Tearing Down the Tower of Babel
with Jennifer Hamano, 6:00 - 7:30 pm at 28 East 35th St.

Schedule of topics

July 15  What is language?
   • How many languages are there in the world?
   • Which languages are the most widely spoken?
   • What are the parts of language?
   • How are the world’s languages different from each other?

July 22  Language mixing
   • Does borrowing foreign words degrade a language?
   • What’s a Creole, and how does it develop?
   • What is "Spanglish" and why do people speak it?
   • Should we discourage people from code-switching or mixing languages?

July 29  Bad grammar, broken English, and language varieties
   • What's the difference between languages, dialects, and accents?
   • Why is it that some speakers of Spanish and Portuguese understand each other, but not all Chinese speakers understand each other?
   • Who decides what the "rules of language" are?
   • Why do we follow those rules?

August 5  Who is a bilingual?
   • Are bilinguals equally fluent in both/all their languages?
   • Do you need to be able to read, write, speak, and understand a language to be considered proficient?
   • Can a bilingual forget his or her native language?
   • Does the presence of two languages cause or worsen language disorders in children and adults?

August 12  Language and cognitive development
   • How is language organized in the brain?
   • Is there a cognitive advantage or disadvantage to being bilingual?
   • Does bilingualism delay child language development?
   • Why is it harder to learn a new language as an adult?

August 19  Language controversies, myths and misconceptions
   • Is texting killing the English language?
   • Does language influence the way we think?
   • How can we support bilingual kids struggling in school?
   • Why did the Oakland school district want to teach kids Ebonics?

Information and resources at http://chamano.commons.gc.cuny.edu/public-speaking/
Hosted by the Community Church of New York http://www.ccny.org/