

ACADEMIC SLANG

Michaela Hradilová, 15. 3. 2012

WHAT IS ACADEMIC SLANG??

- SLANG**: words or expressions that are informal and are not considered suitable for more formal situations. Some slang is used only by particular group of people
- ACADEMIC**: relating to education, especially education in colleges and universities
- ACADEMIC SLANG**: slang from the academic grounds, used on campus

TWO SIDES OF ACADEMIC SLANG

- related to education, schooling itself
- used by teachers as well as by students
- connected with subjects, degrees, abbreviations of institutions, grading



X

- college slang
- used by students, not necessarily related to schooling (sport, parties)
- adjectives of description, abbreviations (in texting, mailing), idioms



A: SLANG (JARGON) RELATED TO EDUCATION, ACADEMIA

❖ **University Degrees:** B.A.; B.S.; M.A.; M.S.; M.F.A.; M.B.A. etc.

❖ **Subjects:**

major/minor; cognates; course load; core/electives; prerequisite/ co-requisite; section; mid-term/finals

❖ **Grading:**

A,B,C,D, E/F (whether a school uses E or F to indicate failing grade typically depends on time and geography); B+, B-, C+, C-, D+, D-; I = incomplete

❖ **Academic life:**

Greeks –fraternity/sorority (from the Latin words *frater* and *soror*, "brother" and "sister")

Greek alphabet – e.g. Alpha Phi Omega; Phi Sigma Pi; Alpha Delta Pledge and Rush Week

❖ **Stages of study:**

Freshmen (1st year)

Sophomore (2nd year)

Junior (3rd year)

Senior (4th year)

❖ **Abbreviations of institutions:**

HBCU: historically black college or university

SLAC: small liberal-arts college

STEM: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

❖ **Other:** alumni; convocation; extracurricular



B: COLLEGE SLANG

= oral, informal, highly expressive language that is created and used primarily by students as part of undergraduate life

❖ Classifying nouns:

Personal Attributes: Personality

Social competence, +/-	<i>dweeb, gweeb, loser,</i>
Easy-going/intense	<i>mellow/monger</i>
Dumb/smart	<i>airhead, bonehead/ brain</i>
Enthusiast/ complainer	<i>Mrs. Holy Cross/ wanta be</i>
Inauthentic	<i>plastic person</i>
Individualist	<i>deviant, freak, rebels</i>
Lazy	<i>sloth, waste product</i>
Nice/nasty	<i>peach, saint/jerk, dink</i>
Crazy/normal	<i>gocher/wicked- good-kid</i>
Exclusive	<i>(crats, P.R.)*</i>
Self-centered	<i>snob, actress, wise guy</i>
Stingy	<i>leech, jew, mooch, sponge</i>
Unreliable/reliable	<i>flake/(good man, normal)*</i>
Follower	<i>groupie</i>

Personal Attributes: Physical Demeanor

Attractive/ugly	<i>babe/butt ugly</i>
Body, good/bad	<i>golden girl/ (mega-moo)*</i>
Clumsy	<i>gomer, spaz, bozo</i>
Dress	<i>JAPS, pure prep</i>
Grooming & make-up	<i>wind-tunnel chick</i>
Weak/strong	<i>wuss-wimp/ (Marlboro man)*</i>

Personal Attributes: Values

Liberal/conservative	<i>commie/cookie cutter</i>
Nature	<i>granola</i>
Politics	<i>martyr</i>
Religion +/-	<i>god squad/heathen</i>

Societal Groups

Age, +/-	<i>eighth grader/fossil</i>
Class	<i>beautiful person, crat</i>
Gender	
Female id	<i>barbie doll, jocksniff</i>
Male id	<i>dude, stud, wimp</i>
Generation	<i>sixties dude</i>
Race or ethnicity	<i>'rican, spicks, niggers</i>
Rural/urban	<i>hick, aggie</i>
Sexual orientation	<i>dyke, fag, flamer, homo</i>

Athletes: jocks, muscleheads, no necks

Party people: party animal, party hound, party monster, fun bunch, mad-men

Less intelligent people: clueless, dork, slow leak, bonehead, knob, loonie

Attractive girl: snapper, hot chick, rocket

Handsome boy: calendar boy, chunk, flash, PDM (potential date material)

❖ **Verbs:**

Go stag = go alone to a dance

Sack out, pad out, turn in = go to bed

Goof off, mess around, shoot the breeze = to kill time

Campus sb = deprive a student of campus privileges

Boot = vomit

❖ **Adjectives :**

Intoxicated state of sb: wasted, crunk, baked, trashed, fried, toasted, stoned, hammered, plastered..

❖ **Acronyms, abbreviations (used in mails, texts, IM):** BTW; LOL; BRB; BYOB, FYI; CYA; GTG; BF/GF; ILY; OMG ...

❖ **Course nicknames:** anthro; English lit.; comp; psych;

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION, HAVE A NICE (ACADEMIC) DAY 😊



SOURCES:

JSTOR: College Slang Revisited: Language, Culture, and Undergraduate Life. David M. Hummon. *Journal of Higher Education*. Vol.65. 1994.

What Is College Slang?. Henry Kratz. *American Speech*. 1964.

Wikipedia (wikipedia.org)

The Chronicle of Higher Education (chronicle.com)

University of Florida International Centre (ufic.ufl.edu)

The Student Magazine of Marquet University (marquettejournal.org)

Macmillan Online Dictionary (macmillandictionary.com)

USA Education Guides (usaeducationguides.com)

McMicken College of Art and Sciences (artsci.uc.edu)