

Linguistic Diversity & Fear of Miscommunication

BIS 317:
Language, Society, and Cultural Knowledge

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what is this class about?

linguistic diversity
≠
miscommunication

What do we need to ask to understand why?

- What are the various ways the notion of communication has been conceptualized historically?
- How can we most usefully understand the relationships between language and thought?
- What is and can be the role of language in individual and national identity?
- How do people communicate across cultural and linguistic differences?
- How and why do languages change over time?
- What is the role of language policy in a democracy?

Pieter Bruegel the Elder. *The Tower of Babel*. 1563.

What does it mean to communicate?



for Wednesday

- Read the syllabus
- Revise *the Oxford Companion to the English Language* definitions of 'communication' and 'language'

Last 5 minutes

- Meet and learn the names of 2-3 people you don't already know
- Find out what questions they still have about the class and answer them if possible
- If not possible, write them down and turn them in to me before you leave