# Linguistics/Anthropology 200 - Fall 2011 Introduction to the Scientific Study of Language T/Th 1:00-2:15 in Herring 100

Office Hours: Dr. Kevin B. McGowan Tuesday 3:00 - 5:00pm Instructor:

kmcgowan@rice.edu or by appointment

Herring Hall 208

### Course Description

This foundation course serves as an introduction to language and linguistics. We will begin with the surprisingly difficult question of 'what is language?' and the related, but not identical, question 'what is a language?'. We will examine the structure and use of language at all levels: social identity and register, how words mean (lexical and cognitive semantics), how words are built up from smaller parts (morphology) and how words are arranges in sentences (syntax). We will then discuss the physiology of speech (articulatory phonetics) and what the organization of speech sounds can reveal about the mind (phonology). Finally, we will return to high level social questions with the study of language variation (sociolinguistics), the process and inevitability of language change (historical linguistics), the development and ideology of writing systems and the psychological underpinnings of language. Throughout the semester we will highlight the interdisciplinary nature of linguistics, especially as it relates to anthropology, sociology, mathematics and cognitive science. Students will gain experience with hands-on data analysis from English and a number of other languages.

### Teaching Assistants

Ling Ma Piotr Nowak Claire Taylor

Email: ling.ma@rice.edu pn3@rice.edu claire.b.taylor@rice.edu

Office Hours: T 4-5 M 11-12 T 2:30 3:30

Office: HH 127 HH 127 HH 127

Each student in the class will be assigned to one Teaching Assistant, based on the initial letters of the students last name. This will help to make such a large class more personal since it will give your TA a chance to get to know you and your work throughout the semester. Your TA will be grading your assignments and exams, and they should be your first point-of-contact for questions and concerns<sup>1</sup>. TAs will also be holding review sessions before the exams. You are welcome to come to any of our office hours at any point during the semester, whether or not you are assigned to that particular TA. And you are welcome –nay, you are *urged*– to come to the instructors office hours as well.

#### Textbook

Finegan, Edward (2012) Language: its structure and use (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) Boston: Wadsworth.

(ISBN: 0155078275)

The textbook has been ordered through the Rice University Bookstore and may well be available there. One copy has been placed on reserve in Fondren library for limited 2-hour loan. There is also a  $5^{th}$  edition (ISBN: 1413030556) available less expensively online. You may choose to use the older edition if you like and we will make every attempt to provide page numbers for both editions in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Yes! I did just intentionally use 'they' as a gender-neutral third-person singular pronoun. Did you even notice it? This word is orthographically similar to the older third-person plural pronoun but serves this other role in the language. It's grammar. It's politics. It's linguistics!

assigned readings.

Lectures will parallel the readings but will not necessarily cover the same material or go into the same depth. You are responsible for all material covered in readings and lectures. Since many of the concepts in Linguistics 200 may be new to you, you will find that you will do your best in this course if you do the reading assigned for each class beforehand. Regular class attendance and active participation are essential for mastery of the material and will be reflected by your overall course grade.

### Grading

Top 8 scores from 9 homework assignments	48%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	28%
4 short online Pop Quizzes/Surveys (announced in class)	4%
Extra-Credit Report	5%
Total	105%

Course letter grades will be assigned as follows:

$$0-59.99\%$$
  $60-69.99\%$   $70-79.99\%$   $80-89.99\%$   $90-99.99\%$   $\geq 100\%$  F D C B A A+

Designations of plus and minus will be given to grades ranging within 1 percentage point of the cutoff. A grade of A+ is a special case, reserved for scores of 100% and above. Obviously, there is no grade of F+! Students who earn less-than 60% will fail the course. Failing the course is not your friend.

#### Homework

There are nine homework assignments for this class, due on most Thursdays as noted on the course schedule. Homeworks will be posted to OwlSpace at least 1 week prior to the due date. Each homework is worth 6% of your course grade. Your lowest of these 9 scores will be dropped, leaving 8 scores to be calculated into your overall course grade. Because you have one "free" assignment, late homework will not be accepted under any circumstances. Homework must be submitted in PDF format on Owlspace before 1:00p.m. on the day it is due. Hardcopy homeworks will not be accepted. If you turn your homework in late, you will not receive credit for the assignment –although we will be glad to give you comments and feedback.

#### Midterm Exam

There is one midterm exam for this course, worth 20% of your total course grade. It will be administered online via Owlspace during regular class time (1:00-2:15pm) on Thursday, October  $13^{th}$ . The midterm is closed-book, closed-note, covering all course material through October  $6^{th}$  but will emphasize material from the homeworks. Make-up exams will be given only under extreme extenuating circumstances, and you must make arrangements with me beforehand. If you miss the midterm and do not clear it with me ahead of time, you will receive a score of 0.

### Final Exam

The final exam (worth 28% of your overall course grade) is cumulative and covers all course material from the semester. It will be online, closed-book, closed-note. It will take place during the exam time scheduled by the Registrars office for this course (TBA). You will have three hours to complete the exam. Students who miss the final or fail to turn it in will receive a score of 0 on the exam. Students are not permitted to work together or to discuss the exam in any way until after it has been turned in.

### Online Surveys/Quizzes

There will be four short online pop quizzes/surveys which you are required to submit using Owlspace at various points during the semester. Each survey/quiz will only take between 5-10 minutes to complete and is worth 1% of your overall course grade. They are ungraded–simply doing the survey/quiz will give you the 1% credit. They will be announced in class, in plenty of time for you to turn them in. If you miss class, you may miss this announcement.

### Extra-Credit Report

During the semester, I would like you to be thinking about language and linguistics outside of this classroom! This may include experiences in your own life, or things you see in the media, news, movies, or internet. Be alert for interesting linguistic behavior that you can observe, comment on, and tell me about in a short written report. (Examples: new or unusual pronunciations; creative use of word-formation processes; interesting, complex or ambiguous syntactic structures; use of metaphor; language used to define social context or relations between participants; example of language change; prior texts; social stereotypes or attitudes reflected in language form.) Another option: report on a language-related news item or controversy presented on radio, television, the internet, or in the print media. Once you have chosen your data to work with (or your news story), submit the paper idea to me by November  $15^{th}$ . Finally, you will prepare a 3-5 page (double-spaced, 12pt font, 1 inch margins) report and turn it in to me before December  $1^{st}$ . Be sure to tie it into class themes: why is your data/news story interesting, given what weve done this semester? Reports will be scored for: (1) originality; (2) appropriateness; (3) relevance and contextualization within the framework of the course; (4) accurate use of terms and concepts discussed in class, and (5) clarity of presentation.

#### **Honor Policy**

Appropriating someone elses work and portraying it as your own is cheating. Collaborating with someone and portraying that work as solely your own is cheating. Obtaining answers to homework assignments or exams from previous semesters is cheating. Falsifying data or experimental results is cheating. (The foregoing is not intended to be a complete list. A complete description of Rices Honor Code, plagiarism, and other general information can be found at the Rice Honor Council Web page at http://honor.rice.edu/). If you are caught cheating, you will be referred to the Honor Council. If you are unsure about whether a specific action is cheating, you may check with your TA or the intstructor. Some general guidelines are:

- Do not look at notes, assignments, or exams from previous semesters.
- Do not seek solutions to homework problems or exams from outside sources, including books (other than the textbook) or the internet.
- Do not copy other (current or former) students homework assignments. To minimize this temp-

tation, always type up your homework answers by yourself, separately from your study group or other students in the class.

- Once you have started to work on your midterm or final exam, do not discuss it with other students, until after you have turned it in and the exam time is over.
- Do not falsify data or other results in your homeworks or Extra Credit project.
- Cite all sources used for your Extra Credit report, and cite and designate all quotations as such.

## **Study Groups**

I encourage students to form study groups to talk about readings and lectures, and especially to discuss and work through analyzing homework problems. Invite me if you want and I'll try to come. However, after you figure/argue them out together please type up your homework answers alone, separately from the other study group members. It is usually easy to tell who has worked together and we will not grade identical answers gently.

### Students with Disabilities

If you require course material in an alternative format or need special accommodations due to a disability, please contact the instructor and the Disability Support Services Office (111 Allen Center).

#### Timeline

Items in (parentheses) are due on the day indicated. Readings should be completed prior to the first day they are listed. Homeworks are due by 1:00pm on the listed day.

TUESDAY	Thursday
Aug 23rd 1	25th <b>2</b>
Introduction: Overview and	Intro 2 (ch. 1)
Contract	
30th 3	Sep 1st   4
Registers & Styles 1 (ch. 9,	Registers & Styles 2 (Buchholtz &
Buchholtz & Hall)	Hall)
6th 5	8th <b>6</b>
Semantics (ch. 6)	Semantics (ch. 6, HW 1)
13th <b>7</b>	15th 8
Morphology (ch. 2)	Morphology (ch. 2, HW 2)
20th 9	22nd <b>10</b>
Syntax (ch. 5)	Syntax (ch. 5 HW 3)
27th 11	29th 12
Phonetics (ch. 3)	Phonetics (ch. 3, HW 4)
Oct 4th 13	6th <b>14</b>
Phonetics (ch. 3)	Phonology (ch. 4)

Tuesday		Thursday	
11th		13th <b>15</b>	
		Midterm Examination	
18th	16	20th <b>17</b>	
Phonology (ch. 4)		Phonology (ch. 4, HW 5)	
25th	18	27th <b>19</b>	
Historical Linguistics (ch. 13,)		Historical Linguistics (ch. 13, HW 6)	
Nov 1st	20	3rd <b>21</b>	
History of English (ch. 14)		Typology & Universals (ch. 7)	
8th	22	10th <b>23</b>	
Language Acquisition (ch. 15)		Language Acquisition & Bilingualism (ch. 15,Thomason)	
15th	24	17th <b>25</b>	
Bilingualism (Thomason, EC report idea due, HW 7)		Sociolinguistics (ch. 11)	
22nd	26	24th	
Sociolinguistics (ch. 11, Lippi-Green)			
29th	27	Dec 1st 28	
Corpus Linguistics (Bennett)		Corpus Linguistics (Bennett, EC report due. HW 9)	