Ling 100a: Introduction to Linguistics
Fall 2019

Instructor: Keith Plaster
Email: kplaster@brandeis.edu (best way to reach me)
Office: Volen 124
Office tel: 781-736-2726
Mailbox: located in Volen 261 (COSI/LING office)
Office hours: TBD

Teaching Assistants: TBD
TA office hours: TBD

Course time and location: MWTh 11-11:50pm, location 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)
- the study of word structures (morphology)
- the study of sentence structures (syntax)
- the study of meaning and its use in context (semantics and pragmatics).

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 the study of 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>Category</th>
<th>Percent of course grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework assignments</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes and exams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final percentage grade</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

Although I strongly encourage you to work on each of the assignments independently, unless an assignment otherwise provides, if you find yourself having difficulty with an assignment you may discuss the assignment with one other person, provided that (i) at the top of your assignment you must identify the person that you discussed the assignment with and (ii) each student must write up the assignment independently and separately. Please note that all work you submit must be your own; you may not copy all or any portion of another student’s work, share copies of your work with another student, or use any online or other resources aside from the class materials when completing the assignments.

Late homework will be accepted only for 2 days after an assignment’s due date subject to the late policy shown below. Each student’s lowest homework grade will be dropped.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When submitted</th>
<th>Late penalty</th>
<th>How to submit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the beginning of class on the day it is due</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Hard copy brought to class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the beginning of class on due date and by 5pm on the following day</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Hard copy brought to class or left in my mailbox (in Volen 261)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(if due by class on Wednesday, submitted by 5pm on Thursday)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By 3:30pm two days after it was originally due</td>
<td>-1.75</td>
<td>Hard copy left in my mailbox (in Volen 261)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(if due by class on Wednesday, submitted by 3:30pm on Friday)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anytime thereafter</td>
<td>No credit</td>
<td>Hard copy given to one of us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(we will always correct your work and give feedback)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Engagement

The engagement portion of the final grade has two components. The first half (2.5 points) of the engagement portion of the final grade is earned through class attendance and coming to class prepared to engage with the assigned material. Class attendance is required, but you may miss up to two classes for any reason; additional absences will result in a reduction of the engagement portion of the final grade. Please come to class each day on time and prepared to engage with the assigned material.

The second half of the engagement portion of the final grade is earned through active engagement with the course, which may include participating in class discussions, playing an active role in group work done in class, and coming to office hours with questions about class material or homework assignments.

Please note that use of an electronic device in class without prior permission will negatively affect your engagement grade.
6.3 Quizzes and exams

There will be a short quiz every 2-3 weeks and 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 engagement grade.

8 Inclusion

I hope to foster a sense of community in this classroom, and I welcome individuals of all backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, religious and political affiliations, and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. If this standard is not being upheld, please feel free to speak with me.

9 Disabilities

Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who needs accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please talk with me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as you can. I want to support you.

In order to provide test accommodations, I need the letter more than 48 hours in advance. I want to provide your accommodations, but cannot do so retroactively. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Support (SAS) at 781.736.3470 or access@brandeis.edu.

10 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.
11 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 1-2: 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 - 4: Phonetics

- Mon., Sept. 2 - 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
- Quiz (tentatively sched. for Thurs., Sept. 26)

Weeks 4-7: Phonology

- LF ch. 3: Phonology
  LF 3.2, 3.3, 3.5 (3.1 & 3.4 optional)
  LF 3.2: Phonemes and Allophones
  LF 3.3: Phonological Rules
  LF 3.5: How to Solve Phonology Problems
- Mon., Sept. 30 & Tues., Oct. 1 - No class (Rosh Hashanah)
- Thurs., Oct. 3 - Brandeis Monday
- Wed., Oct. 9 - No class (Yom Kippur)
- Quiz (tentatively sched. for Thurs., Oct. 17)

Week 8-10: 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 Thurs., Oct. 31)
- Mon., Oct. 14 - No class (Sukkot)
- Tues., Oct. 15 - Brandeis Monday
• Mon., Oct. 21 - No class (Shmini Atzeret)

**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 Thurs., Nov. 21)

**Weeks 13-14: Semantics and Pragmatics**

- LF ch. 6: Semantics, ch. 7: Pragmatics  
  LF 6.1-6.4, 7.2, 7.3, 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 7.3: Drawing Conclusions  
  LF 7.5: Presupposition

- Thanksgiving recess Nov. 27-29

**Weeks 15-16: Additional topics**

Brief overview of additional topics based on class interests

**Final exam** on date and time scheduled by Registrar