

ENGL 451-01 Introduction to the Study of Language and Modern Grammar

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Class Room: Smith Science 207
Class Time: MWF 1:00p-1:50p
Office Hours: MWF 9a-10a; T 10a-11a

Catalogue Course Description

Introduction to the general principles concerning the design and function of human language, and an overview of the history of grammar with emphasis upon modern grammatical theory. Illustrative material is drawn from the English language, modern European languages, and others.

Required Materials

- Course text distributed in .pdf through Moodle
- Grade C or higher in ENGL 101 and ENGL 102

Course Goals and Objectives

Language is a property of the speech community, an instrument of social communication that evolves gradually and continuously throughout human history in response to a variety of human needs.

-William Labov, "Some observations on the foundation of Linguistics"

The objectives of the course are to provide you with an introduction to the nature and structure of human Language, as well as to introduce you to some basic methods of its scientific study, what we refer to as *Linguistics*.

The course will be framed in terms of 4 guiding questions:

- What is the nature of the cognitive system that we identify as Language?
- How is this system used in the production and comprehension of speech?
- How is this system represented in the brain?
- What are the necessary components of Language?

To begin answering these questions we will look at the various fields which linguists approach the study of Language: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. In addition, we will get involved in other "applied" areas which intersect with core linguistics including: sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, language acquisition, etc.

Student Learning Objectives

This course is an introduction to linguistics which will go beyond a mere overview of the field. This course seeks to provide you with the tools to do linguistic analysis and understand the influence of social and historical factors on language variation and change. Towards the end of the course you should have a solid over view of the linguistic system and how fantastically complicated and interesting it is. You should also have gained the ability to do linguistic analysis.

To foster and assess these objectives, you will complete a series of problem sets and exams which will ask you to apply linguistic analysis to real world data.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

In this course you will show your mastery of the course material through 9 Problem Sets, 5 Quizzes, and 2 Exams.

Course Grade Determination

The course will be graded out of 100% as outlined below. Final grades will be converted to a letter scale.

Exams

There will be 2 exams, a midterm and a final, each worth 30% for a total of 60% of the final grade. The midterm will occur midway through the semester and cover material from the first day to that period. The final exam will occur during final's week. The final is not cumulative but will only cover material from the midterm forward. The exams will present you with real-world linguistic data and ask you to apply classroom concepts covered in lecture notes and the readings to analyze the data.

Quizzes

There will be 5 quizzes worth 2% each for a total of 10% of the final grade. Quizzes will be completed in class and will not take the entire period. The quizzes are meant to help you understand which concepts you understand well and which you need more help with before the exam. Unlike the exams, the quizzes will be multiple choice.

Problem Sets

There will be 9 Problem Sets (PSets). I will drop the lowest grade and take the average score of the remaining 8 PSets for a total of 30% of the final grade. The PSets will give you a chance to apply classroom concepts to real-world language data, and they are meant to prepare you for the exams. The PSets will be completed outside of class time and turned in at the beginning of class on the days they are due.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance

To do well in this class, it is essential that you be in class each meeting. Excessive absences will negatively impact your final grade (5% off for each unexcused absence over 5).

If you are unable to attend a class for any reason, you are responsible for contacting me to receive any materials distributed on that day and to turn in any assignments. You will be held responsible for anything missed during an absence.

Late Work

All work must be turned in at the beginning of class on the date it is due. Late work will be penalized or not accepted at the discretion of the professor.

Academic Integrity

Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. See the university's policy on academic integrity.

Classroom Etiquette

You are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner regarding your interaction with the professor as well as with your fellow classmates. Lively discussion and multiple viewpoints are encouraged in this class; however, you are always expected to respond in a professional manner towards the ideas and opinions of your classmates.

All cell phones and other devices that make noise must be turned off before entering the classroom.

This schedule is tentative and subject to change as necessary.

Week	Date	Description	Reading
1	17-Aug	Introduction, What is language, Components of language	
	19-Aug	Competence and Performance Pset1 assigned	handout
	21-Aug	Words and Morphemes	
2	24-Aug	Types of Morphemes	
	26-Aug	Allomorphs, Mental Lexicon I	Chapter 1
	28-Aug	Phonetics, Consonants I	
3	31-Aug	Consonants II, PSet1 due, PSet2 assigned	
	2-Sep	Vowels	
	4-Sep	Transcription, Sagittal Sections	Chapter 2
4	7-Sep	Labor Day	
	9-Sep	Syllable Structure	
	11-Sep	Syllable formation	Chapter 3
5	14-Sep	Phonology I, PSet3 assigned, Pset 2 due	
	16-Sep	Phonology II	
	18-Sep	Morphophonology,	Chapter 4
6	21-Sep	Variation and Change, PSet4 assigned, PSet3 due	
	23-Sep	Sociolinguistics I,	
	25-Sep	Sociolinguistics II,	Chapter 5
7	28-Sep	Review, PSet4 Due	
	30-Sep	Midterm Exam	
	2-Oct	Lexical Semantics, PSet5 assigned	
8	5-Oct	Syntactic Categories,	
	7-Oct	Word Structure I	
	9-Oct	Student Holiday	
9	12-Oct	Compounds	
	14-Oct	Word Structure II PSet 6 assigned, PSet5 Due	
	16-Oct	Morphology	Chapter 7
10	19-Oct	Morphological variation and change	
	21-Oct	Historical Linguistics	Chapter 6
	23-Oct	Acquisition of Morphology	
11	26-Oct	Syntax: Merge and Projection, PSet 7 assigned, PSet 6 Due	
	28-Oct	Clause Structure	
	30-Oct	Constituents (DP and VP)	
12	2-Nov	Constituents (NP)	
	4-Nov	Complex Clause Structure, PSet 8 assigned, PSet 7 due	Chapter 8
	6-Nov	Null Categories	
13	9-Nov	Embedded Clauses, Infinitives	
	11-Nov	Practice	
	13-Nov	Little pro and Big PRO, PSet 9 assigned, PSet 8 Due	

14	16-Nov	Yes/No Questions	
	18-Nov	WH Questions	
	20-Nov	Practice	
	23-Nov	Thanksgiving Break	
	25-Nov	Thanksgiving Break	
	27-Nov	Thanksgiving Break	
15	30-Nov	Negation, PSet 9 Due	Chapter 9
	2-Dec	Practice	
	4-Dec	Final Exam—1:30pm	