Ling 190B: Phonetics  
Fall 2014

Instructor: Keith Plaster  
Email: kplaster@brandeis.edu  
Office: Volen 137 (Fall semester only)

Teaching Assistant: TBD  
TA office hours: TBD

Course location: Volen 119

1 Description and goals

This course will provide an introduction to phonetics [faˈnetiks], the study of the sounds of human speech, with an emphasis on the production and perception of the sounds of the world’s languages. Using audiovisual materials and hands-on projects, we will cover the transcription of speech, articulatory phonetics (the anatomy and physiology of speech), acoustic phonetics (how speech is transmitted), and auditory phonetics (how we perceive speech).

2 Prerequisites

Ling 110A is recommended. Students with a strong interest in linguistics (and/or, specifically, phonetics or speech pathology) are also welcome to take the course but may need to do some additional background readings at the beginning of the semester.

3 Readings

Our textbook will be Ladefoged, Peter & Keith Johnson. A Course in Phonetics. 7th ed. If you use the 6th ed. of the textbook, please note that readings and exercises will be assigned from the 7th ed. and you will be responsible for the content in the 7th ed.

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

4 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.
5 Requirements and grading

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5.1 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 score will be dropped.

Late homework will be accepted only until the graded assignment has been returned, provided that one point will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. 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 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 separately.

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. If you do not currently use an IPA font, you should check the font resources linked to the course LAĈE page. You should feel free to use any IPA font that you prefer so long as it contains all of the characters and diacritics that you need. (I especially recommend the SIL Doulos Unicode font.)

5.2 Language project

During the semester, each student will work toward the production of a final project involving the phonetic investigation of a language of his or her choice using data from a native speaker. Students will begin by identifying a language or dialect and a native speaker who is willing to serve as his or her consultant. As part of several homework assignments, students will be required to research the phonetics of the chosen language or dialect using secondary sources, identify an area that the student would like to explore with phonetic analysis, and design and conduct an experiment to perform the phonetic analysis. At the end of the course, students will submit a 5-10 page (double-spaced) write-up of the research they conducted and briefly present their research and results to the class.

5.3 Participation and attendance

Class attendance is required and participation in class is expected. While you will not be penalized for being quiet in class, I hope very much that you will ask questions and want to participate in class discussions.

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.
5.4 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 25% 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.

6 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).

7 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.

8 Academic integrity

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai). Faculty may refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to, failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences.

9 Topics and general schedule

We will generally aim to cover one chapter of Ladefoged & Johnson per week, supplemented with additional materials and topics based on students’ backgrounds and interests.