

210 Introduction to Linguistics
GFS 118 – Mon/Wed 12:30-1:50 pm

Syllabus for Linguistics 210g
Introduction to Linguistics
Fall 2019

Lecture times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30-1:50 pm
Classroom: GFS 118

Instructor: Prof. Sandra Ferrari Disner
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Office hours: T.B.A

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Section meetings: Fridays, 9:30 or 11 a.m., in GFS 108

Course description:

Linguistics is the scientific study of language as it is represented in the human mind and activated (in the form of sound waves) by the human vocal tract. In this course you will learn to examine language in a systematic way, in order to uncover abstract patterns and generalizations. Your inquiry will focus on your own internalized ‘grammar’, which is comprised of a mental lexicon (your dictionary of known words); a recognized set of speech sounds, and the articulatory gestures associated with their production; sets of rules for word formation and for sentence structure; logical principles that underlie the relations between utterances; and even some idiolectal characteristics that can be of signal interest in a courtroom setting. We will also explore how these language components are acquired by children, and may be lost by adults in consequence of cerebral damage.

The major subfields of theoretical linguistics to which you will be introduced in this course are:

- Phonetics – the production and perception of speech sounds
- Phonology – the systematic organization of speech sounds
- Morphology – the structure of words
- Syntax – the structure of phrases and sentences
- Semantics – the meaning of words and phrases
- Language acquisition – the manner and order in which children build up a vocabulary and grammar.

The data that we will consider comes primarily from English, though illustrative examples will be provided from a typologically representative sample of the world's 7,000 languages.

This course fulfills the University's GE requirement in category F, Quantitative Reasoning.

Textbook:

Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction, W. O'Grady, J. Archibald, M. Aronoff and J. Rees-Miller. *Seventh Edition*, 2017. [CL] (Previous editions are not acceptable.) Two copies of the textbook will be on 2-day loan at Leavey Library. Chapter 1 will be posted on Blackboard for advance preparation.

Course requirements:

1. Attendance and participation. Class meetings in Ling 210 will involve both lecture and discussion. Attendance (both in class and in discussion sections) and participation are very important; not only are they usually correlated with achievement, but attendance in discussion sections will determine a portion of your grade. When an absence is due to a valid reason, such as illness, you should contact the instructor *on or before* the day of the missed class. Medical documentation may be required before the absence is excused.

The attendance and participation components of your grade (total: 5%) will be determined by your TA.

2. Readings. The reading assignments are mainly from the textbook [CL], but occasionally you will be asked to read articles from linguistic journals or chapters from other textbooks. These will be available on Blackboard. Read all assigned chapters and readings carefully, in order to better follow the lectures and participate in class discussions. Any and all readings and handouts posted on Blackboard may show up on the exams, as is also the case with the CL chapters.
3. Problem sets. At least seven times during the semester you will be assigned a problem set based on the material in the textbooks and the lectures. *Your lowest score will be deleted*. The work product must be non-collaborative and timely (= handed in during discussion sections), and it must be submitted in hard copy (*not* via email). If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to find out whether a problem set has been assigned.

A note on collaboration: General discussion of the assignments with other students is acceptable and encouraged, but in the end you must arrive at the actual solutions to problems on your own and write them up on your own. Certain indicia make it quite apparent to an instructor when two students have collaborated. (Note that your instructor is a forensic linguist.)

Lateness policy: Points will be deducted from problem sets which are handed in late, at the rate of 15% of the total score if the problem set is handed in *after* the discussion section on

the first day, and 15% for each successive day. Points will not be deducted when there is a valid, documented reason for the lateness, such as illness.

4. Exams. There will be three exams covering different portions of the material: two in-class midterms and a final. They will include questions in a variety of formats, such as problem solving, labeling, true/false and multiple choice questions, and phonetic transcription. These exams are *not cumulative*; that is to say, the material tested in one exam will not be revisited in another. Each of the three exams, even the final, is to be completed in 80 minutes.

Grading plan:

Attendance and participation: **5%**

Problem sets: **20%**

Midterm 1: **25%**

Midterm 2: **25%**

Final: **25%**

Academic integrity:

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. Students are expected to uphold the USC Student Conduct Code (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>). Violations of the code harm every student in the class, and carry strict sanctions. (See Section 11 of the above.) Any student who is found cheating on an exam or homework, or who facilitates cheating by another student, will receive no credit for that work, and the matter may be reported to SJACS.

Students with disabilities:

Students needing special accommodations (e.g., longer exam time) due to a physical or learning disability should contact the instructor as early in the semester as possible, and should also contact Disability Services and Programs (DSP) to obtain a letter of verification for approved accommodations. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776 and the webpage is http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html

Linguistics 210: Introduction to Linguistics

Tentative schedule of topics and reading assignments. Watch Blackboard for updates.

August 26, 28: The scientific study of language

The nature of Language (distinct from the study of individual languages)
Linguistic competence vs. linguistic performance
Descriptive vs. prescriptive grammars
Universal Grammar. Innateness of language.

Readings: CL: Chapter 1; also readings from “*The Language Instinct*” [on Blackboard]

September 4, 9, 11, 16: Phonetics

Speech production. Anatomy & articulators. Classes of sounds.

Readings: CL Ch. 2, sections 1-6 and 10

The International Phonetic Alphabet. Transcription. IPA bingo.

Readings: CL Ch. 2, sections 7-8

Articulatory processes

Readings: CL, Ch. 2, section 9

September 18, 23, 25, 30: Phonology

Phonemes and allophones

Readings: CL: Chapter 3, sections 1-3

Phonological processes. Phonological rules. Phonological analysis.

Readings: CL Ch. 3, sections 4-6

October 2:	<i>Review session</i>
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	General issues of linguistics. Phonetics & phonology.
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October 7:	<i>First Exam</i>
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October 9, 14, 16, 21: Morphology

The structure of words.
Inflectional and derivational morphology.
Compounding. Other morphological processes

Readings: CL: Chapter 4, sections 1-5

Morphophonemics

Readings: CL: Chapter 4, section 6

October 23, 28, 30: Syntax (Part I)

Sentence structure. Constituency.
Phrase structure and X'-theory.

Readings: *CL: Chapter 5, sections 1 and 2*

The use of modifiers.
Readings: *CL: Chapter 5, section 5.2*

November 4: <i>Second review session</i> Syntax (Part I) and morphology
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November 6: <i>Second Exam</i>
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November 11, 13: Syntax (Part II)

Transformations
Readings: *CL: Chapter 5, section 3, 4, and 5.1*

November 18, 20; 25: Semantics

Semantics: the study of meaning
Pragmatics: meaning in context
Forensics: application of linguistics in the courtroom
Readings: *CL: Chapter 6, sections 1, 2.1-2.2, 3.1-3.3, 4.1-4.2 and 4.4.*

November 27: [Thanksgiving break. No class.]

December 2: **First Language Acquisition**
First language acquisition
Babbling. Early phonetic processes.
Vocabulary development.

Readings: *CL: Chapter 9, sections 1, 2, 4, and 6.5.*

December 4: <i>Third review session</i> Syntax (part II), Semantics and Language Acquisition

December 13 (11 am): <i>Third exam</i> (in GFS 118)
