

General Linguistics

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Fall 2017

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Class Hours: TBD

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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the field of linguistics and provide a general understanding of human language —its defining characteristics, how it works, and how linguists examine it. It will examine the component parts of language, namely, phonetics and phonology (the sound system), morphology (the internal structure of words), syntax (the structure of sentences), and semantics (meaning) and typology (how languages differ from each other). The course will focus on cross-linguistic and universal properties of language structure, and assigned problems will come from a wide range of typologically diverse languages.

Course Objectives

The overall goals of this class are (a) to become familiar with the key concepts and terminology needed to describe and analyze language; (b) to gain a basic understanding of the way language works; and (c) to appreciate how languages differ (and how they're the same), and (d) to be able to use this knowledge in an academic context. In particular, the learning outcomes are:

- Cognitive Outcomes:
 - Following completion of Ling 600 students will be able to:
 - * identify the key areas of linguistic research.
 - * define the key terminology and concepts used in the field of linguistics.
 - * understand, exemplify and explain linguistic analyses and methodology.
 - * apply key linguistic terminology and concepts to new problems/data sets.
 - * describe how various languages differ from each other with respect to their linguistic properties.
 - * analyze linguistic data from various sources.

- * formulate and discuss their own linguistic hypotheses.
- Skills-based outcomes:
 - Following completion of Ling 600 students will be able to:
 - * research the literature on the linguistic properties of a given language.
 - * summarize and synthesize these findings and relate them to the contents covered in class.
 - * design and present a linguistic presentation.
- Affective outcomes:
 - Following completion of Ling 600 students will be able to:
 - * Retrieve, evaluate, and use linguistic information regarding contemporary issues in the world and relate them to their everyday lives.

The course will be a combination of assigned readings, lectures, exercises, small group discussions and individual projects. No prior knowledge of linguistics or language description is assumed.

Required Text

- O'Grady, William, John Archibald, Mark Aronoff and Janie Rees-Miller (Eds). 2009. Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction, 6th edition. Boston:Bedford/St. Martin's.

Course Policies

- **Attendance and punctuality** — Attendance is a requirement in this course. Although there is no specific penalty for missing a class, you will be held responsible for the content of every lecture and for knowing about assignments. If you should need to miss a class, be certain to check with me (the instructor) to ascertain what you will be missing. If you should miss a class or arrive late, be sure to find out what you missed. It is very important that you come to class **on time**. Failure to do so is disruptive and impacts negatively on the rest of class.
- **Electronic distractions** — Laptops, tablets, and smart phones are almost becoming like extended parts of our bodies; however, please respect the institution of the University, the instructor, and yourself by using electronic devices appropriately. You may use your laptop/tablet to take notes and participate in class activities, but you are required to be responsible with respect to sites visited during class. Further, please silence your cell phones before entering the classroom. Use of any technological devices during exams will result in a zero on that exam. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in dismissal from class.
- **Grading of homework assignments** — Grading criteria vary according to the assignment (rubrics for each assignment will be provided on the class website or the teaching tab of my academic website), though you should always aim for originality, relevance (use proper

citation methods), style, grammar, and well-crafted presentation of arguments and counter-arguments. It is your responsibility, whether you are present or not, to be aware of due dates and times for assignments ('It's in the syllabus'). Late assignments (when accepted) will be lowered one letter grade (10%) for each day late (including weekend days).

- No make-up exams will be given.

Grading Policy

- 10% of your grade will be determined by class participation.
- 10% of your grade will be determined by graded homework assignments.
- 25% of your grade will be determined by a mid-term
- 30% of your grade will be determined by a research paper.
- 25% by a final exam.

Grading Scale

| | | |
|----|------------|------------------------|
| A | 91.5-100.0 | excellent, exceptional |
| B+ | 87.5-91.49 | very good, admirable |
| B | 81.5-87.49 | good, commendable |
| C+ | 77.5-81.49 | adequate, passable |
| C | 71.5-77.49 | marginal |
| D+ | 67.5-71.49 | unsatisfactory |
| D | 61.5-67.49 | more unsatisfactory |
| F | < 61.49 | über unsatisfactory |

Course Requirements

- **Participation:** Groups of two or more students will present a research article summary in class once a semester. The presentation must be 15-20 minutes long. The presentation slides must be submitted to Prof. Reed via email at least by the class period before the presentation is scheduled. Late submission reduces the maximum score by 2.5 points for each day that the submission is late.
- **Homework:** There will be around 10 homework assignments designed to allow you to practice the concepts covered in readings and lectures. They will be posted on the class website and/or on the teaching tab at my academic website at least one week prior to the due date. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the specified date.
- **Exams:** The mid-term will cover the material from the first half of the semester, and the final exam will be cumulative for the entire semester.
- **Research Proposal:** Students will write a research proposal on a linguistics topic of their choice (for 30% towards their final grade). This class is an introduction to the field and I

will not require that you conduct a fully fledged study (although if you want to, you are very welcome to do so). However, no matter if your orientation is theoretical or practical by the end of the course you should be able to develop your own research proposal. I encourage you to start thinking about your research proposal right away. Students are strongly encouraged to schedule a meeting with me to discuss possible topics and methods. A 1-page research prospectus outlining the research topic is due by the date indicated below. In the following weeks you will be working on finding a research method that you think will produce a straight answer to your question. The research papers should be between 10-15 pages long (excluding the cover page, references, and potential appendices), double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins throughout. The research paper is due by the date indicated in our schedule below.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

You are encouraged to work together, but are expected to do your own work and acknowledge use of anyone else's work or ideas. Academic dishonesty includes: (a) copying another student's work or letting another student copy your work and (b) copying passages or ideas directly from another source and passing them off as your own; that is, without properly referencing them. If you have been academically dishonest, and violated the Honor Pledge and Code (<https://online.odu.edu/policies-and-student-responsibilities>), I will be required to report you to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. Each student must write up her/his assignment independently; copying and pasting is not allowed.

If you decide to collaborate with others, please describe the nature of this collaboration, whether in the capacity of having your assignment proofread, receiving assistance with the analysis, or simply 'throwing around ideas'. A brief sentence at the top of your assignment will be sufficient. You will not be 'marked down' if you received assistance, but it is important to acknowledge those who have directly helped you develop your ideas.

Statement on Accommodation

In keeping with Old Dominion University's commitment to non-discrimination and providing program accessibility for qualified students with disabilities, I am happy to provide reasonable accommodation in collaboration and guidance with the Office of Educational Accessibility. Students wishing to make such arrangements should contact the Office at 683-4655.

Week 01, 09/02 - 09/06: Course Overview/Introduction to Linguistics

- **Reading:** Chapter 1

Week 02, 09/09 - 09/13: Phonetics

- **Reading:** Chapter 2

Week 03, 09/16 - 09/20: Phonology 1

- **Reading:** Chapter 3, first half

Week 04, 09/23 - 09/27: Phonology 2

- **Reading:** Chapter 3, second half

Week 05, 09/30 - 10/04: Morphology 1

- **Topic:** Chap. 4, first half

Week 06, 10/07 - 10/11: Morphology 2

- **Reading:** Chap. 4, second half

Week 07, 10/14 - 10/18: Mid-term

Week 08, 10/21 - 10/25: Syntax 1

- **Reading:** Chap. 5, first half

Week 09, 10/28 - 11/01: Syntax 2

- **Reading:** Chap. 5, second half
- **Paper:** Research Prospectus due

Week 10, 11/04 - 11/08: Semantics

- **Reading:** Chap. 6

Week 11, 11/11 - 11/15: Historical Linguistics

- **Reading:** Chap. 7

Week 12, 11/18 - 11/22: Socio-linguistics

- **Reading:** Chap. 15

Week 13, 11/25 - 11/29: Corpus Linguistics

- **Reading:** Readings on Class website

Week 14, 12/02 - 12/06: Language Acquisition

- **Reading:** Chaps. 11-12
- **Paper:** Research papers due

Final Exam TBD, 12/09 - 12/13: