LING 001
Introduction to Linguistics

Lecture #1

Introduction & Overview of the Course

01/15/2020

Katie Schuler

Welcome!

- Ling 001 introduces you to the **scientific study of language**

- You will learn about

  - Humans beings' **unique linguistic capacities**, in contrast to animal communication

  - **What speakers know** when they know a language

  - How languages are **all the same**

  - How languages **differ and change**

  - **Social** aspects of language use

  - Language, **Mind** and **Brain**

  - and more…

Intended Audience

- No pre-requisites

- Satisfies **Sector VII** / Natural Sciences & Math Req.

- Open to anyone with an **interest in language**

- Recommended for people interested in **Linguistics major** or **minor**

- Also of interest for **Cognitive Science majors** and related areas
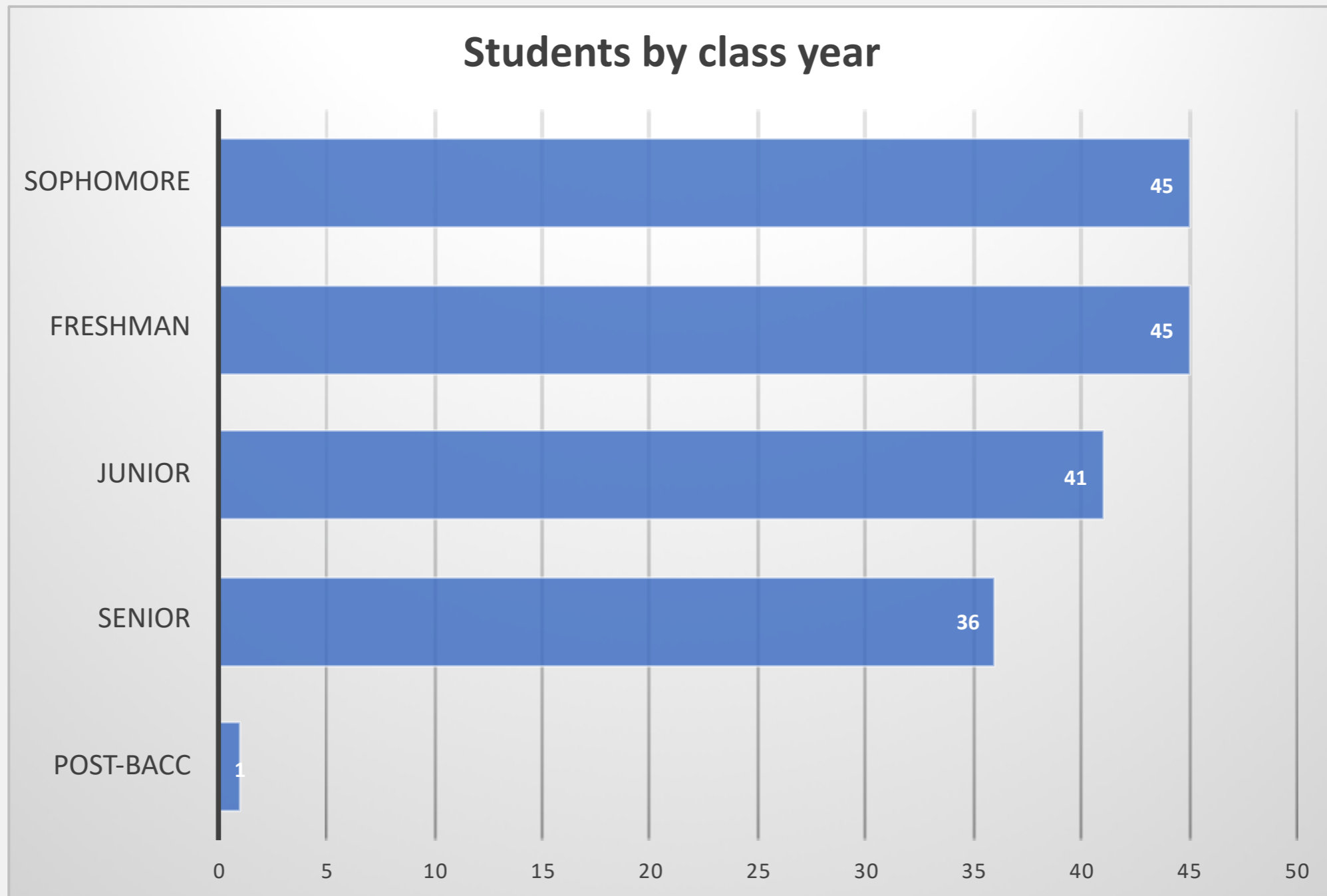
People

- **Instructor:**

  - Kathryn Schuler (Katie)

- **TAs:**

  - Yiran Chen

  - Nari Rhee

  - Ollie Sayeed

  - Milena Šereikaitė

- **Contact:** Canvas messages are the best way to get in touch with us

A little about you

Students by class year

Class Year	Count
SOPHOMORE	45
FRESHMAN	45
JUNIOR	41
SENIOR	36
POST-BACC	1

A little about me

- PhD in **Neuroscience** at Georgetown University

- Assistant Professor in the Linguistics Department

- I study child language acquisition

  - My lab is the Child Language Lab

A little about my family

Logistics

Enrollment

- The course is **full**!

- You need to be enrolled in **both the lecture and a recitation** - **please double check**!

- If you **decide to drop** the course, please do so on Penn in Touch **right away**, so that spaces open up for others (and drop both lecture and recitation)!

- If you can't enroll, **be in touch with the TA** of the recitation you want to enroll in, and we'll see what we can do.

- If not enrolled: look for openings; contact us during **week of January 26th**

Resources

- [Course Website](#)

- [Canvas](#)

- Readings (via [Perusall](#))

- SCHULER-LQNB2

Our Starting Assumptions

- You are an **honest**, **kind**, and **hardworking** person.

- You want to **do well in and enjoy** this class.

Attendance

- …is **highly correlated** with class performance.

- If you need to miss lecture, you can **watch the recorded lecture** when you are ready.

- If you need to miss recitation occasionally, you can **attend another recitation section** that week.

Homework

- There is **no required homework**.

- Instead, practice exam questions and solutions will be posted to the course website.

- But, be warned: you cannot do well in this class without working through the practice questions.

Recitations

- Extremely high value

- Where you will practice your skills as a linguist

Exams

- There are **four exams**, but your lowest exam score will be dropped.

- Study guides, practice questions and solutions will be posted on the course website.

- Counts for **90% of your grade**.

Language Journal

- We want you to **pay attention** to the language in the world around you this semester.

- You'll keep a **language journal** to document how what you observe connects to class.

- Counts for **10% of your grade**.

Academic Integrity

- We will follow the University's **<u>Code of Academic Integrity</u>** (we know you will, too).

Rescheduling Exams

- Since we drop your lowest exam score, **we do not allow exams to be rescheduled or made up**.

  - But if something extreme happens (like a medical emergency) talk to us and we can discuss it.

- Notify your TA ASAP to request **accommodations** or if you observe a **religious holiday** that conflicts.

Grading Mistakes

- If you find a grading mistake, you can **request a regrade** via Canvas.

  - You can request a regrade for up to **one week** after exams are returned.

- We will not consider changing your grade unless you make this formal request.

Extra Credit

- Research bonus

  - Add **1% point** to your final grade for each hour of research participation via SONA and/or each language related talk you attend on campus (limit 3% points).

  - Sign-up for **research participation** here.

  - Find **talks to attend** here.

- Reading bonus

  - The recitation section with the most engagement on Perusall will earn **1%** point toward final grade.

Find Support

- Asking for help is a sign of strength!

- What to do **if you need help**:

  - Talk to me or your TA (email or drop by)

  - Make use of Penn's <u>Academic Resources</u>

  - Make use of Penn's <u>Wellness Resources</u>

Questions?

Background on Modern Linguistics

- Traditional roots in **Philology**

- Modern Linguistics at the **juncture** of humanities and sciences

- (ultimately) **biological** perspective on language

- Emphasis on...

  - the **structural** properties of language

  - language as a **cognitive** system (mind / brain)

  - the **interactions** between languages and other

    - internal (perception, memory, learning) and

    - external (social, cultural, historical) factors

  - **Language, not languages**: universality and diversity

What speakers know

- Being a speaker of a natural language involves an extensive amount of **specialized knowledge**.

- Linguists try to understand what this knowledge consists of, and to **characterize** it precisely, typically by means of **formal tools**.

- **Examples:**

    - What constitutes a **sentence** of the Language

    - What a sentence of the Language **means**

    - Whether a certain **sound** or sound sequence is a possible part of the Language

Illustrations

- Which of the following are English sentences?

1) a. John is the guy **that** ate all the Nutella.
   b. John is the guy ate all the Nutella.
   c. The Nutella **that** John ate was from Europe.
   d. The Nutella John ate was from Europe.

   → **Syntax**

- Which of the following are possible words of English?

2) a. thrings   c. strumpfs   b. tonks   d. lods

   → **Phonology**

Some Questions to start with

- We all seem to agree on the judgments here

  - What is the shared knowledge?

  - Where does it come from?

    - No one has ever taught us these things!

- Explaining our judgments is not trivial

  - Linguistic knowledge is **unconscious**

  - It takes a linguist to uncover
    what this knowledge consists of
    (and how it got where it is)

Hidden Structures

- WYSI**N**WYG in natural language!

- The linguist's object of study is full of hidden structure, which speakers must be able to access and represent

- **Example**: Ambiguity

- unlockable

  a) can't be locked   b) can be unlocked

- I shot an elephant in my pajamas.

How did it get in there?

Not: anything goes

- **Key question**:

  What structures are possible in a given language, and what structures aren't?

- Hypotheses about structures can be tested in various way, much like in experimental sciences

- Data ranges from simple judgments by native speakers to brain scan data

Language in a broader Context

- Language processing on the fly in connection with memory, planning, etc.?

- Language development vs. conceptual, perceptual and social development

- How and why do languages change?

- Social context shapes language, and vice versa

- Linguistics at the core of cognitive science. Interactions with psychology, neuroscience, computer science and with anthropology, sociology, education

  (bureaucratically, we are in the division of Natural Sciences in SAS)

The Miracle of Acquisition

- Average of words learned per day: #20-30

- The growth of linguistic complexity is impressive

> 1 y 10m: Pull Mommy hair
> 1 y 11m: That my toy truck
> 2 y: Wanna play Baba glasses
> 2 y 1m: Mommy help me open door
> 2 y 2m: You want a bottle of water?
> 2 y 3m: Put the truck on bed if you don't
>   want me to cry

- All (healthy) children learn languages effortlessly

- No instruction, supervision, or correction necessary

- Considerable independence between language acquisition and "general intelligence"

Benefit from a head start?

- Given how fast and based on how little evidence children become competent speakers of their native language, it's unlikely that language acquisition starts from scratch

- Children (developing humans) must be born with **learning constraints:**

  - some think these constraints manifest as the kinds of structures we are able to learn and the kinds of things we are wired to pay attention to

  - others believe children are born with a substantial amount of intricate knowledge about language

Possible Languages

- Chomsky's idea of a **Universal Grammar**:

  → abstract knowledge about what human languages can be like

- (One view of) the linguist's task is to figure out what constitutes possible human languages

- Another is to figure out what kinds of structures humans can learn and why

Biological Basis of Language

- The **biological side**: Knowledge prior to actual experience

  → Somehow part of our biological make-up

- Lots of behaviors are **innate**: consider learning to walk v. learning to ride a bike or play piano.

- **Next time: Language as an instinct**

Coming up

- For **next week**:

    - No class on Monday (1/20) - MLK Day

    - For Wednesday (1/22): Read Chapter 1

- **No Recitation** this week

- Come talk to us if you have individual questions about enrollment or anything else

How to do well this week

- Schedule time to do the reading (~1 hour) and work through practice problems each week (~2 hours).

- Make a commitment to yourself to come to class and recitation.

- Review the study guide (~10 minutes) before next week's class

- Strategies I use to protect my time:

    - Inbox when Ready

    - Our Pact or Screen Time

Additional Readings

- Some Recommendations for further readings:

    - *Introduction to Language* by Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams

    - *The Infinite Gift*, by Charles Yang

    - *Language Matters*, by Napoli & Lee-Schoenfeld

- See also references in *Language Matters*

    (especially at the end of Chapter 2)