

Syllabus

Linguistics 201: Introduction to Linguistic Theory

LINGUIST201-SEC03

Fall 2014

Instructor:

Aleksei 'Alex' Nazarov

Integrative Learning Center, 4th floor, office N431G

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Office hours: Mon 1:30-2:30 & Fri 1:30-2:30

Class sessions:

Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays, 12:20-1:10 pm

in Hasbrouck Laboratory, room 136

General Course Information

Language: we use it every day, whether we are speaking, signing in sign language, texting, IMing, writing a letter, typing up a paper, thinking, or singing. But how does language really work? What are the structures and rules that allow us to encode all this information and emotion?

In this course, you will learn how the rules that underlie human languages can be investigated in a precise and formal way. In the first part of the course, you will learn about these rules themselves, and the differences between subconscious rules and attitudes about language. In the second and main part of the course, you will learn about analytic techniques that allow you to find the rules that govern various aspects of language (words, sounds, sentences), and you will learn how to apply these techniques to new data. Finally, the last part of the course will teach you about how the structures of human language may vary between communities and between individual language users.

Since this course requires substantial analysis and analytic reasoning, it satisfies the R2 (Analytic Reasoning) General Education requirement.

Course Requirements & Grading Policy

The course requirements for this class consist of assignments and tests. These will be a guideline for you to learn how to look at languages from an analytic point of view.

Assignments

In the course of this semester, you will be turning in 8 regular assignments (which means 1 assignment roughly every week or every other week). There will also be an introductory Assignment 0 (for credit), and an optional Assignment 9 towards the end of the course.

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Unless specified otherwise, assignments must be handed in by the beginning of class on the designated due date, and **in person**.

In the case of extraordinary circumstances, you may turn in the assignment one session later. In that case, you should give me a note in person (or through e-mail) by the beginning of class on the designated due date, saying that you will turn in the assignment during the next class session. I will accept such late submissions up to a total of three times per student during this semester.

No submissions will be accepted after one class session has elapsed since the deadline.

Tests

There will also be 3 tests: 2 midterm exams (one in early October and one in early November) as well as 1 final exam during the final examination period. All tests will be held in our classroom (Hasbrouck 136). The midterms will take place during class sessions, while the final exam is scheduled for 1:00-3:00 pm on Monday, December 8.

There will be no regular make-up dates for tests. However, if you cannot make it to class on one of the test dates due to special circumstances, and if you let me know in advance, we can find an alternative date for you to take the test.

All tests will be cumulative: the material to study for each test will consist of recent material as well as everything that was studied for previous tests.

Weighting

Tests will be weighted more heavily than assignments. Specifically, all assignment scores together will make up 1/3 of your grade, the midterms combined are another 1/3 of your grade, and the score for the final will provide the remaining 1/3.

<i>Proportion of final grade</i>	<i>Component</i>
1/ 3	8 Assignments
1/ 3	2 Midterms
1/ 3	1 Final exam

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Determining Letter Grades

Letter grades will be determined from point percentages according to the following grading scale:

Point percentage	Letter grade
100-92%	A
91-89%	A-
88-87%	B+
86-82%	B
81-79%	B-
78-77%	C+
76-72%	C
71-69%	C-
68-67%	D+
66-59%	D
58-0%	F

Extra credit

Extra credit for this course may be earned through participation in experiments run by linguists at UMass. These experiments will teach you more about questions that are asked in linguistics, and will advance our scientific knowledge about human language. More information about sign-up and other matters will be given in due time.

You may participate in as many experiments as you would like, and every experiment counts towards 5 points on top of your assignment scores.

Readings

Reading is assigned for most weeks, and should be completed by Monday of the week for which the reading is assigned. The readings do not cover everything that is said in class and that you will have to know for assignments and tests, but provide general background information which will be helpful in preparing for these assignments and tests.

Class materials and Moodle

All class materials, including readings and in-class materials such as lecture outlines, slides, and handouts, will be available on Moodle (moodle.umass.edu). No textbook is required. You should have access to the Moodle page for this course if you are signed up for the course on SPIRE. If you have any trouble accessing the Moodle page, please let me know as soon as possible.

Attendance

Success in this course only comes with a sufficient amount of practice in the analytic techniques that you will be presented with, and it is in class that you will learn about and practice these techniques. Reading materials (uploaded weekly) and in-class materials (uploaded at irregular intervals) will not provide a full summary of what was said in class.

Passing this class requires full attendance and full attention. If you anticipate having to miss many class sessions this semester due to workload from other courses or due to other reasons, the best option may be to take this class at a later time.

Appointments and Office Hours

If you have questions about the homework or a test, general questions about the course, or just some interesting idea about language you would like to share – please always feel free to come by during office hours (Mo 1:30-2:30 and Fr 1:30-2:30). There is no need to make an appointment, just come by my office (Integrative Learning Center, office N431G)!

If you would prefer some other time, I am also always more than happy to meet with you. Just send me an e-mail, or come to me before or after class, to make an appointment.

Academic Honesty

As in any class at the University of Massachusetts, the university's policy concerning academic honesty applies, which can be found at:

http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/index.php

For assignments, working together on solving problem sets is encouraged. However, answers must be written up individually: no duplicates of another student's writeup with your name on it will be accepted. Working together on tests is **never** allowed.

Should I discover that you cheated in any way or form on a test or assignment, you will receive zero points for that test or assignment, and an informal report will be made to the University's Academic Honesty Board. If you are caught cheating more than once, or if the cheating is unusually serious, this will result in an F for the course and a formal report to the Academic Honesty Board. You have the right to appeal any charge of academic dishonesty, as explained on the website given above. I would be glad to answer any further questions you might have about the academic honesty policy.

A note: if you are so lost with an assignment that you are tempted to copy someone else's, you should stop and contact me for extra help. Some questions can be handled via e-mail, but I also have office hours specifically for this purpose (Mon & Fri 1:30-2:30), during which you can drop in without necessarily having to contact me first; if those times do not work for you, contact me to make an appointment.

Accommodations at UMass

Many accommodations are available at the University to ensure that students with disabilities participate fully in academic and student life. For information about course accommodation due to disability, contact Disability Services:

Phone (V/TTY): 413-545-0892 Fax: 413-577-0122
E-mail: ds@educ.umass.edu
<http://www.umass.edu/disability/students.html>

If you have a physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services, you may be eligible for accommodations in this course. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible.

Some important dates

Monday,	September 15	Last day of Add/Drop period
Monday,	October 13	No Class (Columbus Day)
Tuesday,	October 14	Midterm 1
Wednesday,	October 15	No Class
Wednesday,	November 5	Midterm 2
Wednesday,	November 12	No Class (Tuesday Schedule)
Friday,	November 28	No Class (Thanksgiving Break)
Monday,	December 8	Final Exam (in regular classroom, 1:00-3:00 PM)

See the following pages for a full course calendar.

Bibliography

Green, Lisa. 2002. *A Descriptive Study of African American English: Research in Linguistics and Education*. Qualitative Studies in Education, 15, 6, 673-690.

Hockett, Charles F. 1958. *A Course in Modern Linguistics*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Johnson, Kyle. *Syllables*. From course materials for Linguistics 201.

O'Grady, William; John Archibald, Mark Aronoff & Janie Rees-Miller. 2010. *Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction*. Edition 6. Boston/New York: Bedford St. Martin.

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Course Schedule

(Will change!)

DATE	TOPIC/EVENT	WHAT IS DUE?
<i>1. Introduction: Rules of Language</i>		
Week 1		
Wed, September 3	Introduction	
Fri, September 5	Descriptive vs. prescriptive rules	
Week 2		
Mon, September 8	Subconscious knowledge of language	<i>Reading: Language Files, Ch. 1.3 & 10.3</i> Assignment 0 due
<i>2. Analyzing Language</i>		
<i>2a. Morphology (word structure)</i>		
Wed, September 10	Morphology: the building blocks of words	
Fri, September 12	The morpheme	
Week 3		
Mon, September 15	Types of morphemes Last day of Add/Drop period	<i>Reading: Contemporary Linguistics, Ch. 4 (excerpts)</i>
Wed, September 17	Tree structures for words	
Fri, September 19	Morphological rules	
Week 4		
Mon, September 21	Morphological ambiguity	<i>Reading: A Course in Modern Linguistics, Ch. 32</i>
Wed, September 23	Allomorphs	Assignment 1 due
Fri, September 25	Allomorphy rules	
Week 5		
Mon, September 29	Contexts and sounds	<i>Reading: Contemporary Linguistics, Ch. 2.1-2.7</i>
<i>2b. Phonology (sound structure)</i>		
Wed, October 1	Phonetic transcription	Assignment 2 due
Fri, October 3	Phonological classes	
Week 6		
Mon, October 6	Syllables	<i>Reading: Syllables</i>
Wed, October 8	The syllabification algorithm	Assignment 3 due
Fri, October 10	Review for Midterm 1	

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DATE	TOPIC/EVENT	WHAT IS DUE?
Week 7		
Mon, October 13	No Class (Columbus Day)	
Tue, October 14 (<i>Monday Schedule</i>)	Midterm 1	
Wed, October 15	No Class	
Fri, October 17	Impossible words	
Week 8		
Mon, October 20	The Phoneme	<i>Reading: Contemporary Linguistics, Ch. 3 (excerpts)</i> Assignment 4 due
Wed, October 22	Allophones	
Fri, October 24	Allophony rules	
<i>2c. Syntax (sentence structure)</i>		
Week 9		
Mon, October 27	Syntax: building sentences from words	<i>Reading: Language Files, Ch. 6.1-6.4</i>
Wed, October 29	Phrase Structure Rules	Assignment 5 due
Fri, October 31	The problem of infinity	
Week 10		
Mon, November 3	Review for Midterm 2	
Wed, November 5	Midterm 2	
Fri, November 7	Constituency tests	
Week 11		
Mon, November 10	Discovering new constituents	<i>Reading: Language Files, Ch. 6.5</i> Assignment 6 due
Wed, November 12	No Class (Tuesday schedule)	
Fri, November 14	Syntactic Ambiguity	
Week 12		
Mon, November 17	Syntactic Ambiguity, Continued	<i>Reading: Recursion</i> Assignment 7 due
Wed, November 19	Recursion	
<i>3. Language Variation</i>		
Fri, November 21	Word order across languages	

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DATE	TOPIC/EVENT	WHAT IS DUE?
Week 13		
Mon, November 24	Capturing Word Order Variation	<i>Reading: Language Files, Ch. 10.2 & 10.4</i> <i>Assignment 8 due</i>
Wed, November 26	Thanksgiving Surprise!	
Fri, November 28	<i>No Class (Thanksgiving break)</i>	
Week 14		
Mon, December 1	Language and Dialect	<i>Reading: A Descriptive Study of African American English, pages 677-687</i> <i>Assignment 9 due (optional)</i>
Wed, December 3	A Case Study of African American English	
Fri, December 5	Review for Final	<i>Bring your extra credit slips!</i>

Finals week		
Mon, December 8 1:00 - 3:00 PM	<i>Final Exam</i> in Hasbrouck 136	