Ling 110A: Introduction to Phonological Theory  
Spring 2015

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Office hours: W 11am-12pm or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: TBD  
TA office hours: TBD

Course time and location: MWTh 12-12:50pm, Volen 119

1 Description and goals

This course will provide an introduction to phonology, the study of the sound systems of the world’s languages. In the course students will learn the fundamental aspects of phonological theory, including allophonic relations, distinctive feature theory, the concept of a "natural class," phonological processes and their representation, phonological typology and naturalness, and nonlinear phonological representations. Additional advanced topics may be covered based on students' interests and class progress.

2 Prerequisites

Ling 100a (Introduction to Linguistics) or permission of instructor.

3 Readings


Additional recommended and required readings will be made available on the course LATTE site from time to time.

4 LATTE

Please check the course LATTE site frequently. The course schedule, additional/supplemental readings, assignments, and other materials will be posted on the site as we progress through the semester.
5 Requirements and grading

Homework assignments 40%
Participation and attendance 10%
Quizzes and exams
  Quizzes 30%
  Final exam 20%
Final percentage grade 100%

5.1 Assignments

There will be approximately 8 homework assignments during the semester. Assignments are due at the beginning of class and will be graded on a 10-point scale. The lowest score will be dropped.

Late homework will be accepted only until the graded assignment has been returned, provided that one point will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. Please note that homework submitted on the date it is due but after the beginning of class will be deemed one day late.

Although I strongly encourage you to work on each of the assignments independently, if you find yourself having difficulty with an assignment you may work with one other person, provided that (i) in your assignment you must identify the person that you worked with and (ii) each student must write up the assignment separately.

All homework must be typed and submitted in hard copy; due to the many issues that can occur with fonts, assignments may not be submitted by email. If you do not currently use an IPA font, you should check the font resources linked to the course LATTE page. You should feel free to use any IPA font that you prefer so long as it contains all of the characters and diacritics that you need. (I especially recommend the SIL Doulos Unicode font.)

5.2 Participation and attendance

Class attendance is required and participation in class is expected. While you will not be penalized for being quiet in class, I hope very much that you will ask questions and want to participate in class discussions.

You may miss up to three classes for any reason. Each additional class missed will result in a reduction of your final percentage grade for the course by 0.25%, up to a maximum of 10% lost.

5.3 Quizzes and exams

There will be a short quiz every 2-3 weeks, along with a longer midterm quiz, which will count as two quizzes; all of the quizzes together will comprise 30% of your final grade. The final exam will take place at the date and time scheduled by the Registrar. I will provide more details on each as the dates approach.

6 Electronic devices

No electronic devices (including laptops, tablets, and cellphones) may be used in class without my prior permission. Please keep all cellphones put away (and turn them off completely if the thought of a new message is irresistible).
7 Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

8 Academic integrity

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/svpse/academicintegrity/). Faculty may refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to, failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences.

9 Topics and general schedule

The topics that will be covered in the course and general schedule are as follows (subject to minor change based on class progress and interests):

Week 1 - 3: Introduction to the course and the study of phonology; overview of phonetic preliminaries to study of phonology

- Transcription
- Place of articulation
- Manner of articulation
- Vowels
- Phonetics quiz (tentatively sched. for Thursday, Jan. 29)

Weeks 4-7: Phonological theory

- Odden ch. 2: Allophonic relations
- Odden ch. 3: Feature theory
- Features quiz (tentatively sched. for Thursday, Feb. 12)
- Odden ch. 4: Underlying representations
- Mid-term recess Feb. 16-20 (Week 6)

Weeks 8-9: Phonological analysis

- Odden ch. 5: Interaction of phonological processes
- Midterm (tentatively sched. for Thursday, Mar. 5)
- Odden ch. 6: Doing phonological analyses

Weeks 10-12: Specialized topics

- Odden ch. 7: Phonological typology and naturalness
- Syllabification
- Quiz (tentatively sched. for Apr. 2)
• Spring recess Apr. 3-10 (Weeks 12-13)

Weeks 13-14: Specialized topics

• Odden ch. 9: Nonlinear representations

Final exam on date and time scheduled by Registrar (tentatively Wed., May 6)