



EMORY  
COLLEGE  
OF ARTS AND  
SCIENCES

Emory College  
Language Center

with support from the  
Hightower Fund

presents

# Elana Shohamy

Professor of Language Education, Tel Aviv University

Oxford Building Auditorium  
February 10  
4:00 pm

## “Linguistic Landscape: A Wide Lens for Documenting, Analyzing and Interpreting Societal Conflicts”

Linguistic Landscape (LL) refers to language displayed in public spaces on signs, advertisements, instructions, buildings, streets, billboards, etc.; 'Language' within LL refers not only to written forms but also to other sources that interact in public spaces such as images, video, graffiti, moving advertisements, sounds ('sound-scapes'), and even people and buildings. While language in public space has been mostly ignored in the field of applied and socio-linguistics it has been getting major attention in the past decade anchored in disciplines such as politics, geography, urban studies, law, economics and education. 'Who owns the public space' and who has 'the right to write' there leads to critical views of LL pointing to those who are included, excluded, accepted or marginalized, leading to debates and protests. This paper will survey a number of research studies related to LL that bring about relevant research findings. One study documents LL in public spaces pointing to levels of multilingualism among Arabs and Jews in Israel and providing theoretical explanations as to the presence and absence of certain languages (e.g., rationale choice, collective identity). Another study focuses on the city of Tel Aviv during its centennial (2009) where LL was used by the city authorities to deliver ideological messages of uniformity and cohesion versus other groups that protested about being excluded and ignored and utilizing various types of LL items. Another study shows how LL needs to be observed in smaller units than cities referring to neighborhoods where LL can manifest messages about collective identities. The last study shows the value of teaching LL awareness to students in schools. It demonstrates how active engagement of high school students in documenting LL in their neighborhoods can bring about a growing awareness of diversity, tolerance as well as understanding conflicts. Together, these studies point to the unique value of LL as a dynamic field of research as it provides new knowledge that could not be obtained without it.

**Co-sponsored by the Departments of German Studies, Spanish and Portuguese, Russian and East Asian Languages and Cultures, Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, and the Program in Linguistics**