

Syllabus ◊ Introduction to Linguistics (Ling 210g) ◊ USC Spring 2021

Place: <https://usc.zoom.us/j/98886305299?pwd=SWdrL3kxajR3ZlhFV1ZTN2hTRVd5dz09>

Lecture time: Monday and Wednesday, 9:00-10:20am (PST)

Discussion time: Friday 9-9:50am, or 10-10:50am, depending on what you registered for (PST)

Instructor: Colin Davis

Office hours: By appointment

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TA: Ana Besserman

Office hours: By appointment

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1 Course description

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the basic methods and discoveries of modern linguistics. In this course, we will see that human language can be studied in a systematic, scientific way, just like any other natural phenomenon. We will use analytic reasoning to examine a variety of aspects of language, such as the following:

- Phonetics / phonology (sound systems)
- Morphology (word structure)
- Syntax (sentence structure)
- Child language acquisition

Students will both learn some basic principles about these aspects of human language, and apply this knowledge in order to analyze new linguistic data.

2 Course materials

There is **no textbook** for this course. All materials, including the slides and handouts used in lectures, as well as other supplemental materials, will be made available on the course's Blackboard page.

3 Course requirements

There are four main components necessary for success in this class.

3.1 Attendance / participation

You will not be directly graded based on your attendance of the lectures (held on Mondays and Wednesdays) or the discussion sections (held on Fridays), since I know that several students are constrained by time zone complications. If possible, it is in your best interest to attend as much as possible, so that you have the opportunity to participate in class discussions and ask questions. If external circumstances require you to miss a class or discussion section, please watch the recording of it at a later time, so that you stay up-to-date on the progress of the course. Let me know if you cannot access the recordings, though I will post the link for each class on Blackboard as soon as it is available to me. Ask for help if you have any trouble!

3.2 Homework

Throughout the class, there will be several homework assignments, which will ask you to apply your knowledge to the analysis of new linguistic data. These assignments contribute to 40% of your final grade.

3.2.1 Due dates and turning-in

All homework assignments will be announced on Mondays and posted on the blackboard page at that time, and will be due on the next Monday. **If for some reason you cannot complete your homework in this time span, let us know!** All assignments will be posted on the Blackboard page, through which you will also be able to upload your completed homework. Please submit all completed homeworks in PDF format. (Most word processing programs have the ability to export a file to PDF. I cannot guarantee being able to open your assignment if you turn it in with a different file format.)

3.2.2 Collaboration with other students

Collaboration on your homework with other students is permitted, provided that you explicitly state in your homework submission who you worked with. Even when working together, each student must submit their own individually written assignment.

3.3 Midterm exams

There will be **two midterm exams** (dates to be announced), each of which will count for 15% of your grade.

3.4 Final exam

There will be a **final exam** that will be worth 30% of your grade.

3.5 Grading scale

A: 100.0 - 93.0% / A-: 92.9 - 90% / B+: 89.9 - 87% / B: 86.9 - 83% / B-: 82.9 - 80% / C+: 79.9 - 77% / C: 76.9 - 73% / C-: 72.9 - 70% / D: 66.9 - 63% / D-: 62.9 - 60% / F: 59.9% and below

4 Schedule

Instead of a spring break, USC has designated several "wellness days" during which there are no classes. This results in the following schedule for this course:

Week 1 - Introduction, phonetics, the IPA

M 1/18: **No class (holiday)**

W 1/20: Lecture, homework 1 posted

F 1/22: Discussion sections

Week 2 - More phonetics

M 1/25: Lecture, homework 1 due

W 1/27: Lecture

F 1/29: Discussion sections

Week 3 - Finishing phonetics, syllables

M 2/1: Lecture

W 2/3: Lecture

F 2/5: Discussion sections

Week 4 - Syllables, phonotactics, tone and stress

M 2/8: Lecture, homework 2 posted

W 2/10: Lecture

F 2/12: Discussion sections

Week 5 - Flapping, phonological lessons from the English plural

M 2/15: **No class (holiday)**

W 2/17: Lecture, homework 2 due

F 2/19: Discussion sections

Week 6 - Phonemes and allophones (current week as of syllabus update)

M 2/22: Lecture, homework 3 posted

W 2/24: Lecture

F 2/26: Discussion sections

Week 7- Midterm 1 review, introduction to morphology

M 3/1: Lecture, homework 3 due

W 3/3: Lecture

F 3/5: Discussion sections

Week 8 - More morphology

M 3/8: Lecture, **midterm exam 1 posted**

W 3/10 Lecture

F 3/12 **No class (wellness day)**

Week 9 - Introduction to syntax

M 3/15: Lecture, **midterm exam 1 due**

W 3/17: Lecture

F 3/19: Discussion sections

Week 10 - More syntax

M 3/22: Lecture

W 2/24: Lecture

F 2/26: Discussion sections

Week 11 - More syntax

M 3/29: Lecture, homework 4 posted

W 3/31: Lecture

F 4/2: Discussion sections

Week 12 - Midterm 2 review

M 4/5: Lecture, homework 4 due

W 4/7: **No class (wellness day)**

F 4/9: Discussion sections

Week 13 - Acquisition

M 4/12: Lecture, **midterm 2 posted**

W 4/14: Lecture

F 4/16: Discussion sections

Week 14 - Miscellany

M 4/19: Lecture, **midterm 2 due**

W 4/21: Lecture

F 4/23: Discussion sections

Week 15 - Review for the final exam

M 4/26: Lecture

W 4/28: Lecture

F 4/30: **No discussion sections (wellness day)**

Final exam: Friday, May 7, 8-10am