SSHRC Insight Grant
PIs: David Gramling & Ervin Malakaj

This Symposium is co-sponsered by

UBC Strategic Equity and Anti-Racism Enhancement Fund

Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada-funded Project #LLIMU

The Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions

Symposium Program

9:00 AM - 9:10 AM

Come in and eat!
IKBLC Peña Room 301

9:10 AM – 9:15 AM

Welcome & Opening Remarks
Dr. David Gramling, Dr. Ervin Malakaj

9:15 AM – 9:30 AM

"Power-Mapping Multilingualism and Monolingualism at UBC"
Nona Jalali

9:30 AM – 10:20 AM

"Layers of Fear: Arabic in a Monolingual University"
Dr. Nesrine Basheer

Dr. Nesrine Basheer explores the layers of fear surrounding Arabic in an Anglocentric university context, from institutional fear of the language's political and cultural associations to learners' internalized anxiety about using "improper" or "non-standard" forms. Drawing on a *Students as Partners* redesign of an advanced Arabic course and a qualitative analysis of student reflections, she shows how Arabic itself became a means of countering fear through dialectal expression, critical dialogue, and collective vulnerability. The talk argues that confronting these intersecting fears can transform the Arabic classroom into a site of linguistic courage, epistemic justice, and resistance to monolingual norms.

10:30 AM – 11:15 AM

"What is Linguaphobia?"
Collaborative Exploration: *Are these statements true or false?*

1. There are no legitimate reasons to fear language(s).
2. Students choose their courses and majors independent of linguaphobia (fear of language(s).

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3. The ways and intensities with which people experience linguaphobia interact with how they experience gender, racialization, sexuality, ability/ableism, wealth and class.
4. Linguaphobia is a natural feature of human interaction.
5. Linguaphobia is produced, maintained, and intensified by both subtle and blatant institutional means.
6. Linguaphobia is less prevalent at universities than elsewhere.
7. Linguaphobia is not culturally specific.
8. Irrational reasons to fear language(s) outnumber rational ones, and this is more so the case in 2025 than in other eras.

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM ***"What is Linguistic Indifference?"***

Collaborative Exploration: *Are these statements true or false?*

1. My field of study has a (surprising) propensity to ignore the analytic importance of language(s) in its research questions, without noticing the consequences of doing so.
2. I come in contact with others' fields of study and am surprised to see the way its research questions seem to express a disinterest in language(s).
3. Linguistic indifference affects public policy, curricular planning, and geopolitics in important ways.
4. Linguistic indifference is taught at a young age.
5. Linguistic indifference impacts different languages in different ways, and is more present in some historical periods than in others.
6. Literary and linguistic fields, including Translation Studies, are immune to linguistic indifference.
7. Certain administrative and political processes depend on linguistic indifference to succeed.
8. I can think of a research question or course topic that can afford to be linguistically indifferent.
9. Linguistic indifference is the same as linguistic neutrality or linguistic agnosticism.

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12:30 PM – 1:20 PM	***"Linguistic In/Justice in our Classrooms"*** Dr. Moberley Luger In this presentation, I'll discuss two projects that I'm working on to promote equity in how we approach, teach, and evaluate student speakers in our classrooms. These projects aim to shift pedagogies, and campus culture more broadly, to address linguistic discrimination (for example, accent discrimination) and white language supremacy.
1:20 PM – 2:00 PM	***Quick Break***
2:00 PM – 2:50 PM	***""Ah, Your Accent is Cute!" How Listeners Produce Linguistic Insecurity"*** Dr. Marie-Eve Bouchard Existing works on linguistic insecurity have focused on the speakers who feel linguistic insecurity. But one important piece is missing: the interlocutor. In this talk, I invite you to focus on the interlocutor. What does the interlocutor gain from embodying a position of authority? Speakers of languages and varieties that are perceived as dominant can contribute to language-based discrimination in spoken interactions, and these interactions are ideal for the development of linguistic insecurity. A speaker feels linguistic insecurity because of the power structures that exist around them and because some of their interlocutors have indicated that their language use or practices are different, non-standard or illegitimate. How and why does this happen? What can we do about it?
3:00 PM – 3:30 PM	***"Toward a Strategic Plan for/with Languages"*** Collaborative Exploration: *Are these statements true or false?* 1. Universities like UBC are less monolingual than they used to be, when it comes to their student bodies. 2. Universities like UBC are more monolingual than they used to be, when it comes to their curricula, proprietary technologies, and student services.

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3. Monolingualism constrains the university's ability to do cutting-edge research in a variety of fields.
4. Monolingualism at universities is an own-goal; it is a self-imposed mechanism that suppresses diversity, knowledge, and participation—with no benefit in return.
5. Corporate-driven accessibility / transparency ideals, and the dream of ensuring a "common language" for exchange between members, propels the university towards a monolingualism no one actually asked for.
6. Universities in 2040, including UBC, are likely to be more monolingual than they are in 2025.
7. At UBC, Anglocentricity and monolingualism mean the same thing.
8. It is too unwieldy and methodologically unsound to teach classes (on topic x) in multilingual ways.

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Featured Speakers

Dr. David Gramling LLIMU Principal Investigator

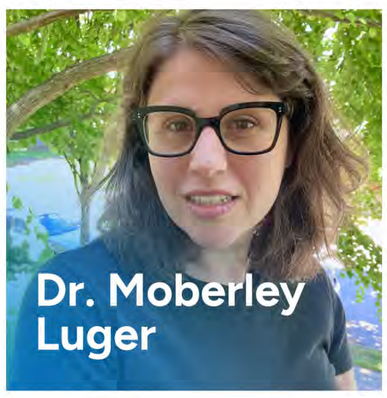
David Gramling (they+) is author, editor, or translator of eight books in print: Literature in Late Monolingualism (Bloomsbury 2024); The Invention of Multilingualism (Cambridge University Press, 2021); The Invention of Monolingualism (Bloomsbury 2016, American Association for Applied Linguistics Book Award, 2018); co-author of Palliative Care Conversations: Clinical and Applied Linguistic Perspectives (De Gruyter 2019, with David's big brother Robert Gramling); Linguistic Disobedience: Restoring Power to Civic Language (Palgrave 2019, with Yuliya Komska and Michelle Moyd); Germany in Transit: Nation and Migration 1955–2005 (University of California Press 2007 with Deniz Göktürk and Anton Kaes); and Transit Deutschland: Debatten zu Nation und Migration (Konstanz University Press / Wallstein Verlag, with Deniz Göktüurk, Anton Kaes, and Andreas Langenohl). David's book-length co-translation (with Aron Aji) of Murathan Mungan's Turkish-language Shahmeran story cycle Valor: Stories (Cenk Hikâyeleri) was published in Fall 2023 with Northwestern University Press, and made possible by a 2021 Global Humanities Translation Prize from Northwestern University.

Dr. Ervin Malakaj LLIMU Principal Investigator

Dr. Malakaj's first book, Anders als die Andern (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023), concerns the aesthetics of mourning at the core of Richard Oswald's infamous early queer melodrama. The monograph is part of Dr. Malakaj's broader research arc concerning pre-1933 queer German cultural practice, which also includes a monograph in progress on early queer media theory and occult cultural practice tentatively titled Divinatory Cultural Techniques: Queer Media Engagement, 1900–1933.
Dr. Malakaj's work on literary studies draws on queer theory, narrative theory, and book history in order to examine the influence of fluctuating literary markets on authorial agency and narrative form. Here, he recently completed a book manuscript provisionally titled Fragile Poetics: Precarity and Literary Form in Early Wilhelmine Germany (under review).

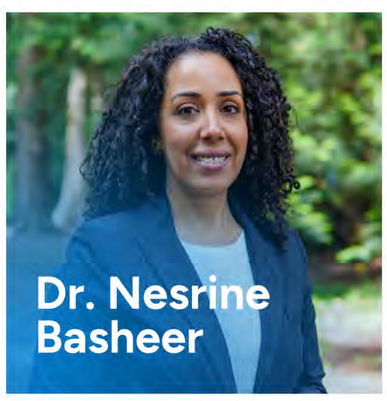
Dr. Marie-Eve Bouchard Featured Speaker

I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies at UBC. I hold a PhD degree in linguistics from New York University, where I specialized in both sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology.
I am an anthropologically oriented sociolinguist, and I tend to enjoy the blurred space between these two fields. In the past few years, my main research project investigated the emerging variety of Portuguese spoken in São Tomé and Príncipe. My new research projects focus on different varieties of Canadian French.



Dr. Moberley Luger Featured Speaker

I am an Associate Professor of Teaching in the Department of English Language and Literatures and Chair of the Coordinated Arts Program. My research has generally focused on contemporary American poetry and its relation to crisis and memory; more recently, my scholarship has turned toward pedagogy and I am exploring pedagogies of poetry, considering methods for incorporating cultural studies of poetry into the classroom. I am also working on several initiatives to promote equity in scholarly communication at UBC, including through the development of my TLEF-funded online teaching resource the PASS (Precedents Archive for Scholarly Speaking). I have articles published in English Studies in Canada, Memory Studies, Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature, Pedagogy, Contemporary Literature, Discourse and Writing/ Rédactologie, College English, and the Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. I am a proud recipient of a 2023 Killam Teaching Prize.



Dr. Nesrine Basheer Featured Speaker

Nesrine Basheer is an applied linguist and a specialist in teaching Arabic as a foreign language (TAFL). Her research interests include the teaching and assessment of writing and the multidialectal approach to teaching Arabic. Nesrine has taught Arabic at the American University in Cairo, the United Nations, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Maryland, and more recently, the University of Sydney. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. She is passionate about advancing Arabic first and second language education at the K-12 and tertiary levels.

Nona Jalali LLIMU Public Policy Researcher

Nona Jalali is passionate about the roles of art and language in policymaking and implementation, particularly in transitional justice. She majored in Linguistics and minored in Book & Media Studies and Creative Expression at the University of Toronto. Post-graduation, Nona wrote for the non-profit Arts Help and worked at the front desk at Municipal Hall in the District of North Vancouver. Now, Nona is a Master of Public Policy and Global Affairs student at the University of British Columbia, during which she has worked across different disciplines and departments on research topics like feminist pedagogy in international relations, gender and sexuality in ancient literature, and monolingualism in the post-secondary setting. Nona hopes to build a career in transitional justice that pulls on her multidisciplinary background.

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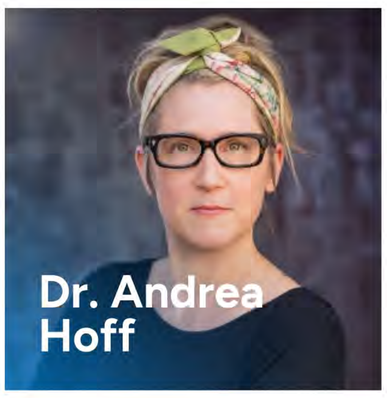
LLIMU Team

Alexander Suyanto Indigenous Voices in LLIMU Researcher

MA Student in the UBC Department of Central, Eastern and Northern European Studies.



Dr. Andrea Hoff LLIMU Artist

Andrea (Andy) Hoff is a multimedia artist, writer, and arts-based researcher. Her work in art and academia is centred in community practice and often engages with speculative world-building and radical ecologies. Her PhD research in Language and Literacy Education focuses on youth empowerment in the context of the climate crisis, explored through the medium of comics. Andrea's published writing and comics have appeared in The Tyee, Room, Display Canadian Design, and Broken Pencil. In 2022, Andrea and Cree poet and writer Wanda John-Kehewin co-founded Beyond Collective, an Indigenous/settler feminist studio that employs comics, research, installation, and performance to challenge colonial narratives and collaboratively work towards reconciliation. You can find more of Andrea's work at https://www.andreahoff.com.

Ihomehe Agbebaku LLIMU Artist

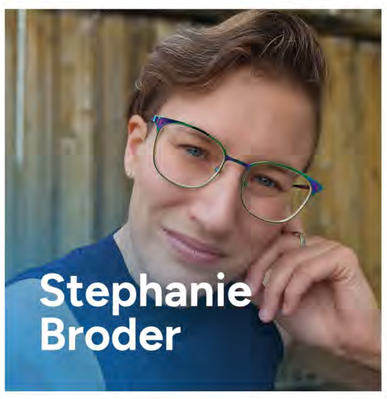
Ihomehe Agbebaku is a first-generation writer, filmmaker, and photographer completing an MFA in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia, where she is also the Editor-in-Chief of PRISM international. Their work moves across poetry, prose, film, and visual storytelling, often exploring silence, belonging, and the politics of language in everyday life.
You Know What I Mean is a photographic comic set in a shared university housing kitchen. The project explores how linguaphobia is not only experienced in speech but also in its absence, in the silences and coded gestures that emerge when words are policed, mocked, or misunderstood. Through staged and documentary stills, it traces how posture, gaze, and everyday acts of resistance become their own language in a space shaped by cultural difference and institutional norms. By centering these quiet forms of communication, the work reflects on how linguaphobia, indifference, and disobedience live in the body as much as in spoken words.

Jia Xin Gu LLIMU Designer

Jia (she/they) is a 4th year Asian Studies major and German Studies minor at UBC. Her interests include art, game development, and research—with a special emphasis on language and power as well as language as a tool in making friends. They are passionate about public-facing undergraduate research, and often combines history and culture with game design to make scholarship more accessible.

Siming Liao LLIMU Artist

Betty(Siming) Liao, 20, third year media studies student at UBC. Started drawing since three and continued education in art and design till today. Participated in various student programs including game designs as the lead artist, and provided commissions for 50+ customers across the internet.
My work will be focused on discussing the additional features and how they are given to accents, as well as how they influence people on terms of linguaphobia. A child learnt to hide her accents finds more and more ways to use it...until she realizes accent is just an accent.



Stephanie Broder LLIMU Artist

Stephanie Broder (they/them) is an illustrator, writer, and arts educator with a particular passion for graphic narratives. They are fascinated with comics, video games, and the potential of participatory storytelling through gameplay and multimedia narrative projects. They credit the Japanese interactive multimedia art collective teamLab with their growing obsession with art and stories that you physically engage with. Currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at UBC, their comics and novels lean towards science fiction, with an emphasis on character-driven stories about identity and belonging. You can also find them all over town, teaching workshops and tabling at events, as well as on their website https://www.stephaniebroder.com/ and Instagram @artofstephaniebroder.

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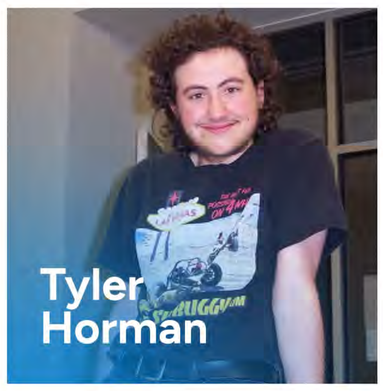
Sydney Green LLIMU Artist

Sydney is an independent comic artist and writer living in New Westminster, BC. Her work seeks to unsettle and terrify with stories about women in historical settings. She has created three independent comics thus far, The Sculptor's Wife, Oliver, and her longest work The Vows of Beasts, and is currently writing a novel. Her work can currently be found at @syd.sees.monsters as well as Lucky's Books and Comics on Main. She can be reached on Instagram and at sydney.g.illustration@gmail.com.



Tyler Horman Transgender Voices in LLIMU Researcher

Tyler Horman (he/him) is a fifth year undergraduate studying Linguistics and Nordic Studies at UBC. He works in the CENES Department as a research assistant and teaching assistant. Tyler is interested in anything and everything to do with language revitalization, translation, and linguistic identity. He is researching for the project *Translating Transgender*.

Raphael Saint K LLIMU Artist

Raphael Saint K is a Vancouver-based multi-disciplinary artist, writer, and media packrat inspired by the somatic relationships between experience and expression. Attending to the ways in which a medium blocks or accesses aspects of their being, they seek to create work that turns solipsism into communication.

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