

LING 1600-01 Introduction to Linguistics

Dr. Nick Danis, Washington University in St. Louis

<i>Course number</i>	LING 1600-01	<i>Instructor</i>	Nick Danis
<i>Semester</i>	Spring 2026	<i>Contact</i>	nsdanis@wustl.edu
<i>Time</i>	TR 1-2pm	<i>Office</i>	January 206
<i>Location</i>	Hillman 60	<i>Office hours</i>	TBD
<i>Website</i>	https://wustl.instructure.com/courses/168232		

This course introduces students to the scientific study of language. All major subfields are covered: the physical description of speech sounds (phonetics), the cognitive patterning of these sounds in a speaker's grammar (phonology), the creation and analysis of word and phrase structure (morphology and syntax), and the study of compositional meaning of these sentences (semantics) and their interaction in a discourse (pragmatics). Students will learn the fundamental tools and analytical methodology in each. Additionally, this course covers special topics in language variation, acquisition, and change; and writing systems.

Goals

1. Learn to view natural language, and humanity's capacity for it, as an object of scientific inquiry
2. Understand the different core subfields within linguistics: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics
3. Create representations and implement methodology within these subfields
4. Analyze and solve problems in novel natural language data
5. Apply linguistic tools to critique and debunk common myths about language

Required Materials

The required textbook is the 12th edition of *Language Files* (The Ohio State University Press; abbreviated LF12). Earlier editions are likely to differ in content and organization. Note that this is also **not** the most recent version. Please check Canvas for the availability of this book. Any additional readings are posted as PDFs as necessary.

Attendance and delivery

In-person attendance is required for this course. However, be smart and put your health first. If you think you need to miss class for a health-related issue, please try to contact me **before** class time. Class sessions are not recorded by default, but if you have an extended, excused period of absence, arrangements can be made. Attendance is taken every session in some form. A single unexcused absence will not count against your grade, but anything more will require documentation.

Grade

The final grade is weighted as follows.

Category	Weight
Exams and Quizzes	50%
Assignments	30%
Attendance and Participation	20%

Exams and Quizzes

There are three in-class exams during the semester. You will have the entire class period to complete the exam, and can leave once you have turned it in. If you have accommodations through Disability

Resources, please send me documentation as soon as you can (ideally during the first week of class) so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The dates for the exams are listed in the schedule below, yet note that these may change. If you have an excused absence on any of the exam dates, please notify me beforehand as soon as possible so that accommodations can be made. If you have a medical issue the day of the exam, please also notify me as soon as you can with the appropriate documentation. There are no make up exams for unexcused absences. There is **no** final exam during the exam period.

Additionally, there are several shorter IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) quizzes throughout the semester. The IPA is a tool that we will use often and it is in your best interest to get as comfortable with it as you can, especially as it applies to English. The course will provide ample study and practice opportunities, and the quiz dates are always given in advance (so, no surprises).

Assignments

There will be 3 take home problem set-style assignments throughout the course. These are meant to both give you direct, hands-on experience with the theories and tools of the class, while also challenging you a bit beyond the material as presented in class. The dates for these will be posted once class begins. Working in groups is encouraged for these assignments, with two conditions: 1. everyone must still turn in their own assignment; and 2. if you did work in a group, write their names on your submission somewhere (e.g. *worked with x, y, ...*).

Attendance and Participation

The attendance portion of this category is simply $(\text{total classes} - \text{unexcused absences}) / \text{total classes}$. The participation portion involves completion of low-stakes study quizzes on Canvas, completion of in-class practice problems, and responding to course polls and surveys. Details on these last items will be given in class. There is no perfect way to quantify participation, which is why I find a variety of low-stakes items to be best overall. If you put in an honest effort in the course there shouldn't be any issues in participation.

Schedule

Please see Canvas for all up-to-date readings and assignment due dates. The schedule is likely to change specific to how the course progresses. The indicated readings refer to the chapter of the *Language Files 12* textbook that largely overlaps with that topic's content (so LF12 2 refers to chapter 2 of *Language Files*, etc.). It is up to you whether you want to do the reading before each module, after, or during.

Date	Week	Topic	Comment	Reading
1/13/2026	01	No Class	Instructor Traveling	
1/15/2026	01	Fundamentals		LF12 1
1/20/2026	02	Fundamentals - Design Features		
1/22/2026	02	Phonetics - Consonants & Vowels		LF12 2
1/27/2026	03	Phonetics - Transcription		
1/29/2026	03	Phonetics - Acoustics	IPA Quiz 1	
2/3/2026	04	Phonology - Phonotactics		LF12 3
2/5/2026	04	Phonology - Phonemes	IPA Quiz 2	
2/10/2026	05	Phonology - Rules and Processes		
2/12/2026	05	Phonology - Practice		

Date	Week	Topic	Comment	Reading
2/17/2026	06	EXAM 1 - Fundamentals, Phonetics, Phonology	Exam 1	
2/19/2026	06	Morphology		LF12 4
2/24/2026	07	Morphology - Classification		
2/26/2026	07	Morphology - Practice		
3/3/2026	08	Syntax		LF12 5
3/5/2026	08	Syntax - Judgements and Constituency		
3/10/2026	09	No Class	Spring Break	
3/12/2026	09	No Class	Spring Break	
3/17/2026	10	Syntax - Trees		
3/19/2026	10	Syntax - Arguments and Adjuncts		
3/24/2026	11	EXAM 2 - Morphology, Syntax	Exam 2	
3/26/2026	11	Semantics - Meaning		LF12 6
3/31/2026	12	Semantics - Propositions and Entailment		
4/2/2026	12	Semantics - Practice		
4/7/2026	13	Pragmatics		LF12 7
4/9/2026	13	Pragmatics		
4/14/2026	14	Historical	IPA Quiz 3	LF12 13
4/16/2026	14	Historical		
4/21/2026	15	EXAM 3 - Semantics, Pragmatics, Historical	Exam 3	
4/23/2026	15	Review & Wrap-up		
4/28/2026		Reading and Finals	NO Final Exam	

Policy on the use of AI (sigh)

Large Language Model (LLM)-based artificial intelligence tools (ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, etc.) have become a ubiquitous, tempting, yet still often useful tool for a variety of tasks. As a university student, you should always know the following: never let LLMs be the final word. It is not an academic source, it hallucinates information, and it is not always true in even the most elementary sense. If you are using it as a brainstorm or study aid, *always* verify the output it gives you against trusted sources.

Further, as a student in this course, any and all work submitted by you must be original. Directly submitting the output of some LLM as your own constitutes a violation of the academic integrity policy.

General policies

This course follows and takes seriously all policies on assault & harassment, accommodations, academic integrity, and so on. In order to provide you with the most up to date material, I will link directly to the University guidelines below:

<https://provost.wustl.edu/syllabi-resources-and-template-language-danforth-campus/>

Please be familiar with these and don't hesitate to reach out if you ever have any related questions or concerns.

Academic Integrity

In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others (including generative artificial intelligence) must be appropriately acknowledged and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. You should familiarize yourself with the appropriate academic integrity policies of your academic program(s).

Unauthorized Recording And Distribution Of Classroom Activities & Materials

Except as otherwise expressly authorized by the instructor or the university, students may not record, stream, reproduce, display, publish or further distribute any classroom activities or course materials. This includes lectures, class discussions, advising meetings, office hours, assessments, problems, answers, presentations, slides, screenshots or other materials presented as part of the course. If a student with a disability wishes to request the use of assistive technology as a reasonable accommodation, the student must first contact the Office of Disability Resources to seek approval. If recording is permitted, unauthorized use or distribution of recordings is also prohibited.

Disability Resources (DR)

WashU supports the right of all enrolled students to an equitable educational opportunity and strives to create an inclusive learning environment. In the event the physical or online environment results in barriers to your inclusion due to a disability, please contact WashU's Disability Resources (DR) as soon as possible and engage in a process for determining and communicating reasonable accommodations. As soon as possible after receiving an accommodation from DR, send me your WashU Accommodation Letter. Remember that accommodations cannot be applied retroactively.

<https://disability.wustl.edu/>

Sexual Harassment And Assault

If you are a victim of sexual discrimination, harassment or violence, we encourage you to speak with someone as soon as possible. Understand that if you choose to speak to me as an instructor, I must report your disclosure to my department chair, dean, or the Gender Equity and Title IX Compliance Officer, which may trigger an investigation into the incident. You may also reach out to the Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) Center to discuss your rights and your options with individuals who are not mandatory reporters.

<https://titleix.wustl.edu/students/confidentiality-resources-support/>

Religious Holidays

To ensure that accommodations may be made for students who miss class, assignments, or exams to observe a religious holiday, you must inform me in writing before the end of the third week of class, or as soon as possible if the holiday occurs during the first three weeks of the semester. For more information, please see the university's Religious Holiday Class Absence Policy (<https://bulletin.wustl.edu/washu/calendar/Religious-Holidays.pdf>).

Emergency Preparedness

Before an emergency affects our class, students can take steps to be prepared by downloading the WashU SAFE App (<https://emergency.washu.edu/washu-alert-system/washusafe-app/>). In addition, each classroom contains a "Quick Guide for Emergencies" near the door.

Resources for Students

WashU provides a wealth of support services that address academic, personal, and professional needs. To start exploring resources that can help you along the way, please visit: <https://provost.washu.edu/resources/instructor-resources/student-resources/>