Ling 100a: Introduction to Linguistics

Fall 2017

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Course time and location: MWTh 12-12:50pm, TBD

1 Description

This course introduces students to the scientific study of human language and the language faculty (commonly referred to as "theoretical linguistics").

The study of linguistics is typically broken up into four basic sub-areas, and introducing each of these will form the bulk of the course's content: the study of sound traits and sound patterns (phonetics and phonology), of word structures (morphology), of sentence structures (syntax), and of meaning and its use in context (semantics and pragmatics). In this course, each of the basic sub-areas will be approached largely from a synchronic perspective, comparing the traits present in a broad range of languages currently spoken around the world.

We will also touch on several other important areas of linguistics, including language change, language acquisition, and sociolinguistics, and certain areas in which linguistics interfaces with other disciplines (including, e.g., computational linguistics).

2 Learning goals

By the end of the course, students will:

1. develop a general familiarity with the basic components of linguistic knowledge across languages and the modern generative approach to analyzing grammar. This will include a basic knowledge of:
   1.1. how sound patterns work
   1.2. the structure of words, phrases, and sentences
   1.3. how lexical, compositional, and/or contextual meaning arises in language

2. gain a strong understanding of the descriptive (and not prescriptive) approach used in the field of linguistics;
3. learn the basic articulatory traits of the sounds found in the world's spoken languages, and to use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to read transcriptions of English and other languages and create transcriptions of English;

4. learn to apply their knowledge to analyze data from the languages of the world.

3 Prerequisites

This course has no prerequisites and assumes no prior knowledge of linguistics.

4 Readings

Our textbook will be Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics, 12th edition, by the Department of Linguistics of The Ohio State University. A copy of the textbook is on reserve in the library.

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

5 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.

6 Requirements and grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework assignments</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and attendance</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes and exams</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final percentage grade</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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6.1 Assignments

There will be approximately 8 homework assignments during the semester. Assignments will typically be assigned on Thursdays and due at the beginning of class on the following Wednesday. Unless otherwise stated for a particular assignment, 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.

Homework assignments will be graded on a 10-point scale, and the lowest homework grade will be dropped. Late homework will be accepted only for 2 days after an assignment's due date, provided that one point will be deducted for each day the assignment is late; homework submitted more than 2 days late will be corrected but will not be accepted for credit. 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 on the assignment 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 independently and separately.

Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

6.2 Participation and attendance

Class attendance is required and participation in class is expected. Please come to class each day on time and ready to discuss the readings and other material for the day.

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 0.10%, up to a maximum of 5% lost.

6.3 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 35% 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.

7 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). Please note that use of an electronic device in class without prior permission will negatively affect your participation and attendance grade.

8 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.

9 Academic integrity

You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS - Research Guides - Citing Sources.
10 Topics and general schedule

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

Week 1: Introduction to the course

- Language Files (LF) ch 1: Introduction
  LF 1.1-1.3 (1.4 & 1.5 optional)
  LF 1.1: Introducing the Study of Language
  LF 1.2: What You Know When You Know a Language
  LF 1.3: Other (Non-Essential) Aspects of Knowing a Language

Week 2 - 3: Phonetics

- Mon., Sept. 4 - No class (Labor Day)
- LF ch. 2: Phonetics
  LF 2.1-2.3 (2.4 & 2.5 optional)
  LF 2.1: Representing Speech Sounds
  LF 2.2: Articulation: English Consonants
  LF 2.3: Articulation: English Vowels
- Thurs., Sept. 21 - No class (Rosh Hashanah)

Weeks 4-7: Phonology

- Tues., Oct. 3 - Brandeis Thursday
- Thurs., Oct. 5 - No class (Sukkot)
- Wed., Oct. 11 - Brandeis Thursday
- Thurs., Oct. 12 - No class (Shmini Atzeret)
- Quiz (tentatively sched. for Thurs., Oct. 19)

Week 8-9: Morphology, Midterm

- LF ch. 4: Morphology
  LF 4.1 - 4.5
  LF 4.2: Morphological Process
  LF 4.3: Morphological Types of Languages
  LF 4.4: The Hierarchical Structure of Derived Words
  LF 4.5: Morphological Analysis
- Midterm (tentatively sched. for Wed., Nov. 1)
Weeks 10-12: Syntax

- LF ch. 5: Syntax
  LF 5.1, 5.3 - 5.5 (5.2 optional)
  LF 5.1: Basic Ideas of Syntax
  LF 5.3: Syntactic Constituency
  LF 5.4: Syntactic Categories
  LF 5.5: Constructing a Grammar
- Quiz (tentatively sched. for Mon., Nov. 20)
- Thanksgiving recess Nov. 22-24

Weeks 13-14: Semantics and Pragmatics

- LF ch. 6: Semantics, ch. 7: Pragmatics
  LF 6.1-6.4, 7.2, 7.5
  LF 6.1: An Overview of Semantics
  LF 6.2: Lexical Semantics: The Meaning of Words
  LF 6.3: Compositional Semantics: The Meaning of Sentences
  LF 6.4: Compositional Semantics: Putting Meanings Together
  LF 7.2: Rules of Conversation
  LF 7.5: Presupposition

Final exam on date and time scheduled by Registrar (currently Mon., Dec. 18)