

[Note: this syllabus is a live working document, continue to check regularly for the most updated information]

Instructor: Prof. [Kate Davidson](#) (Office hour: Wed 11am-12pm, Boylston 305, email: kathryndavidson@fas.harvard.edu)

Teaching Fellows:

Ankana Saha, OH: Thu 4:15-5:15pm, Location Boylston 303, email: ankana_saha@g.harvard.edu

Nadav Asraf, OH: Wed 2-3 pm, Boylston 236, email: nadavasraf@g.harvard.edu

Dasha Bikina, OH: Mon 4:30-5:30pm, Boylston 103, email: dbikina@g.harvard.edu

AljoĀja MilenkoviĀ†, OH: Tue 3-4pm, Boylston 303, email: aljosamilenkovic@g.harvard.edu

Dear students, welcome to Ling 83! This class is designed to teach you about the structure of human language from a cognitive scientific perspective and to help you understand better this core aspect of what it is to be human (both by comparison and contrast to other biological and artificial systems). By the end of the course you should be in a strong position to take any of our more advanced undergraduate Linguistics courses if you're interested in pursuing linguistics further, or to apply current linguistic thinking to your studies in other domains across the social sciences, physical sciences, SEAS (esp. CS), and arts and humanities.

Lecture slides can be found [here](#). (Or navigate via Pages in the Canvas menu.)

This class complements in person lectures with both TF-led sections and a textbook to allow you to learn the material from several continuous, interconnected perspectives. Your **textbook** is [An Introduction to Language by Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman, and Nina Hyams](#). You'll need the 11th edition, as editions do differ quite a bit, but it can be rented, there's an e-copy, etc, as we've used this text before. All additional readings will be posted to the Canvas site as PDFs.

This course is designed to help everyone keep on top of the material by requiring weekly comments to facilitate dialogue between instructors and students and ensure lectures make the best use of our time, as well as regular manageable-length p-sets/homeworks to hone your skills, and two exams and two projects that allow you to show how much you've learned. Accordingly, grades will be based on:

- Comments on weekly readings and lectures (11 total, due on Canvas as text, drop the lowest) = 30%
- Problem sets (6 total due on Fridays via Gradescope file upload, drop the lowest) = 30%
- Two exams = 20%
- Two projects = 20%

Discussion sections, led by experienced TFs, will be held on Wednesday and Thursdays.

D002 Wed 3:15 - 4:15pm @ Vanserg 215, TF: Nadav Asraf

D003 Wed 4:30 - 5:30pm @ Vanserg 215, Nadav Asraf

D004 Thu 12 - 1pm @ Boylston G07, TF: Ankana Saha

D005 Thu 1:30 - 2:30pm @ Boylston G07, TF: AljoĀja MilenkoviĀ†

D006 Thu 3:15 - 4:15pm @ Boylston 303, TF: Ankana Saha

D007 Thu 9 - 10am @ Lowell Hall B-11, TF: Dasha Bikina

D008 Thu 10:30 - 11:30am @ Lowell Hall B-11, TF: Dasha Bikina

Classroom policies:

Laptops are welcome in lecture if they help you learn but please consider the content you engage with during lecture to minimize distractions for your classmates. *Lectures are not recorded* to help foster an active classroom atmosphere, but of course life happens, so for those occasions when you have to miss class due to sickness, travel, etc. there is a textbook to introduce material as backup, ask questions in section, and for some topics I can share asynchronous lectures from when I taught this class during the covid online year (although they'll now be quite a bit outdated); you're also strongly encouraged to attend office hours, reserved time specifically set aside to answer any questions/ideas that come to your mind.

Late policy:

The point of due dates is to keep you on top of the material, but we also know you've got to balance

keeping on top of your school work with your mental and physical health, so we'll be happy to automatically *drop your lowest p-set grade (out of 6 total) and also drop your lowest comment grade (out of 11 total), and allow you one further late p-set and comment each, to be completed by the end of the last day of class.* Any further late or incomplete assignments beyond these should be only in unusual circumstances in consultation with and with approval from your Allston Burr Assistant Deans and Resident Deans of Freshmen.

P-set regrade policy:

You are allowed to request a regrade of your p-set during five office days following the day of the release of the grades. After that time, no regrade requests will be considered.

Collaboration policy: Your **reading comments** should generally be done by only you. **P-Sets** should also generally be done by you, but you may find some problems worth discussing with others in the class, *and that is fine*, especially after you first try it yourself. If you do discuss problems with friends, please note which classmates you discussed the problems with on your homeworks. **Please do not consult outside materials (including AI/the internet), as this will not actually help you learn the material.**