

ENGL 5335: Principles of Language, Fall 2008

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Office hours: **Thursday, 3:30-5:00 PM & Friday 1:00-2:00 PM (or by appointment)**

Course description:

This course provides an introduction to the study of language at the graduate level. We will learn about the set of underlying principles of human language by analyzing linguistic data drawn from various languages, although English data will be used most frequently for ease of exposition. We will begin with more theoretical and fundamental sub-fields of linguistics, i.e., morphology, syntax, semantics, phonetics, and phonology. We will then turn to more applied or descriptive sub-disciplines in linguistics such as language acquisition, language variation, and linguistic typology. Our approach will be descriptive rather than prescriptive, which means that we will analyze what is actually spoken by people. Class meetings will be organized around a lecture format. However, students are expected to participate actively in class discussions. Also, they are expected to do a teaching demo on a chapter in the textbook, and in addition present their research results on a specific topic pertinent to the course towards the end of the term.

Texts:

Required: Fromkin, V.A. and Rodman, R. *Introduction to Language*. 1997. Harcourt Brace. 6th edition.

Recommended: Akmajian, Adrian, Richard A. Demers, Ann K. Farmer, and Robert M. Harnish. *Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication*. Fifth Ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 2001.

Learning Outcomes and Assessments:

Upon successful completion of this course, a student should be able to do the following:

- Define linguistics and its main subfields such as morphology, syntax, semantics, phonology, and phonetics, and discuss their relevance and significance our daily life and other academic disciplines.
- Compare human language with animal communication and appreciate the creativity of human language and its role as a window into the human mind.
- Outline the broad history of linguistic inquiry in the West with some emphasis on identifying and critiquing the aims and origins of diachronic and synchronic approaches, and with some assessment of the contributions of notable linguists and language scholars such as Panini, Noam Chomsky, Richard Montague, Paul Grice, William Labov, and Deborah Tannen.
- Identify units of meaning; isolate and categorize morphemes in words; and begin to describe what rules might exist about the formation of words in a language.

- Identify units of sentence structure such as heads, phrases, and constituents; diagram tree structures that represent grammatical analyses; and generalize about structural patterns of newly-encountered phrases and sentences.
- Define the fields of semantics and pragmatics and name some major approaches to meaning.
- Identify units of sound and describe the features of common phonemes. Also, identify underlying rules that govern the phonological system of a language.
- Use a phonetic alphabet to transcribe words (and/or read words presented in a phonetic transcription); explain why alphabetic spelling is complicated and may not represent pronunciation; and begin to explain how phonological rules might be formulated.
- Identify factors that induce language change and variation such as gender, geographic, and socioeconomic factors. In addition, compare various varieties of a language and describe their similarities and differences in a systematic and theoretical manner.
- Raise consciousness on issues pertaining to bilingualism and formulate a linguistically-informed opinion about some basic issues in bilingual education.
- Find, read, summarize, and evaluate scholarly resources in linguistics; cite sources following the MLA documentation style.

Assessment methods:

1. Two tests
2. Teaching on a topic of linguistics
3. A final term-paper
4. Oral presentation on research results
5. In-class discussions
6. Brief in-class review sessions
7. Consultations during office hours

Requirements:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance (10%) • Exam 1 (20%) • Exam 2 (20%) • Teaching demonstration (10%) • Final paper proposal (5%) • Final paper (25%) • Oral presentation on the final project (10%) |
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-Students will attend class regularly and will participate positively in class discussions.

-They must complete the assignments in a timely fashion and bring the results to class. They will not be graded. But **some of them** will be submitted to the instructor on the day they are due and **all of them** will be submitted as a collection at the end of the semester (more on this below).

-Students will take two exams. They will cover information given out **during lectures and discussions**, as well as what's written in the lecture notes. Therefore, attending each lecture will be crucial.

-Students will do a teaching demo on a topic that is included in the required textbook, i.e., by selecting a chapter in the 2nd half of the semester. This will be done as a team teaching.

-Students will write a final research paper on a topic pertinent to the course content or what they did their teaching demo on. The paper will be **10-12 pages** long, **double-spaced**, **excluding** references. It must be well-organized, well-written, with clear section headings and indentations, and follow the *MLA*, *Linguistic Inquiry* or *Language* style.

-The selection of the final paper topic must be approved by the instructor beforehand. This is done by submitting a **one-paged** (**single-spaced**) proposal clearly outlining their final paper topic, enumerating some of the **references** they will rely on, and the **research methods** to be utilized.

-Students will deliver an oral presentation on their research findings at the end of the term. More specific instructions for the presentations will be given later in class and also by e-mail.

-Students will be expected to demonstrate scholarly writing skills in completing the exams and also writing the final research paper.

Course Policy:

Announcements will be made both in class and by e-mail. E-mail messages will be sent to student's TTU accounts. So students must keep their **TTU e-mail accounts active and check them every day.**

About course content:

- In order to earn a passing grade, a student must successfully complete all course requirements.
- Students are expected to be present and punctual each class day. Attendance will be checked every day. Students with **4 absences with no justification** will receive an **automatic D**. Students with more than **5 absences** will receive an **automatic F**. Justification for absences must be done via appropriate documentation. On the other hand, students who never misses any class will receive **5 extra credit points for the final grade**.
- Homework problems will be assigned to coordinate with lectures and discussions. As aforementioned, homeworks will not always be collected or graded on the due dates; they will simply be reviewed in class. However, they should be well **kept and filed (in a binder**, for instance), for the entire set will be **submitted** to the instructor **at the end of the semester**.
- No individual make-up tests will be administered (the only exception being hospitalization and religious activities, but both will need to be justified or evidenced by appropriate documentation).
- Students should be present on test days except in cases of extreme emergencies. If the university is closed for emergency reasons on the day it is scheduled, then the test will be administered on the next class day.
- Students must submit any written work **either stapled or clipped**.
- **No electronic or late submission** of a paper will be accepted. Early submissions are welcome.
- Students are encouraged to set up appointments or conferences with the professor. Constructive feedback about the course is encouraged at any time. Students must take responsibility for their

own learning. If you have difficulty understanding course material or need additional information about an assignment, then you must make an appointment at a time that suits both your schedule and your professor's.

About student behavior:

- We should strive to make the classroom as an optimal place for learning and growing both as intellectuals and human beings. Thus, students are expected to behave appropriately, maintaining appropriate decorum in their speech and behavior, and showing respect for other people. No single student should dominate the entire discussion. No student should remain silent all the time.
- Unless otherwise approved by the instructor, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom may result in a directive to leave class
- Students will exhibit integrity in their work and in their dealings with their classmates. **Plagiarism** or other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. Any student found cheating can expect to receive **an F** for the course and endure any other penalties invoked by the student's dean or the upper administration.
- Any student who, because of a disabling condition, may require special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. Students requesting such services will need to present verification from the appropriate university office since it is university policy that such accommodations are not made prior to completion of the approved TTU process.
- Other information about university policies can be located in the Graduate Catalog and in the Directory of Classes. Students with concerns not addressed in this policy statement should discuss their situations with their professor at their earliest convenience.

Schedule (Subject to Change):

Part 1

Aug 25	Introduction and overview of the course (Ch. 1) (homework1 given out)
Sept 1	No class: Labor Day Holiday
Sept 8	Homework 1 review & Brain and Language (Ch. 2)
Sept 15	Homework 2 review & Morphology (Ch. 3)
Sept 22	Homework 3 review & Syntax (Ch. 4)
Sept 29	Homework 4 review & Semantics and pragmatics (Ch.5)
Oct 6	Test 1 & Phonetics (Ch. 6)
Oct 13	Homework 5 review & Phonetics cont'd
Oct 20	Homework 6 review & Phonology (Ch. 7)

Beginning of students' teaching demo

- Oct 27 Language acquisition (Ch. 8)
- Nov 3 Language processing: Humans and computers (Ch. 9)
- Nov 10 Language and society (Ch. 10) (**final paper proposal due**)
- Nov 17 Language change (Ch. 11)
- Nov 24 **Test 2**

Thanksgiving break

- Dec 1 **Last day of classes: Student oral reports, final paper due.**