

USC Freshman Seminar Syllabus

How we speak

Professor Dani Byrd

Fall 2023

[Class Meetings Fall 2023](#)

[Course Goals and Learning Objectives](#)

[Book and Reading](#)

[Required Work](#)

[Grades](#)

[Weekly Schedule Fall 2023 \(always subject to change\)](#)

[USC and Related Support Resources](#)

[Communication and Policy Information](#)

[In-Class Health Notes](#)

[Course Content Distribution & Synchronous Session Recordings Policies](#)

[Course Evaluations](#)

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*office hours: Wednesday
immediately after class, and
by appt (zoom or in person)*

Freshman Seminar Fall 2023 (FSEM 100 , 2.0 units) "How we speak"

We humans talk. And talk and talk. But how do we do this?! This course will consider how moving our bodies—our tongue, larynx, and lips—creates sound that encodes the informational substance of human language.

After an introduction to vocal tract anatomy, students will take an audio-visual tour through the International Phonetic Alphabet, surveying the diverse speech sounds that languages use to compose words, from vowel and consonant sounds to clicks to tone. We will practice phonetic transcription of English. We will visit the new USC Dynamic Imaging Science Center, which uses Magnetic Resonance imaging to make live movies of internal mouth movements during speech production. We will look at varieties of American English, including marginalized varieties, and at how bilingual speakers juggle their multiple languages. We will consider the effects of certain disorders and diseases on the ability to hear and speak. The course will wrap up with an overview of machine speech synthesis and recognition and take the pulse of what's happening with models like ChapGPT.

If you're interested in linguistics, cognitive science, voice and speech, speech technology, or human health, this freshman seminar might be up your alley. All backgrounds and interests are welcome!

In addition to its topical material, this Seminar also embraces orienting Freshmen to the university's organization, to communicating with faculty and being effective in the college classroom, and to avenues for undergraduate research activities. Faculty guests will join periodically to introduce themselves.

Class Meetings Fall 2023

Meetings: Twelve class meetings Aug 23 - Nov 15

Time: Wednesdays 12-1:50pm

Place: WPH 104

Office Hours: My office in GFS after class with me; or ping me on email or Slack to schedule a Zoom meeting.



Courtesy of USC's
Yongwan Lim

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

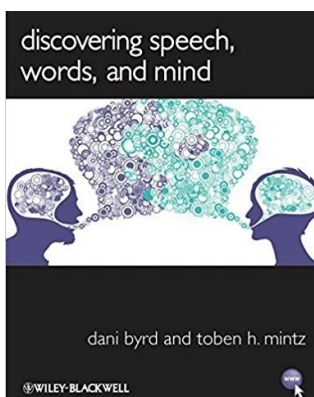
In the USC [Freshman Seminar Program](#), 18 or fewer freshmen "learn the excitement of intellectual inquiry by participating once a week for eleven weeks in a two-hour seminar on a topic of personal interest both to the seminar leader who has chosen to offer the topic and to the students who have elected 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
- To familiarize oneself with aspects of university organization, opportunities, and work strategies that may be helpful to undergraduates

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 digest an overview of how speech technology is engineered, including synthesis, recognition and Chat bots
- To become acquainted with speech and hearing 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, *Discovering Speech, Words, and Mind* (Byrd and Mintz), as well as other web-based material. The book is available on reserve at Leavey and as a free e-book from the Libraries. *No textbook purchase is required, though it is available optionally:*

D. Byrd & T. Mintz. (2010) [Discovering Speech, Words, and Mind](#). Wiley-Blackwell Publishing.

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 meetings, students will be *reading* scholarly and lay articles and media material that treat with scientific topics.
- Submission of *occasional small homework assignments* to hone skills will be required.

Grades

This is a 2-unit Credit/No credit class. Credit will be received if the required work is done, including attendance (in a way consistent with the Covid Notes below) and homeworks. There are no exams.

[Weekly Schedule Fall 2023 \[click here\]](#)

[USC and Related Support Resources](#)

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

Communication and Policy Information

Slack and Email: In addition to the utility of **Slack**, it is 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.

In-Class Health Notes

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](#).

Students are expected to comply with all aspects of USC's COVID-19 policy as extant at any given time, including its masking policy. Failure to do so may result in removal from the class and referral to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards. If we find ourselves needing to be remote, here are Professor Byrd's [Netiquette](#) expectations for the virtual classroom.

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, there should be no expectation that this class will be recorded, though it may be recorded at times for students who cannot be present due to illness.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis—New Students are automatically signed up for [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](#).”

(The inclusion here of the material below is required by USC.)

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university’s mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or “recycle” work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's](#)

[website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Unless specifically designated as a 'group project,' all assignments are expected to be completed individually. Please ask me if you are unsure about what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution. In this class, you are expected to submit work that demonstrates your individual mastery of the course concepts.

If found responsible for an academic violation, students may be assigned university outcomes, such as suspension or expulsion from the university, and grade penalties, such as an "F" grade on the assignment, exam, and/or in the course.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Violations of Academic Integrity: Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Violations of Academic Integrity: Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Course Evaluations

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide.

Students and Disability Accommodations

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

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Banner Art Credit: Lena Foellmer

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