

Ling 170D Introduction to Linguistics

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Description

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.

Course Info

Course Number	L44 Ling 170
Semester	Spring 2024
Time	MWF 11:00A-11:50A
Location	Umrath 140
Office	January 206
Office Hours	TBD
Homepage	https://wustl.instructure.com/courses/127670
Assistant Instructor	Mel Mallard, m.mallard@wustl.edu

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 (abbreviated LF12). Earlier editions are likely to differ in content and organization. Any additional readings are posted as PDFs as necessary. Please check Canvas for the availability of this book.

Attendance and delivery

In-person attendance is required for the course. However, be smart and put your health, and the health of others, first. If you are sick, or think you are getting sick, please take all necessary precautions (health services, etc) and also contact me as soon as you think you might miss class. You will not be penalized for excused absences. If you contact me before you miss class, I will likely be able to record the class in some way. Lectures will not be recorded by default, so it is important for you to contact me.

Grade

The grade breakdown is shown below.

Category	Weight
Exams	50%
Assignments & Skills Quizzes	40%
Participation	10%

Exams

There are four exams throughout the duration of this class. These are administered on Canvas, graded, open-book, and with a time limit. You have only one submission. Treat these as mini-midterm exams that are taking the place of in-person exams. These are the bulk of your grade. There is no in-person final. The fourth exam is due during finals week but it is still administered online and is not cumulative.

Assignments & Skills Quizzes

Assignments

Several critical thinking problem sets will be assigned throughout the semester. These usually involve real linguistic data and application of the theory and material in a way that might require some novel thinking. You are free to collaborate and work in groups on these, but everyone must submit their own individual assignment. If you do work together, put “Worked together with: ...” on the heading of your assignment.

Skills Quizzes

The Skills Quizzes are short, autograded online quizzes on various topics throughout the semester. You will receive instant feedback and can take each quiz multiple times (the highest grade will be counted). These are both meant to show me that the concepts are being understood and also as a tool for study itself. If you don't understand a concept, try using the Skills Quiz as a study guide, and work on it until you get a score you are comfortable with. Each quiz has a due date and there will be a minor penalty for quizzes submitted after this, but they are open throughout the semester so you can always go back to review.

Participation

There is no perfect (or even good) way to quantify participation, and I don't like doing it for myself or for you, the students. Instead, I aim to provide a wide variety of participation methods, and trust that you will fall into a rhythm that works best for you. In addition to speaking up and contributing in class, I may have slides with surveys (e.g. PollEverywhere) that you can participate in. Additionally, if you come across any article/meme/whatever that relates to content for class, feel free to send it my way.

Letter grades

Letter grades are assigned based off the following scale. Numerical grades are **not** rounded.

$100 \geq A+ \geq 98$	$80 > C+ \geq 77$
$98 > A \geq 93$	$77 > C \geq 73$
$93 > A- \geq 90$	$73 > C- \geq 70$
$90 > B+ \geq 87$	$70 > D+ \geq 67$
$87 > B \geq 83$	$67 > D \geq 63$
$83 > B- \geq 80$	$63 > D- \geq 60$

If you are taking this class pass/fail, you must receive at least a C- (70%) to pass.

If you believe there has been an error in grading, I am happy to discuss it with you. However, you must bring it up to me within one week of the graded assignment being returned to you. After this, the grade is considered final.

Schedule

The exact schedule is likely to change as the semester progresses. Please see [Canvas](#) for all up-to-date readings and assignment due dates. Below is only a rough outline.

Date	Event/Module	Reading	Assignments*	Skills Quizzes*
1/16	Classes Start			
1/17	Fundamentals	LF1.0-1.5		Design Features
1/22	Phonetics	LF2.0-2.7	IMF IPA	IPA 1, IPA 2
2/5	Phonology	LF3.0-3.5	Kuria	Minimal Pairs, Natural Classes, Phonemes, IPA 3
2/12	Exam 1 - Fundamentals & Phonetics			
2/19	Morphology	LF4.0-4.5		Morphological Types, Morphological Processes
2/26	Syntax	LF5.0-5.5	Japanese	Grammaticality, Constituency

Date	Event/Module	Reading	Assignments*	Skills Quizzes*
3/4	Exam 2 - Phonology & Morphology			
3/11	Break Begins			
3/15	Break Ends			
3/18	Semantics	LF6.0-6.4		Entailment, Sets
3/27	Pragmatics	LF7.0-7.5	TBD	Maxims
4/5	Historical Linguistics	LF13.0-13.4, 13.7		Comparative Method, Natural Historical Processes
4/8	Exam 3 - Syntax & Semantics			
4/12	Language Acquisition	LF8.0-8.4		Language Acquisition Concepts
4/17	Psycholinguistics	LF9.0-9.7		Psycholinguistics Concepts
4/22	Linguistic Variation	LF10 (optional)		
4/24	Sociolinguistics	LF11 (optional)		
4/26	Classes End			
4/29	Reading Begins			
5/1	Reading Ends			
5/6	Exam 4 - Pragmatics, Historical & Special Topics			
5/8	Exams End			

*Please see Canvas for all details (such as due date and mere existence) for all quizzes and assignments.

Academic Integrity

This course adheres to the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#), and takes cheating and plagiarism very seriously. All work completed online must be done alone unless instructed otherwise, and no resources not approved by the instructor may be used during exams.

ADA Compliance

Washington University is committed to providing accommodations and/or services to students with documented disabilities. Students who are seeking support for a disability or a suspected disability should contact Disability Resources at 935-4153. Disability Resources is responsible for approving all disability-related accommodations for WU students, and students are responsible for providing faculty members with formal documentation of their approved accommodations at least two weeks prior to using those accommodations. I will accept Disability Resources VISA forms by email and personal delivery. If you have already been approved for accommodations, I request that you provide me with a copy of your VISA within the first two weeks of the semester. Please see more information at <http://cornerstone.wustl.edu>.

Sexual Assault Resources

The University is committed to offering reasonable academic accommodations (e.g., no contact order, course changes) to students who are victims of relationship or sexual violence, regardless of whether they seek criminal or disciplinary action. If you need to request such accommodations, please contact the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center (RSVP) at rsvpcenter@wustl.edu or 314-935-3445 to schedule an appointment with an RSVP confidential, licensed counselor. Information shared with counselors is confidential. However, requests for accommodations will be coordinated with the appropriate University administrators and faculty. Please see more information at <https://students.wustl.edu/relationship-sexual-violence-prevention-center>.

Last updated: January 15, 2024