

# USC Freshman Seminar Syllabus

## How we speak

Professor Dani Byrd

Fall 2021

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*office hours: Wednesday  
immediately after class, Tues  
2-3 on zoom and by appt*

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[https://sites.google.com/view/danibyrd-home/fresh-sem-f21\\_syll-byrd](https://sites.google.com/view/danibyrd-home/fresh-sem-f21_syll-byrd)

## Freshman Seminar Fall 2021 (FSEM 100 34600R , 2.0 units) "How we speak"

The capabilities and versatility of our vocal instrument, along with our elegant cognitive and hearing faculties, allow humans to deploy an astonishing diversity of speech sounds to encode words in spoken language. This Freshman Seminar will introduce students to how humans produce the sounds used in the world's languages. After an introduction to vocal tract anatomy and the International Phonetic Alphabet, we will take an audio-visual tour of many of the speech sounds that languages use to compose words, from clicks to tone. We will also take an actual tour of the new USC Dynamic Imaging Science Center, which uses MRI to image real-time internal body movements in speech production. There may be an opportunity for students to participate in creating video of their own moving vocal tract. The class will enjoy a guest presentation on singing and vocal performance, and we will have a look at varieties of American English and at bilingualism. Finally, we will conclude with a consideration of speech production in breakdown—how certain diseases and disorders can affect the ability to speak.

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### Class Meetings Fall 2021

*Meetings:* Eleven class meetings Aug 25 - Nov 10

*Time:* Wednesdays 12-1:50pm

*Place:* [CPA](#) 203

If we find ourselves needing to be remote, here are Professor Byrd's [Netiquette](#) expectations for the virtual classroom.

Office Hours (tentative): Walking back to my office in GFS after class with me; or ping me on email or slack for a Zoom meeting--Tues 2-3 is available or by appt



Courtesy of USC's  
Yongwan Lim.

## Course Goals and Learning Objectives

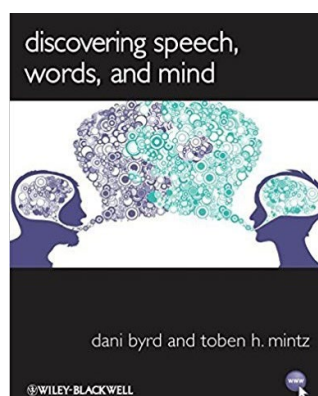
*In the USC [Freshman Seminar Program](#), 18 or fewer freshmen "learn the excitement of intellectual inquiry by participating once a week for eleven weeks in a two-hour seminar on a topic of personal interest both to the seminar leader who has chosen to offer the topic and to the students who have elected to enroll. By doing so, incoming students learn how to study in a seminar setting, acquire the expectations of academic culture, and meet a group of other freshmen who take their educations seriously."*

### Course Goals

- To introduce the study of speech science as a topic of scholarly study and empirical research
- To begin to see spoken language from an analytic perspective

### Learning Objectives

- To understand how the sounds of the world's languages are articulated and coordinated
- To have an elementary understanding of the acoustics of speech
- To appreciate variation in speech ranging from cross-linguistic variation to dialectal variation to speech in vocal performance
- To become acquainted with speech-specific breakdown, disorders and disabilities
- To gain a degree of comfort with scientific displays of quantitative and physiological information



## Book and Reading

We will examine portions of the textbook, available as pdfs, *Discovering Speech, Words, and Mind* (Byrd and Mintz), as well as other web-based material. No textbook purchase is required, though it is available optionally:

D. Byrd & T. Mintz. (2010) [Discovering Speech, Words, and Mind](#). Wiley-Blackwell Publishing. (Also available on reserve at Leavey.)

In addition to the class [Weekly Schedule](#), it is expected that we will use the class's [channel](#) on Slack as one regular form of interaction.

Blackboard will not be used.

## Required Work

Attendance at all class meetings is required (but see Covid Notes below).

Between meeting students will be reading scholarly and lay articles and media material that treat with scientific topics. Occasional small assignments to hone skills may be given.

## Covid Notes

(per USC Dornsife directives of August 9 2021 and [Provost FAQ](#) of August 17 2021)

Students with symptoms of illness should not be in the classroom. If you are ill, let me know and we will work together to address continuity of education. If your symptoms are consistent with Covid-19, you should arrange to test through [MySHR](#).

The instructor may check your Tojan Check pass at any time.

Students are expected to comply with all aspects of USC's COVID-19 policy, including its masking policy. Failure to do so may result in removal from the class and referral to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards.

For students enrolled in classes that will be taught in-person, the default attendance expectation is in-person. Students who present an OSAS accommodation from the Office of Student Accessibility Services that permits them to take the class online-only will be accommodated. Similarly, we want to support and accommodate students who test positive for COVID or are required to self-isolate due to a high-risk exposure. That said, this class will not normally be recorded.

## Grades

This is a 2-unit Credit/No credit class. Credit will be received if the work is done, including attendance (in a way consistent with the Covid Notes above). There is no final exam.

## Weekly Schedule Fall 2021

[https://sites.google.com/view/danibyrd-home/fresh-sem-f21\\_weekly-byrd](https://sites.google.com/view/danibyrd-home/fresh-sem-f21_weekly-byrd)

## USC and Related Support Resources

for the health, safety, and well-being of members of the USC community

<https://sites.google.com/view/uscphongroup/usc-support>

## **Communication and Policy Information**

**Slack and Email:** In addition to the utility of **Slack**, it would be useful if we can communicate with each other **using email**. In this way, you can be advised of changes, and I can be advised of any problems that you encounter. Please know that for this class *I will expect you to check your email*. In case you are unfamiliar with email, communications should be respectful and grammatical.

**Statement on Academic Conduct**—"Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>."

I expect that all students will uphold the [USC Student Conduct Code](#). Because violations of the code harm every other student in the class, the instructor will aggressively prosecute any student who cheats on an exam or homework or who allows others to cheat on an exam or homework.

Please also note: [SCampus under Academic Policies](#): "Notes or recordings made by students based on a university class or lecture may only be made for purposes of individual or group study, or for other usual non-commercial purposes that reasonably arise from the student's membership in the class or attendance at the university. This restriction also applies to any information distributed, disseminated or in any way displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email or otherwise on the internet, or via any other medium. Actions in violation of this policy constitute a violation of the Student Conduct Code, and may subject an individual or entity to

university discipline and/or legal proceedings.”

**Students with Disabilities**—Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with [Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for OSAS is (213) 740-0776. (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), [SASfrntd@usc.edu](mailto:SASfrntd@usc.edu).

**Learning Experience Evaluations** —“Learning Experience Evaluations will be conducted on [or near the last day of class]. This will be your opportunity to provide feedback about your learning experience in the class. This feedback helps the instructor determine whether students are having the intended learning experiences for the class. It is important to remember that the learning process is collaborative and requires significant effort from the instructor, individual students, and the class as a whole. Students should provide a thoughtful assessment of their experience, as well as of their own effort, with comments focused on specific aspects of instruction or the course. Comments on personal characteristics of the instructor are not appropriate and will not be considered. For this feedback to be as comprehensive as possible, all students should complete the evaluation.”

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**—Please ensure that you are signed up with TrojanAlerts. “In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university’s site on [Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness](#).”

Date Last Modified: Aug 20, 2021

Banner Art Credit: Lena Foellmer

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