Ling 100a: Introduction to Linguistics
Fall 2016

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Course time and location: MWTh 10-10:50pm, 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 *Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction (2010)*, 6th edition, by William O’Grady,
John Archibald, Mark Aronoff, and Janie Rees-Miller. 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

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<th>Requirement</th>
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<td>Participation and attendance</td>
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6.1 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 homework grade will be dropped.
Late homework will be accepted only for 4 days after an assignment’s due date, *provided that* one point will
be deducted for each day the assignment is late, up to a maximum deduction of 4 points off. Please note
that homework submitted on the date it is due but after the beginning of class will be deemed one day late.

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.

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 for that 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 0.25%, up to a maximum of 10% 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 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.

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).

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 and general schedule are as follows (subject to change based on class progress and interests):

*Week 1: Introduction to the course*

- O’Grady et al. ch. 1: Language: A Preview

*Week 2 - 4: Phonetics*

- *Mon., Sept. 5 - No class*
- *Thurs., Sept. 8 - Brandeis Monday*
- O’Grady et al. ch. 2: Phonetics: The Sounds of Language
- **Quiz** (tentatively sched. for Thurs., Sept. 15)

*Weeks 5-8: Phonology*

- O’Grady et al. ch. 3: Phonology: The Function and Patterning of Sounds
- **Quiz** (tentatively sched. for Thurs., Oct. 6)

*Week 9-10: Morphology, Midterm*

- O’Grady et al. ch 4: Morphology: The Analysis of Word Structure
- *Tues., Oct. 25 - Brandeis Monday*
- **Midterm** (tentatively sched. for Mon., Oct. 31)

*Weeks 11-13: Syntax*

- Reading TBD
- **Quiz** (tentatively sched. for Mon., Nov. 21)
- *Thanksgiving recess Nov. 23-25*

*Weeks 14-15: Semantics and Pragmatics*

- Reading TBD

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