

# **Ling 100a: Introduction to Linguistics**

## **Fall 2018**

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Course time and location: MWTh 12-12:50pm, Mandel Center G03

### **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

Category	Percent of course grade
Homework assignments	40%
Participation and attendance	5%
Quizzes and exams	
Quizzes	35%
Exams	20%
Final percentage grade	100%

#### 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.

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

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 preparedness for and participation in class is expected. Please come to class each day on time and prepared to engage with the assigned material.

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, up to a maximum of 5% lost. Please note that use of an electronic device in class without prior permission will negatively affect your participation and attendance grade.

## **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 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

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.

## 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: 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. 3 - No class (Labor Day)*
- *Thurs., Sept. 6 - Brandeis Monday*
- 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
- *Mon., Sept. 10 - No class (Rosh Hashanah)*
- *Wed., Sept. 19 - No class (Yom Kippur)*

- *Mon., Sept. 24 - No class (Sukkot)*
- *Tues., Sept. 25 - Brandeis Monday*
- **Quiz** (tentatively sched. for Thurs., Sept. 27)

*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., Oct. 1 - No class (Shmini Atzeret)*
- **Quiz** (tentatively sched. for Thurs., Oct. 18)

*Week 9-10: Morphology, Midterm*

- LF ch. 4: Morphology
  - LF 4.1 - 4.5
  - LF 4.1: Words and Word Formation: The Nature of the Lexicon
  - 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. 7)
- **Ghanaian drum language guest lecture and performance** (scheduled for Nov. 12, location TBA)

*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
- *Thanksgiving recess Nov. 21-23*
- **Quiz** (tentatively sched. for Wed., Nov. 28)

*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

*Weeks 15-16: Additional topics*

Brief overview of additional topics based on class interests

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