
LINGUIST 101 (49624)
People and Their Language
MW 1.25-2.15, Morrill Science (II), Room 131
Sections: F 10.10-11.00 (AF), 11.15-12.05 (AD), 12.20-1.10 (AC, AE), 1.25-2.15 (AA,AB)
Fall 2022

<PROF_FULL_NAME>
N418 Integrative Learning Center
Office Hours: W 12-1 and by email
<PROF_EMAIL>

Teaching Assistants
<TA_FULL_NAME> (<TA_EMAIL>) ILC
N421H, Office Hours: F 8-10
Sections: AF 10.10-11.00 (ILC S231), AA 1.25-2.15 (Hasbrouck Lab Add 104B)

<TA_FULL_NAME> (<TA_EMAIL>)
ILC N431G, Office Hours: MW 2.30-3.30
Sections: AD 11.15-12.05 (ILC N255), AC 12.20-1.10 (ILC N255)

<TA_FULL_NAME> (<TA_EMAIL>) ILC
N431G, Office Hours: Th 2-4
Sections: AE 12.20-1.10 (Hasbrouck Lab 228), AB 1.25-2.15 (Hasbrouck Lab 138)

Course Overview: This course considers language from the viewpoint of nature and of society. The nature part refers to the human adaptation that is responsible for language learning and use with limited nurture or input from the environment. Part of the evidence for this biological basis of language comes from the way children learn to talk and use language. Children acquiring spoken languages and signed languages (e.g., American Sign Language) do not just mimic the language of people in their environments; they create systems beyond what they hear. In general, speakers draw on the same type of innate knowledge in acquiring language, a point that supports the claim that the universals for signed languages and spoken languages are the same. Language is also a social phenomenon. A central concern will be the question of what distinguishes a dialect from a language. We will look at how accents and dialects are important markers of regional and social identity. We will closely examine the pernicious effects of dialect prejudice. In addition, we will study language in space and time – how the languages of the world are grouped together into a few language families and how one of these languages, namely English, has changed over time. We will also study an important cultural artifact often associated with language: writing systems.

All course materials will be made available online via Moodle. All assignments must be submitted in **pdf** format unless otherwise indicated.

Instructor's Note: This is a large class and for many of you, this will be your first semester at UMass. It might feel distant and impersonal. Let's try to make it less so. I think we can do it if we stay connected. So I ask of you: please communicate with us throughout. Tell us how the course is going for you. Ask us questions in the lectures and section, email us – use whichever form feels most natural. If you notice that you are falling behind or if you miss classes for any reason, just let us (me or your TAs) know and we will work with you.

Lectures, Discussion Sections and Attendance:

I will lecture on MW 1.25-2.15 in Morrill Science (II), Room 131. The slides that I use for the lecture will also be posted on Moodle.

Discussion sections are on Friday (check Spire to see the time/ location of your section) and you should make sure to attend these as you will be doing group problem solving and mini-assignments which will constitute a size-able chunk of your grade. But at any time you feel like you are coming down with something, you should feel free to not come to section that day. You will not be penalized for your absence – just let your TA know and they will make an accommodation for you.

All class materials, including required readings, will be posted on Moodle.

Accommodations at the University of Massachusetts:

Many accommodations are available at the University to ensure that students with disabilities participate fully in academic and student life. They provide a student with a disability equal access to the educational and co-curricular process, without compromising essential components of the curriculum. Accommodations are determined on an individual basis, based on the student's documentation. If you have a documented disability (e.g., physical, psychological, or learning) on file with Disability Services, you may be eligible for accommodations in this course. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. For information about course accommodation and disability, contact Disability Services: phone: <PHONE>, email: <EMAIL>, <https://www.umass.edu/disability/students>

General Education Requirement:

This course bears the Social and Behavioral Sciences (SB) and Cultural Diversity (U) designations of the General Education program here at UMass because it introduces students to the dynamic nature of individuals and societies through language. In addition to placing emphasis on analysis of phenomena associated with human language and analytical skills, this course also contributes to the development of writing and critical thinking skills, which are major components of General Education. Critical thought is required in all areas of the course.

Course Objective:

The objective of the course is to provide a foundation that will help students:

- 1) explain what is meant by language as a mental phenomenon.
- 2) discuss commonalities among all human languages (signed and spoken).
- 3) discuss misconceptions about and attitudes toward dialects, in particular dialect prejudice.
- 4) investigate issues related to language in social contexts.
- 5) develop and practice the skills of critical thinking, reasoning, communication, and integration of knowledge and perspectives, including:
 - a) Communicating persuasively and effectively orally and in writing;
 - b) Working effectively and collaboratively (in groups, across perspectives).

(Objective #5 is from the UMass Amherst General Education Learning Objectives:

<http://www.umass.edu/gened/objectives-designations>)

Course Requirements

1. Homework Assignments (10*5=50%): This is a big chunk of the course grade, so just one missing assignment could lower your grade considerably! There will be regular homework assignments, which will be distributed via Moodle. The assignments will take a number of different forms: problem solving homeworks (7), participation in an experiment (1) (sign up here: <http://umassxling.sona-systems.com>), participation in online quizzes (1) and surveys that you will conduct (10). All assignments must be typed and **submitted electronically via Moodle in pdf format** unless indicated otherwise. Due dates will be given in the instructions for assignments. Late assignments will be accepted as long as you submit them at the beginning of the class period immediately following the due date. This is the extended due date. However, you will lose twenty percent of the total points if you submit your assignments late. **No credit will be given for assignments submitted after the extended due date.** Exceptions will be made when you provide advance notice of religious observance (<https://www.umass.edu/gateway/religious-observance>) or written documentation in the event of serious illness or some other compelling event.

2. Writing Project (3*5=15%): The writing project will have us all reading an article and writing a report on various aspects of it. The project will have three stages: an initial draft, peer review of writing, and a final draft that incorporates the feedback from the first two stages.

3. Group Problem Solving in Sections (10*1.5=15%): On most Fridays, in the discussion section you will do some group problem solving. **You cannot make up missed discussion sections so don't miss them!** The usual exceptions apply.

4. Exams (2*10 = 20%): There will be a in-class midterm exam on October 24 and an in-class final exam on December 12.

Extra Credit: 2*5=10% We will make available extra credit opportunities in the form of an optional assignment during the semester and an additional experiment i.e. in addition to the required experiment, you will also have the opportunity to receive extra credit by participating in a second experiment in the Department of Linguistics, which you can sign up for by going to <http://umassxling.sona-systems.com>

Grading Scale:

100-92: A	91-89: A-	
88-87: B+	86-82: B	81-79: B-
78-77: C+	76-72: C	71-69: C-
68-67: D+	66-59: D	
58-0: F		

Course Policy on Academic Dishonesty:

You should become familiar with the University of Massachusetts policy concerning academic dishonesty (if you have not already read the information), which includes a statement about plagiarism: <http://www.umass.edu/honesty>

For this course, plagiarism, copying someone else's responses to any assignments, projects, and exams, and allowing others to copy your work are considered academic dishonesty, for which appropriate action will be taken. In brief, plagiarism refers to passing off someone else's work as your own.

Course Schedule

Introduction

Week 1: September 7, No Discussion Section

Mental Grammars

Week 2: September 12, 14, Discussion Section: September 16

Assignment 1: UMass Linguistic Diversity Survey

Assigned: Sep. 16, Due: Sep. 23 (you will have a week for assignments)

Context Free Grammars

Week 3: September 19, 21, Discussion Section: September 23

Assignment 2 on designing and using Context Free Grammars

A notation for the sounds of languages: the IPA

Week 4: September 26, 28, Discussion Section: September 30

Assignment 3 on using the IPA

The organization of the Sounds of Languages

Week 5: October 3, 5, Discussion Section: October 7

Assignment 4 on Minimal Pairs

Dialect and Accent

Week 6, 7: October 12, 17, Discussion Section: October 14

Assignment 5: New York Times Dialect Survey, Writing Project

Language Classification

Week 7: October 19, Discussion Section: October 21

Assignment 6: On the Boston *r* or lack thereof

Midterm Exam

Week 8: October 24

Signed Languages

Week 8: October 26, Discussion Section: October 28

Writing Project: First Draft

Week 9: October 31, November 2, Discussion Section: November 4

Assignment 7: Signed Languages

Week 10: November 7, 9

Writing Project: Peer Review

Dialects of English

Week 11: November 14, 16, Discussion Section: November 18

Assignment 8: Dialect Syntax

Week 12: November 21, Discussion Section: November 22

Writing Project: Final Draft

Change, the history of English, and the case of *they*

Week 13: November 28, 30, Discussion Section: December 2

Assignment 9: The history of English

Writing Systems

Week 14: December 5, 7, Discussion Section: December 9

Final Exam

Week 15: December 12