

Linguistics 201

Syllabus

Fall 2015

1 General Info

Instructor: Michael Clauss
email: mclauss@linguist.umass.edu
Course site: <http://switchll.net/ling201.html>

	Class meetings	Office hours
Time	TTh 1:00-2:15	W 3:00-4:00, F 11:00-12:00 (Or by appointment)
Place	Dickinson 112	ILC N421F

2 Goals and content of the course

There are two primary goals of the course: (1) to give an introduction to the methods used by theoretical linguists, and (2) to give a general overview of some of the topics studied by theoretical linguists.

2.1 Methods of linguistics.

Theoretical linguists, specifically those who are interested in formal theories of language (the kind we will be interested with in this course) use analytic methods to make generalizations about language, often by thinking abstractly about language to find commonalities across data which may not be immediately obvious. We will show how this may be done across different domains of language, and in general give training in these skills so that they may be used both in and out of the field of linguistics.

Because of the formal variety of reasoning used in these methods, Linguistics 201 satisfies the R2 General Education requirement.

2.2 Topics of linguistics.

Linguists use similar sorts of methods across all domains of language, though different domains may require different sorts of generalizations and different ways in which to formalize them. We will survey three different domains of language, how they may be abstractly represented, and what sorts of generalizations may be made about them. The three domains are sounds (both on their own and in sequences), words, and then phrases and sentences.

Before these topics, though, we will spend the first few sessions of the class discussing general concerns of linguistics, defending the usefulness of this type of linguistic theory, and addressing some ideas about language which are quite commonly assumed to be true, but which most (if not all) linguists find flawed.

3 Course policies

3.1 Attendance

Attendance is not strictly required, but it is advisable; while homeworks, study guides, and in-class exercises will be available on the course website, most material will only be accessible during class. If you must miss a class for any reason, let me know and we can work out the best way for you to make up the material; probably the best way will be to come to attend office hours. If office hours conflict with your schedule, I will do my best to provide other arrangements.

3.2 Communication

I will communicate with you by sending messages through Moodle. As such it is crucial that you check your school email.

3.3 Homework

Homework makes up a good portion of your final grade, and thus doing homework assignments will be an important part of success in the class. Further, homework's will provide practice for the sort of problems and questions which will appear on exams.

- Homeworks will be made available on the course website, and summarized briefly in class, seven days before they are due.
- Homeworks will only be accepted in hard copy. If you cannot make it to class the day a homework is due, let me know and we can make alternative arrangements, depending on the reason you are unable to make it. If you have a medical reason for missing class I may be willing to accept an emailed homework but in most cases only hard copies will be acceptable.
- Late homeworks will be accepted, with a 2 point deduction, at the *beginning* of the following class. A homework submitted after this will not be accepted without a reasonable excuse accompanied by some sort of documentation (doctor's note, or something else relevant).
- Answer keys for each homework will be made available, and the homework reviewed, at the class period following the due date.
- You may collaborate with other students on homeworks, but each student must submit a unique, completed copy. Please label any collaborators who worked with you on each homework.

3.4 Exams

There will be three exams in the class: Two midterms and a final. Each exam will be cumulative in that as of any exam, material from any preceding part of the class may be included. The midterms each comprise 15% of the final grade, and the final comprises 30%. As such the final will be a bit longer than either of the midterms. Unless I inform you otherwise, assume that the exams will take place at the same time and place as class sessions.

3.5 Extra credit

There may be opportunities for extra credit. Details will be forthcoming.

3.6 Readings

There will be no required textbooks for this class. Some material for this class will be taken from O'Grady et al's *Contemporary Linguistics* text book; the Sixth Edition (2009) is available on Amazon.com and from a number of other sources. Books that cover material very similar to what we will cover here include Jackendoff's *Patterns in the Mind* and Pinker's *The Language Instinct*, both of which are widely available. The only strictly necessary materials for the class are assignments and lecture notes, which will be given in class and available on the course site.

3.7 This syllabus

You may consider this syllabus to be a contract between instructor and class; as such, the expectations, schedules, etc. discussed here are binding, and any changes to them will not be one-sided decisions but will be discussed between us. However, I consider your attendance to be a requirement in participating in these decisions; not showing up is tantamount to waiving this right.

4 Grade breakdown

- 40% for HW1-8 (5% each)
- 30% for MT1-2 (15% each)
- 30% for Final

5 Schedule

Week 1: 9/7-11

Tues 9/8: Review syllabus, Introduction, Linguistic form and linguistic theory **HW1 Assigned**
 Thurs 9/10: NO CLASS (I am away)

Week 2: 9/14-18

Tues 9/15: **HW1 Due**; Form, theory, and innateness; making generalizations
 Thurs 9/17: The human articulatory system and the description of sounds; **HW2 Assigned**

Week 3: 9/21-25

Tues 9/22: The articulatory system and the IPA
 Thurs 9/24: **HW2 Due**; The IPA continued

Week 4: 9/28-10/2

Tues 9/29: Stress and the representation of syllables; **HW3 assigned**
 Thurs 10/1: Phonological representation: Phonemes

Week 5: 10/5-9

Tues 10/6: **HW3 Due** Allophony in English; **HW4 assigned**
Thurs 10/8: Phonological rules

Week 6: 10/12-16

Tues 10/13: NO CLASS (Monday schedule)
Thurs 10/15: **HW4 due**; Phonological rules practice; general review

Week 7: 10/19-23

Tues 10/20: Exam #1
Thurs 10/22: Words and their structure; types of morphological processes. **HW5 assigned**

Week 8: 10/26-30

Tues 10/27: Morphological ambiguity and structure; Inflection and derivation.
Thurs 10/29: **HW5 due**; Morphological analysis. **HW6 assigned**

Week 9: 11/2-6

Tues 11/3: Morphological variation, morpho-phonology.
Thurs 11/5: **HW6 due**; Morphological variation continued.

Week 10: 11/9-13

Tues 11/10: Review and practice.
Thurs 11/12: Exam #2

Week 11: 11/16-20

Tues 11/17: Words, phrases, and sentences.
Thurs 11/19: Syntactic representations and phrase structures. **HW7 assigned**

Week 12: 11/23-27

Tues 11/24: Ambiguous sentences and their structures.
Thurs 11/26: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

Week 13: 11/30-12/4

Tues 12/1: **HW7 due**; Recursion and Constituency; question formation. **HW8 assigned**
Thurs 12/3: Question formation continued.

Week 14: 12/7-11

Tues 12/8: **HW8 due**; Semantics and pragmatics, and topics beyond.
Thurs 12/10: General review and final thoughts.

Finals Week: 12/14-ish

– The date of our final will be announced when it is known.