

# INDEPENDENT STUDIES IN SPEECH – HONORS

Summer 2018 Assignment:

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Welcome to Independent Study of Speech, a senior level honors course that takes a survey through the field of communication studies! I am excited to guide you through this year's exploration of language, cultural identity, and the relationship that they hold with one another. In order to cover the vast array of material that we have set for this year, it is necessary for you to enter the 2018 – 2019 school year with a firm understanding of the foundational components of sociolinguistics and rhetoric. The following summer assignments will help prepare you with these skills.

## **Assignment One – Realities Constructed Through Language – Due Monday, July 30:**

What role does language play in our understanding of the world around us? What makes something real? Is it the physical existence of a concept? The application of a theory? Is something real if we do not experience it on an individual level? This assignment will task you with proving the existence of our reality under various constraints.

Consider Genie. She was tortured horribly for the first 14 (well, 13, but still) years of her life. She was locked in a dark room tied to a potty chair. She hadn't experienced the world around her. If you were to discover Genie and describe to her what grass is (what it looks/feels/smells like), would she understand it? What would she imagine? Would her answer be any more or less "correct" than yours?

On separate sheets of college ruled notebook paper, answer the following 5 prompts using a minimum of 1 handwritten page (just the front) for each of them. Your task is to [prove to me/Genie that grass is real](#) under the following circumstances:

- 1) Using nothing but the perspective of physics/the physical world.
- 2) Using nothing but the perspective of a cultural anthropologist.
- 3) Using nothing but the perspective of a linguist/rhetorician.
- 4) Using nothing but the perspective of a parent teaching a child.
- 5) Using nothing but the perspective of a child communicating with a child.

## **Assignment Two – The Evolution Of Language Within Society – Due On The First Day Of The School:**

Read Chapter One of [What Kind of Creatures Are We?](#) by Dr. Noam Chomsky. You will be able to find a copy of this text in my classroom or you may access a digital copy of it on the CSHS website. In this chapter, Dr. Chomsky gives a detailed analysis of the evolution of language within human societies. He also discusses how language "works" in society. These are very important components of this course. After you finish the reading, write a 2 page (1 front, 1 back) paper that makes real world connections to the concepts presented in Chapter One.

### **Helpful Hints:**

- 1) Knock Assignment One as early as possible.
- 2) Save Assignment Two for the end of the summer – hint: we might have a quiz on the reading.
- 3) If you have any questions, email me at [mdonaldson@chinaspringisd.net](mailto:mdonaldson@chinaspringisd.net) or call/text me at (254) 640 – 5785.
- 4) Don't let summer homework ruin your summer. But also don't let it ruin your grade. ☺

Good luck! See you soon!