

Ling 240: Language and Mind

University of Maryland

Fall 2014

Lecture

Time: MWF 11:00-11:50 pm

Place: LeFrak Hall (LEF) 2208

Instructor Information

Professor: Tonia Bleam (Dr. Bleam)

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Office hours: Wed 2:30-3:30 and by appointment

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Office hours:	Tues 3:45-4:45 & by appt	Thurs 2:30-3:30 & by appt

Note: Please make every effort to attend a scheduled office hour before requesting an appointment. If you need to request an appointment, the best way to do this is to send an email to one or more of us, including a list of your available times during the week.

Course Web Page

The course web page (in Canvas) is at: <http://elms.umd.edu>

Schedule updates, assignments, announcements and overheads from lecture will be posted on this site. Make sure you have access to the site and that you check it regularly (i.e., every day).

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to investigate the nature of the human mind using language as a vehicle for this exploration. We will study how knowledge is structured in the mind such that humans can produce and understand their native language(s) and how this knowledge develops as the product of innate knowledge in combination with information from the environment.

The course will be centered around two themes that reflect two fundamental conclusions of modern linguistics: that humans have a mental grammar and that humans have innate linguistic knowledge. Studying phonology (sound systems), morphology (word structure) and syntax (sentence structure) will help us to understand and appreciate the nature and organization of mental grammar. Studying how children acquire language (and making comparisons between humans and other species) will help us to explore the balance of nature vs. nurture in the development of mental grammar.

Since this course serves as a gateway to the linguistics major, there will be an emphasis on mastering the technical skills needed to solve phonology and syntax problems and on learning to approach the relevant questions from a scientific perspective.

The Jackendoff text (see below) will serve as the skeleton of the course. Readings from the Language Files textbook will help fill in the technical details. Supplemental readings (linguistics and cognitive psychology articles) will give students the opportunity to engage with classic and current literature from the field.

Learning Outcome Goals

After taking this class, students should be able to...

- understand the concept of a mental grammar and be able to describe and model parts of the system that generate language
- understand the concept of innateness, questions about the interplay between innate knowledge and the environment (nature vs. nurture) in the acquisition of language, and what kinds of things might be part of a human genetic endowment that may be specific to the linguistic component
- make linguistic generalizations based on a data set
- provide an analysis of the basic syntactic constituents of an English sentence (and to some degree a sentence from any language if given glosses) (i.e., draw a syntactic tree structure)
- determine the phonemic inventory (how sounds are categorized) and phonological rules in a given language based on a data set
- apply the scientific method in the linguistic domain to some degree (for example, testing the predictions of hypotheses using provided data sets)

Readings

- Required Textbooks:
 - **Jackendoff**, Ray. 1994. *Patterns in the Mind*. Basic Books. (labeled “J” in the schedule)
 - **The Ohio State University**. 2007. *Language Files*. 11th edition. Ohio State University Press.
- Additional readings will be made available on the ELMS web site, through library reserves, or through the Linguistics Department.

Evaluation

Breakdown of final grade:

homeworks & exercises	...	30%
quizzes	...	20%
Exam I	...	20%
Exam II	...	30%

Total	...	100%

Homeworks: Homeworks and exercises will be assigned to help you process ideas from the reading and to practice language analysis skills. Homeworks will either be turned in online or in class, depending on the assignment. Online submission must take place

before class time on the day the assignment is due. If the assignment is to be submitted in class, it must be typed, stapled and **turned in at the beginning of class** on the day they are due. Homeworks that are not typed or stapled will be penalized 10%. (Trees and phonetic symbols may be written by hand – extremely neatly.) There is a distinction between *homeworks* and *exercises*. Homeworks are worth 10 points and are graded on correctness, whereas exercises are worth 2 points and will be graded more leniently (i.e., it is possible to get some answers wrong and still get full credit). **It is extremely important that you complete BOTH the homeworks and the exercises on time and on your own in order to learn the material and be successful in the class.**

As a rule, late homeworks and exercises will not be accepted. If you run into problems, you may contact your TA BEFORE the time the homework is due, and IF YOUR TA AGREES, you can turn in a late homework with the following conditions: Late homeworks will receive a 10% penalty and will not be accepted any later than **24 hours** following the original due date & time. (Late exercises will go down ¼ of a point.) **Do not miss class to finish a homework!!** If the assignment is not turned in at the beginning of class, it is late anyway. Come to class, explain the situation to your TA, and take an extra day to finish the homework (with the 10% penalty). **Exceptions to the late policy will be made only in the case of serious, documented emergencies that are communicated to us in a timely manner.**

Exams & Quizzes: There will be two exams and several quizzes (on the order of 3-5). The final exam is cumulative. Exams and quizzes are closed-book. To some degree you will be tested on memorized material, but for the most part exams will require you to think about problems and analyze data that you have not seen before. **No early or late make-up exams or quizzes** will be given. If you miss an exam, you will receive a “0” on it. **Exceptions will be made only in the case of serious, documented emergencies that are communicated to me in a timely manner.** (See policy on medical absences below.) You must take the final exam in order to pass the class.

Participation: Participation can affect your grade. Frequent absences will result in a lowered grade (at most 5%). Consistent attendance coupled with significant thoughtful participation (demonstrating preparation and engagement) will result in a raised grade (at most 5%). If you attend class regularly and are attentive, your grade will be unaffected.

Experiment requirement: Students are required to fulfill an experimental requirement for this course which involves participating in linguistics experiments for a total of 2 hours OR doing a provided alternative activity (i.e., attending a scheduled video showing) for 2 hours, or some combination of these. Failure to complete this requirement will result in a lowering of your grade by 1/3 of a grade (i.e., A to A-, A- to B+, etc.). More details will be forthcoming.

Extra credit: **There is NO possibility for extra credit for this course.** You should focus on learning the course material and put effort into your assignments. If you are having trouble with anything, be pro-active and make sure that you get help from one of us. Communicate about your situation. Don’t let yourself get too far behind!

Student Responsibilities (General)

- be responsible for your own learning. (Your focus should be on learning, not primarily on your grade. The requirements of the course are designed to help

- you learn. If you are doing the required work and learning the material, your grade will reflect that.)
- Academic honesty and integrity: properly cite ideas that come from other sources; do not share your work with others; do not ask to see someone else's homework. (ETC – see below)
 - Attendance: you are expected to be in class, prepared and participating (at least by paying attention), every scheduled class meeting.
 - Keep up with homeworks and exercises. Turn in on time and fully completed.
 - Communicate – about how your learning is going; request justified extensions & extra help in a timely manner.
 - Come for extra help if there is anything that you do not fully understand. (Don't wait! Get help as soon as you notice an issue or problem to keep yourself from falling behind.)
 - *Be respectful of others*, not disruptive. (Behaviors I take to be disrespectful or disruptive: reading the newspaper during class, doing email, texting during class, walking out in the middle of class, coming late.) If you need to leave class early or arrive late, please let me know ahead of time if at all possible. If you are bored in class, find a way of talking to me about what could help (see point about communicating) or drop the class now if you are not interested in this topic! (My advice: only take courses you are interested in!)
 - Time commitment: You should expect to have to actively prepare for every single class, spending 2-3 hours outside of class for every hour in class. Sometimes preparation will just be reading, other times it will be an exercise or homework assignment to turn in, or it may be reading plus an exercise. Reading an article does not just mean skimming it once. You may have to read several times, take notes, look up words you don't know, etc., in order to understand a research/journal article.

Writing and Study Skills Help

This course requires a significant amount of expository writing. Clarity in your writing will count toward your homework, exam and writing assignment grades. If we feel you need help with your writing skills, we will ask you to contact the [Writing Center](#) in the College of Arts & Humanities.

If you are experiencing difficulties in keeping up with the academic demands of this course, contact the Learning Assistance Service, 2202 Shoemaker Building, 301-314-7693. Their educational counselors can help with time management, reading, math learning skills, note-taking and exam preparation skills. All their services are free to UMD students. More information is available at: www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS

CORE Distributive Studies: You may have chosen this course as part of your Gen Ed or CORE Liberal Arts and Sciences Studies Program, the general education portion of your degree program. Gen Ed and CORE Distributive Studies courses are designed to ensure that you will take a look at several different academic disciplines and the way they create and analyze knowledge about the world. A faculty and student committee approved this Gen Ed/CORE Distributive Studies course because it promises you ideas and issues that

are central to a major intellectual discipline and because it promises to involve you actively in the learning process.

University Policies:

1. Students with Disabilities: If you have a physical disability or a learning disability, it is your responsibility to bring it to my attention at the beginning of the course (well before any exams or assignments are due). I will make every effort to accommodate your needs. If you require special accommodations for test-taking, you need to arrange for this at least one week before a scheduled quiz or exam, and then also remind me by email a day or two before the quiz or exam.

2. Academic Honesty: We follow the University's policies on academic honesty and will report any form of cheating or dishonesty according to these policies. Please review the terms and penalties of the Student Honor Council's Code of Academic Integrity at:

<http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html>.

Students are prohibited from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, facilitating academic dishonesty, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures.

Plagiarism policy: all quotations taken from other authors, including from the Internet, must be indicated by quotation marks and referenced. Paraphrases must be referenced as well. Suspected cases of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Honor Council for subsequent action. The grade of XF is listed on the transcripts of individuals found to have plagiarized work; this grade means that the grade of F was received because of academic dishonesty.

In accord with the Code, students will be required to write and sign the following statement on each exam and assignment:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).

You must write up and complete all work by yourself and in your own words. If you are having trouble with class material please seek help from one of your instructors well before exams or assignment deadlines. Plagiarized material (copied from a book, the internet or fellow student) will not be accepted for credit. **If we discover two assignments that have significant portions of identical material, we will assign a grade of "0" to BOTH assignments and the case will be reported to the Honor Council.** Do not, under any circumstances, give your completed assignment to someone else in the class (whether the intention is for that person to turn in your assignment or to help the student understand the assignment, or whatever).

3. Religious holidays: The University of Maryland provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs. Students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances. **You must inform the instructor in advance of the day to be missed.**

4. Medical Absences: Regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the concepts and principles being discussed. However, in the event that a class must be missed due to an illness, the policy in this class is as follows:

For every medically necessary absence from class, a reasonable effort should be made to notify the instructor in advance of the class. When returning to class, students must bring a note identifying the date of and reason for the absence, and acknowledging that the information in the note is accurate.

If a student is absent more than two times, the instructor may require documentation signed by a health care professional.

If a student is absent on days when tests or quizzes are scheduled or homeworks are due, he or she is required to notify the instructor in advance, and upon returning to class, bring documentation of the illness, signed by a health care professional. The student is responsible for scheduling make-up work as soon as it is possible to do so. Failure to make arrangements with the professor in a timely manner may result in an inability to make up the work (homework, exam, etc.).

5. Emergencies/Inclement weather: Official closures and delays are announced on the campus website at www.umd.edu and snow phone line (301-405-SNOW), as well as on local radio and TV stations. If the professor is forced to cancel class due to inclement weather conditions or for any other reason, registered students will be notified by email through the ELMS web site (and an announcement will be posted on ELMS).

6. This syllabus may be subject to change. Students will be notified in advance of important changes that could affect grading, assignments, etc.

Grading scale:

98-↑	A+	77-79	C+
93-97	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
		59-↓	F

Rough Schedule (subject to change!)

- This schedule is very likely to change. Homework due dates are approximate. Please use this as a rough guide, but you will need to check the course web page regularly. More details about reading assignments and homeworks will be given in class and regularly updated on the web page. Exercises will be frequent. You should expect to have something to read or turn in for each class.
- Readings are listed **on the first day they are relevant**. (In the absence of any over-riding information, please have the reading done by class on the day it is listed. Other assignments will be given on Blackboard with their due dates specified there.)
J = Jackendoff; LF = Language Files; O = O'Grady. Bibliography will be posted on Blackboard web site. Access to all readings (besides the two Textbooks) will be provided on Blackboard.

Day #	Date	Topic	Due Dates Readings (&HW)
1	9/3	Intro to class, Admin	
2	9/5	Mental Grammar, Innateness	J Chs.1-3; LF ch.1
3	9/8	Methodology (Grammaticality, Description vs. Prescription; scientific method)	
4	9/10	Phonetics (IPA)	J Ch.4; Finegan; Crystal; Pinker
5	9/12	Phonetics (features of consonants)	(J Ch.5); LF ch.2
6	9/15	Phonetics (features of vowels)	(HW due)
7	9/17	Phonetics & Phonology; Phonetics Quiz	
8	9/19	Phonology	J Ch.5; LF ch.3
9	9/22	Phonology	
10	9/24	Phonology	
11	9/26	Phonology	
12	9/29	Phonology; Phonology quiz	
13	10/1	Phonology (syllable struct & stress)	(HW due)
14	10/3	Phonology: Categorical Perception	Eimas
15	10/6	Acquisition of Phonological Categories	Werker
16	10/8	Acquisition of Phonology and UG/ Morphology	
17	10/10	Morphology	LF ch.4
18	10/13	Morphology	(HW due)
19	10/15	Practice/Review/Make-up Day	

20	10/17	Midterm Exam	
21	10/20	Syntax	J Ch.6; LF ch.5
22	10/22	Syntax	
23	10/24	Syntax	
24	10/27	Syntax;	
25	10/29	Syntax; Syntax Quiz	
26	10/31	Syntax	
27	11/3	Syntax	(HW due)
28	11/5	Universal Grammar: Innateness & Cross-linguistic variation	
29	11/7	ASL: mental grammar & UG	
30	11/10	ASL: Acq of ASL (Guest Lecture)	
31	11/12	Acquisition	J Ch.8, LF ch.8
32	11/14	Acquisition	
33	11/17	Acquisition	
34	11/19	Acquisition	J Ch.7, O Ch.10
35	11/21	Acquisition (Poverty of Stimulus)	J Ch.9; Ch.10
36	11/24	Acq in Unusual Circumstances: Evidence for UG; Innate specialization	(HW due)
37	11/26	Critical Period	Curtiss; Newport
	11/27	Thanksgiving Break: NO CLASS	
37	12/1	Critical Period	
38	12/3	Nicaraguan Sign	Osborne; Kegl; Senghas
39	12/5	Nicaraguan Sign	
40	12/8	Other animals & Human Language	Terrace; TBA
41	12/10	Other animals & Human Language	
42	12/12	Wrap-up; Review	(HW due)
	12/17	FINAL EXAM (Wednesday, Dec.17 8:00am-10:00am)	