

Syllabus

Ling. 115: Phonological Theory I
Fall 2016
Thursday 1–3, Boylston 303

Instructor

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Office hours: Wed 1–2, or by appointment

Course site: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/16885>

Description

This course is an intensive introduction to phonological theory and experimental work in phonology. This includes rule-based and constraint-based approaches, the typology of phonological processes (vowel and consonant harmony, assimilation and dissimilation, lenition and fortition, etc.), and phonological acquisition. Experimental approaches will deal with gradience, exceptionality, and productivity with an introduction to the quantitative methodologies that these phenomena require.

The goal for the Fall is to build a solid background in Optimality Theory (OT), the dominant theoretical framework in the field, give students a first taste of the typology of phonological phenomena, and give students insight into some approaches in the literature that draw upon both synchronic and diachronic phonology. Linguistics 215 in the Spring will involve more exploration of various types of phonological phenomena, as well as experimental and computational approaches.

Presumed background

This course will assume general familiarity with what would be covered in a basic undergraduate phonology course (such as Ling. 105): basic articulatory phonetics, features, and alternations. I will review these foundational aspects at the outset, but only very briefly. Please let me know if you have any concerns about your experience level.

Grading and policies

This course will involve approximately 7 assignments, and 1 short final paper. The assignments will count for 60% of your final grade, while the paper contributes the other 40%.

You are encouraged to collaborate on assignments, though you must write up each one individually in your own words. The assignment load will be lighter towards the final weeks to give you more time to focus on your papers.

For the final paper, you should aim for about 3000-4000 words excluding tables and figures. The paper should engage with some theoretical issue, not just be description or analysis. You should make sure to meet with me at least once regarding your choice of topic. I will be happy to provide assistance with choosing and developing a topic at any point during the semester.

Required materials

One textbook is required for this course: John McCarthy's *Doing Optimality Theory* (Blackwell, 2008). This book is a wonderful resource both for beginners and experienced phonologists. Additional readings, some optional and some required, will be posted on the website as they are assigned.

Preliminary Course Calendar (subject to change)

Week	Day	Topic	Readings
1	Sep 1	Intro: Contrast, Features, Derivations	(Kenstowicz & Kissner 1979, Ch. 1-3)
2	Sep 8	Arguments for constraints	Doing OT, Ch. 1
3	Sep 15	OT Intro	Doing OT, Ch. 2
4	Sep 22	OT continued	Doing OT, Ch. 4
5	Sep 29	Factorial typology, learnability	Doing OT, Ch. 5
6	Oct 6	Syllables, stress, alignment	Kager (1999), Ch. 4 (Hayes 1995, Ch. 3-5)
7	Oct 13		
8	Oct 20	Autosegmental representations: spreading	TBA
9	Oct 27	Opacity revisited	McCarthy (2007)
10	Nov 3	Typology revisited	Kiparsky (2006)
11	Nov 10	OT and Learnability	
12	Nov 17		TBA
13	Nov 24	Thanksgiving, no class	
14	Dec 1	Final paper presentations	

Bibliography

Kager, René. 1999. *Optimality Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kenstowicz, Michael, and Charles Kissoberth. 1979. *Generative Phonology*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Kiparsky, Paul. 2006. The amphichronic program vs. Evolutionary Phonology. *Theoretical Linguistics* 32(3): 217-236.

Hayes, Bruce. 1995. *Metrical stress theory: Principles and case studies*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

McCarthy, John. 2007. Derivations and levels of representation. In Paul de Lacy (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Phonology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.99-118.

McCarthy, John. 2008. *Doing Optimality Theory: Applying theory to data*. Oxford: Blackwell.