will learn. Lessons in the Tunica Language. Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana: Marksville

**Week Two: Language Camp**

*Monday through Friday – 7:30 meet in the lobby (you should have breakfasted before this, as it is a long time until noon and the camp lunch). We will walk through the parking lot and then Nature Trail and dance grounds to the summer camp. You will team up with your supervising teacher and the tribal elders, prepare the day’s teaching materials and be ready to meet the children at 8 a.m. We will eat at the camp. After the children in your group are picked up, you may make your way back to the casino hotel. You will be given meal vouchers for the restaurants. The casino hotel has a swimming pool and a gym, but don’t get too tired out. You must keep a journal of the Summer Camp experience. Your journal entries should include data on the lessons covered, but also the effectiveness of the methodology, interaction with the children, language learning success and failures, cultural awareness, and observations on how the camp activities might be improved. Reflection on your own challenges, questions, and insights is encouraged.*

Thursday evening the Tunica children and youths will present their class projects at a dinner for their families. The Tulane assistants will attend and participate with their groups. Friday’s lessons will end with a ritalapu “store” activity, in which the campers get to “buy” gifts using laspiyoroni “Tunica bucks”, scrip earned for good behavior in class. Once all the children have had a chance to cash in their laspiyoroni, there will be an informal closing activity and the Tulanians can depart.

**Evaluation:**

1. class discussion: you are expected to come to class each day, having read the materials and prepared to participate fully 10%
2. daily essays (10 x4) 40%
3. presentation of sample class on Friday of week one 10%
4. serving as teaching assistants: work with children, elders and educators 10%
5. *journal on Language Camp experience with methods, teaching resources, language, and reflection 30%*

*The journal must be turned in Friday before we disperse.*

**Code of Academic Conduct:**
This is a Tulane course. You are expected to uphold our standards of Academic Honesty. All work you turn in must be your own. Ideas and concepts from other scholars must be appropriately referenced. Here’s the link to a full version of the code. Goldman Disabilities Services are available on Tulane’s campus: Goldman Office of Disability Services: