Linguistic Typology
Course Information and Syllabus — January 16, 2019

Lectures: MWTh 11:00-11:50am, Volen 119

Instructor: Lotus Goldberg
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Mailbox: Volen 261 [Computer Science Dept. Office]
Office: Volen 252

Office Hour for this week only: Friday January 18, 1:30-2:30pm

Teaching Assistant: Kristen Sheets

Office Hour for this week only: Thursday January 17, 2:30-3:30pm, Starbucks in the Library

Regular Office Hour times for both Prof. Goldberg and Kristen will be announced soon!

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course focuses on linguistic typology, in which the languages of the world are classified in terms of the grammatical features that they have in common. We will also deal some with language universals: traits and implicational relationships that hold in (nearly) every language.

This type of typological classification of languages contrasts with the genetic classification of languages done in e.g. historical linguistics: languages grouped together genetically would be a language family (such as Indo-European or Afro-Asiatic), while languages grouped together because they are typologically similar would constitute a language type (such as being permissive versus non-permissive of coda consonants, or complexity in onsets or codas, in phonological traits; being head-final as opposed to head-initial syntactically, or having SVO as opposed to SOV or VSO word order; or being morphologically agglutinative and/or synthetic as opposed to isolating)

This course will focus primarily on morphological and syntactic typology, surveying the types of patterns which are found across the languages of the world. At the start of the course, we will give some discussion of phonetic and phonological typology as well. However, typological generalizations are so deeply encoded within modern phonological theory that they are largely covered in Ling 110a–Phonological Theory, and so are not given a primary focus in this course.

In this course, students will examine the make-up of data of many different types, from a very diverse range of the world's languages. Participants will gain a thorough understanding of how numerous constructions are realized in various languages, along with in-depth knowledge of the how such word and sentence structures work in a specific language. Over the course of the term, students will learn what typological traits are more versus less common cross-linguistically, and the nature of any implicational relationships between such traits—along gaining the ability to carefully and insightfully analyze the empirical make-up of data from a language not previously examined.

Students will also strengthen their ability to write clearly and precisely about linguistic data, using the standard conventions for presenting and discussing such data in linguistic typology, and in linguistics more broadly.

Prerequisite: LING 100a–Introduction to Linguistics, or instructor consent. Graduate students interested in the course, including those who have not taken Intro to Linguistics here or elsewhere, are particularly encouraged to contact me, as some may be fine taking this course. For undergraduate students, having taken Intro to Linguistics in a prior term—and ideally done well in it—is more strictly required.
Learning Goals: As a result of taking this course and fully engaging with its material and work, students will:

- significantly deepen and broaden their knowledge and understanding of the nature of words, phrases, and sentences in languages of the world;

- significantly deepen and broaden their ability to describe and compare the differences in word and sentence structures of data from a broad range of language types and families, and to draw plausible and linguistically informed generalizations about these data;

- improve and deepen their ability to write clearly, precisely, and with attention to detail about the empirical traits of word and sentence structures in a language other than English, using the scientific style of writing standard in linguistics, and used more specifically in linguistic typology research;

- develop a base of knowledge of the major generalizations and implicational relationships established in the field of linguistic typology involving words and sentences.

COURSE READINGS

The course has no official textbook to purchase, but will involve primary, required readings on Latte from the distinct 1985 and 2007 editions of the three volume series Language Typology and Syntactic Description, edited by Timothy Shopen, from Cambridge University Press. For both editions, Volume 1 is entitled Clause Structure, Volume 2 Complex Constructions, and Volume 3 Grammatical Categories and the Lexicon.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Come to each class prepared, and participate in what happens here. This includes having done the reading and any assigned work. Your course grade may be lowered by 5-10% for failure to attend or participate.

2. At the start of the course, each student will pick a language to focus on, for which the student has checked out at least one suitable reference grammar (~a book that describes a language's orthography (if any), phonetics, phonology, morphology, and syntax). It is ideal to choose a language with which you are not familiar, though exceptions to this will be considered when a strong reason is present.

At the end of each topic in the syllabus (roughly every 2 weeks or so, once we finish the introductory part of the course), a 'Language Report' is due, in which you describe in prose how the topic works in just the language you've chosen for the term. These reports should be detailed and lucid, so that another linguistics student unfamiliar with your language could follow, and completed in the standard style of writing used in linguistics in general, and in typology in particular. Detailed guidelines for how to do this will be given in class; learning this style is a major focus of the first part of the course. [Language Report Average: 55% of course grade]

3. There will be several short quizzes over the course of the semester. [Quizzes Average: 10% of course grade]

4. At the end of the semester at our Typology Fest (and possibly once during the term, depending on how many end up enrolled in the course), each student will give an oral presentation based on traits of their language. A paper handout to accompany the presentation will also be required. [Oral Presentation(s): 10% of course grade]

5. The final paper will involve a brief, typologically informed overview of your language's basic morphological and syntactic typological traits, along with a detailed exploration of one (larger) or more (smaller) topics of your choice, not covered in any of the assigned Language Reports. The paper should be about 17-25 pages. It will use the same writing conventions, and the same basic grading criteria, as the Language Reports. [Final Paper: 25% of course grade]

Important: All work must be turned in at the START of lecture on the day it is due, and no late work is accepted. You must get in touch with me before an assignment is due if illness or other extraordinary circumstances prevent you from getting your work handed in on time.
IMPORTANT Policies AND Points TO nOTe

- **Students with 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.

- **Course Workload:** 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, language reports, etc.).

- **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:** You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult the Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities handbook for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity, and note that 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 a failing grade on the assignment, a failing grade for the course, and/or suspension from the university. See LTS Library guides for citation and research assistance. Most importantly, though: if you have any questions about my expectations, please ask me!

- **Policy on Laptops and Other Electronic Devices:** It is very important to me that students who come to class be able to be here and engage fully with the class material and discussion throughout our entire class meeting. Therefore, no laptops, phones, or other electronic devices are allowed to be open or used during class. Exceptions are granted for students who have a compelling reason (such as difficulties taking notes by hand) to use a laptop to take notes—in which case the only program that can be open while our class is meeting is the text or word processing program used to take notes. Students with such requests should see me immediately, noting that just a preference for typing over writing by hand is unfortunately not an accepted reason. Absolutely no web browsing is allowed during class, with no exceptions.

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**PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS** (subject to some change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics/Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weeks 1-2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Jan 16-24</td>
<td>Introduction to Typology; How to choose a reference grammar for the term; Phonetic and phonological typology</td>
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<td><strong>Weeks 3-4</strong>&lt;br&gt;Jan 28-Feb 7</td>
<td>Types of lexical categories and cross-linguistic patterns involved: Shopen 1985 – Vol I, Ch 1 “Parts-of-Speech systems”</td>
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<td><strong>Weeks 5-7</strong>&lt;br&gt;Feb 11-14, Feb 25-Mar 7 (No class week of Feb 18)</td>
<td>Basic morphological typology, and a cross-linguistic picture of derivational morphology: Shopen 2007 – Vol III, Ch 1 – “Typological Distinctions in Word Formation”</td>
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<td><strong>Weeks 8-9.5</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mar 11-27</td>
<td>Tense-Aspect-Mood systems (i.e. ways that languages mark the time information in each clause); Other types of inflectional morphology: Shopen 2007 – Vol III, Ch 5 “Aspect, Tense, Mood” Shopen 2007 – Vol III, Ch 3 “Inflectional Morphology”</td>
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<td><strong>Weeks 9.5-11</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mar 27-Apr 4</td>
<td>Basic word order in simple clauses across languages, and the various patterns and correlations involved: Shopen 2007 – Vol I, Ch 2 “Word Order”</td>
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<td><strong>Week 12-13.5</strong>&lt;br&gt;April 8-17</td>
<td>A cross-linguistic picture of copula clauses (“clauses that translate to English as having main verb ‘be’); related constructions like existentials, and strategies for expressing predicate meanings involving possession: Shopen 2007 – Vol I, Ch 4 “Clause types”</td>
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<td><strong>Week 13.5-14</strong>&lt;br&gt;Apr 17-18, Apr 29-May 1 (No class week of Apr 22)</td>
<td>Language endangerment, death, and revitalization; Course wrap-up</td>
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**COURSE GRADING INFORMATION**

All work for this course will be graded on a scale of 6 total possible. This will be broken down as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>A range</th>
<th>B range</th>
<th>C range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.3 up - 6</td>
<td>A (5-6)</td>
<td>3.2 up</td>
<td>2.8 up</td>
<td>C+ (2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 up</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>2.5 up</td>
<td></td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.5 up</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>2.2 up</td>
<td></td>
<td>D+ (1.5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.0 up</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1.8 up</td>
<td></td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 up</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>1.5 up</td>
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<td>below 1.5</td>
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For all language reports except Report #1, the 6 points will be distributed as follows. These are also all crucial components of the grading criteria for the Final Paper.

**Content quantity, including number of examples**

A. 1 Point: The write-up has enough content, in terms of the overall range of example types examined, the amount of discussion, and the overall length

B. 1 Point: There are enough examples included; roughly 1-2 for each descriptive point made

**Data quality, including clarity in the presentation and discussion of all examples**

C. 1 Point: Data presentation

   .5: There are morpheme glosses for all of the examples' phonetic representations, with a one-to-one correspondence between the words and morphemes on the 1st line and their glosses on the 2nd line; each word on the 1st line is left-aligned with its gloss on the 2nd line.

   .5: Each example has the required 3 lines of transcription, morpheme glosses, and translation; (nearly) all examples are full sentences.

D. 1 Point: Data are explained accurately and thoughtfully, and in enough detail

**Overall quality, including the quality of the discussion as a whole**

E. 1 Point: The discussion is thoughtful, sufficiently deep, and gives the student's own take on the material, rather than just re-writing or reporting what the source materials say (even when the latter doesn't hold together)

F. 1 Point: The overall quality of the report, in terms of overall depth, detail, accuracy, writing, and giving an example for (roughly) each point made