

LING-101-012: Introduction to Linguistics

Syllabus for 2015 Spring

1 General Information

LECTURE: Tues. & Thurs. 3.30-4:45pm Pearson Hall 114

INSTRUCTOR: Mai Ha Vu

OFFICE: 125 E Main Street

E-MAIL: maiha@udel.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Tue. 2-3pm

Fri. 11:30am-1:00pm

Other times by appointment

2 Course Description

Linguistics, the systematic study of human language, is different from many other scientific subjects in that its focus (language) is accessible to everyone. Unlike in biology or physics, we all have intuitions and knowledge about at least one language that we have acquired as toddlers. We can easily gather linguistic data from those around us, including even ourselves.

Because of the prevalence of language in our species, many of us take our linguistic knowledge for granted. However, once we study a foreign language, teach our own to someone else, or encounter someone with developmental disabilities that prevents them from acquiring language, we realize the infinite complexities that lie in our linguistic intuitions. Think about it: it is an ongoing, almost impossible struggle to program a computer to understand and speak any human language, yet it is perfectly acquired by any normally developing toddler by the age of three. How do we come to such a complex knowledge so easily?

In this course we will survey how language can be scientifically studied, and how it relates to other disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, and sociology. We start with the introduction to the core subfields of linguistics that are organized by the different levels of language: the study of sounds and their production (phonetics), the mental representation and pattern of sounds (phonology), the structure of words (morphology), the structure of sentences (syntax), the meaning of sentences and words (semantics), and the use of language (pragmatics).

In the second half of the course, we will apply our knowledge of linguistic analysis to understand how language varies, changes, and gets acquired. We will learn about the diversity of language as well as the generalizations that must be universal to all human language. Through this course, we will challenge and question our preconceived beliefs about what a language is, and how it connects to other aspects of being human, both from a social and from a personal perspective.

3 Course Materials

Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics. 11th Edition. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press.

Other materials will be posted on Sakai (<https://sakai.udel.edu/portal>).

4 Grading

Homework: 8 homework assignments, each worth 5%	40%
Quizzes: 2 quizzes, each worth 10%	20%
Midterm: in class	20%
Final exam: cumulative, during finals week	20%

93–100%	A	74–76%	C
90–92%	A–	70–73%	C–
87–89%	B+	67–79%	D+
84–86%	B	64–66%	D
80–83%	B–	60–63%	D–
77–79%	C+	0–59%	F

- Grades can only be discussed in person due to privacy laws (they cannot be discussed on the phone or via e-mail).
- Grades will be posted to Sakai. At any given time grades might not be completely accurate, as extra credit is added in the end.
- Extra credit opportunities will be announced during the semester.

5 Policies

5.1 Readings and Participation

- Readings should be done **before** the class they are listed for.
- Good participation in class includes regular attendance, asking questions and participating in discussions in class, and coming to office hours if needed. Participation will not be graded, but will be a deciding factor for borderline cases when assigning final grades.
- Attendance will be checked for the purpose of evaluating participation.
- Make-up quizzes and exams are given for excused absence only. You have to notify me about your absence **before** the class you are missing.

5.2 Homework

- Homework assignments will be collected in the beginning of class on the day they are due.
- Late homework assignments can be submitted up to **24 hours** after they are due at a penalty of 50% off the homework grade.
- Homework assignments can be submitted by e-mail or hard copy. Be advised that a number of assignments will be difficult to complete in Microsoft Word or similar text editors due to special symbols and figures that you will have to produce. I recommend either writing them by hand, using \LaTeX , or Google-ing how to do them in Word.
- If you choose to e-mail your homework assignment, use the following format for the e-mail subject line: **LING101-Homework[NUMBER]-[LAST_NAME]**. For example, *LING101-Homework1-Vu*. I cannot guarantee seeing homework assignments sent with a subject line in a different format.
- If you choose to submit the homework assignment in hard copy either late or early, put them in my box at the Linguistics Department at 125 E Main Street.
- If you miss time due to an excused absence, contact me early to make arrangements, and expect to have to document that the absence is excused (at Undergraduate Academic Services, 109 Mitchell Hall, <http://www.cas.udel.edu/uas/>).
- You are encouraged to work together on homework, but write-ups must be done individually.

5.3 Academic Integrity

- Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a zero on the assignment or test in question, and possibly a failing grade for the course.
- If you are not sure what plagiarism is look up the rather brief section on academic honesty in the Academic Code of Conduct: <http://www.udel.edu/stuguide/1314/code.html#honesty>

5.4 Use of Electronic Devices

- You are welcome to use laptops or tablets for **note taking only**.
- All electronic devices must be silenced.
- No cell phones are to be used in class.
- No electronic devices may be used (or even visible) during quizzes and exams.
- Please be courteous to your fellow students: do not walk in and out of the classroom unless absolutely necessary, consume food and beverages discretely, do not carry on side conversations, etc.

5.5 Academic Accommodations

- Students with documented disabilities receiving services this semester should talk to me in person so we can discuss your needs.

6 Schedule

Schedule is tentative and will be updated during the semester. Check Sakai for all updates.

Dates	Topic	Reading	Assignment
02/10	Introduction		
02/12	Introduction	Files 1.0-1.4	
02/17	Phonetics	Files 2.0-2.4	
02/19	Phonetics		
02/24	Phonology	Files 3.0-3.3, 3.5	HW1 due
02/26	Phonology		
03/03	Quiz 1 , Morphology	Files 4.0-4.5	HW2 due
03/05	<i>No Class, Snowday</i>		
03/10	Morphology		
03/12	Syntax	Files 5.0-5.5	HW3 due
03/17	Syntax		
03/19	Semantics & Pragmatics	Files 6.3-6.4, 7.0-7.2	HW4 due
03/24	Midterm		
03/26	Language Variation	Files 10.0-10.5	
03/31	<i>No Classes, Spring Break</i>		
04/02	<i>No Classes, Spring Break</i>		
04/07	Language Change; Pidgins & Creoles	Files 12.3-12.4	HW5 due
04/09	Case Study: AAVE		
04/14	Language Documentation, Endangered Languages		
04/16	Language Documentation in Class	Files 12.6	HW6 due
04/21	Quiz 2 ; Language and Thought	Files 11.1-11.2	
04/23	Language & Brain	Files 9.0-9.7	
04/28	Psycholinguistics		
04/30	Language Acquisition	Files 8.0-8.5	HW7 due
05/05	Language Acquisition		
05/07	Animal Communication	Files 14.0-14.3	HW8 due
05/12	Review		
05/14	Final Exam in class		