

Linguistics 201: Introduction to Language in the Humanities

Scott Martin

Autumn quarter 2008

Instructor [Scott Martin](http://www.ling.ohio-state.edu/~scott/) (<http://www.ling.ohio-state.edu/~scott/>)

Office 204 [Oxley Hall](#)

Phone 614-688-3108

Mailbox 225 Oxley Hall (end of the hall, by the kitchen)

Course Meeting Times Mondays and Wednesdays 9:30–11:18 AM in 201 [Enarson Hall](#).

Web Page <http://www.ling.osu.edu/~scott/autumn/201/>

This course web page contains digital copies of this syllabus, homeworks, etc. The class schedule is maintained on the course Carmen web page, including dates for homeworks and exams.

Office hours Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30 AM–12:30 PM (in general, arranging an appointment by email works best)

Exam Schedule The mid-term will be held in class; the final may be held at a different location to be determined later in the quarter (I will update the class via email about this once I find out).

Mid-term Wednesday, October 29th 2008 9:30–11:18 AM (tentative)

Final Tuesday, December 9th, 9:30–11:18 AM

TA Coordinator Dr. Hope Dawson, dawson.165@osu.edu, 222a Oxley Hall, 614-688-3109.

Course Description and Objectives

This course provides an introduction to the nature of human language, and probes such questions as:

- What is *language*? What constitutes *a language*?
- What distinguishes human language from other communication systems?
- What are words, phrases and sentences? Do all languages use these equally?
- What do all languages have in common?
- How does language change over time?
- What is “standard language”? Who decides whether a word or spelling is “right” or “wrong”?
- What is the meaning of the word “the”?

Throughout the course, we will focus on the various aspects of human language, and learn how to discuss them objectively. We will also address widely-held myths about language and language use. By the end of this course, you will have a new appreciation of the amazing system you employ every day.

GEC

This course fulfills GEC 2.C.3: 2–Breadth; C–Arts and Humanities; 3–Cultures and Ideas. (This GEC was formerly known as 5.B.3.)

Materials

- *Language Files*, 10th Edition. Anouschka Bergmann, Kathleen Currie Hall, and Sharon Ross, editors. 2007. The Ohio State University Press.
- *Language Myths*. Laurie Bauer and Peter Trudgill. 1998. Penguin.

Requirements, Assignments, and Grading

Reading assignments will be given for most class meetings, to be completed before that day’s lecture. There will be four or five homework assignments, which students will be given at least one week to complete. Homework assignments are due in the Carmen dropbox before class on the assigned due date. **Late homework assignments are not accepted.** Group work on homework assignments is encouraged, but **all students must write and submit their own answers.**

Please submit homeworks to the Carmen dropbox in plain text (.txt), PDF, or HTML format. (Note that many word processing applications have the ability to export or “save as” PDF.) **No formats other than plain text, PDF, or HTML will be accepted.** If you are unable to generate work in any of these formats, please contact me.

Both exams will be held in class, with no textbooks or notes allowed. The course grade will be determined according to the following rubric:

Participation	5%
Homeworks	30%
Midterm	30%
Final	30%
Linguistics Outside the Classroom	5%

If you know you won’t be able to make a deadline or exam, please see me **before** you miss the deadline or exam.

The OSU Standard Grading Scheme is used, which maps percentages to grades in the following way:

A	93–100	B+	87–89	C+	77–79	D+	67–69	E	0–59
A–	90–92	B	83–86	C	73–76	D	60–66		
		B–	80–82	C–	70–72				

Attendance

Attendance is critical for your success in this course. The readings will provide background, and we will flesh out and discuss the concepts in class.

Formal roll will not be taken each class period, and students will therefore not be graded on attendance as such. However, each class meeting a question about the previous day’s material, that day’s assigned reading, or some other course topic covered recently. You will write your answer on an index card and hand it in. These cards will be graded on a scale of 0 to 2: 2 points for a correct or partly correct answer, 1 point for an incorrect answer, and 0 points for no answer. These go under “Participation” above. The lowest 2 cards will be dropped from your grade at the end of the quarter.

Linguistics Outside the Classroom

Students in all sections of Linguistics 201 must fulfill this requirement. You must:

- Participate in **two (2)** linguistics experiments – OR –
- Attend **two (2)** talks – OR –
- Do **one (1)** of each.

Whichever you choose, you will need to complete a questionnaire for each talk and/or experiment. The questionnaire will be given out at the event. Please see <http://linguistics.osu.edu/courses/outside.cfm> for details. You may also refer to the handout which I distributed on the first day of class.

Note that you must complete one part of this assignment by the end of the 5th week of class, and the second part by the end of the 10th week of class. **Do not put this off until the last minute.** Seating is limited, and the later sessions tend to fill up, so students may end up receiving no points for this requirement by procrastinating.

Academic Misconduct

To state the obvious, academic dishonesty is not allowed. Any suspected academic misconduct or violation of the code of student conduct **must**, by university rules, be reported to to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct. Examples of academic misconduct include plagiarism and replicating another student's work. For more information, visit the University Committee on Academic Misconduct's web site: <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html>.

Students with Disabilities: Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me as soon as possible to discuss the course format, to anticipate needs, and to explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office of Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. Students who have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services are encouraged to do so (292-3307; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>).

Tentative Schedule

Date	Topics	Files	
Week 1			
Wed 9/24	Introduction		
Week 2			
Mon 9/29	Language in General	1.1, 1.4, 1.5	
Wed 10/1	Phonetics	2.6	
Week 3			
Mon 10/6	Phonetics (cont.)	2.0–2.3	
Wed 10/8	Phonology	3.0–3.3	Homework 1 Due
Week 4			
Mon 10/13	Phonology (cont.)		
Wed 10/15	Morphology	4 (all)	
Week 5			
Mon 10/20	Syntax introduction	5.0, 5.1	
Wed 10/22	Syntax (cont.)	5.3–5.5	Homework 2 Due
Week 6			
Mon 10/27	Midterm review		
Wed 10/29	Midterm exam		
Week 7			
Mon 11/3	Semantics	6.0–6.3	
Wed 11/5	Semantics (cont.)	6.4, 6.5	
Week 8			
Mon 11/10	Pragmatics	7.0, 7.1	Homework 3 Due
Wed 11/12	Pragmatics	7.2–7.5	
Week 9			
Mon 11/17	Language Acquisition	8.1–8.2	
Wed 11/19	Language Change	12.1–12.3	
Week 10			
Mon 11/24	Language Variation	10.1–10.3	Homework 4 Due
Wed 11/26	No class (Thanksgiving)		
Week 11			
Mon 12/1	Language Variation and Culture	10.4, 13.1–13.3	
Wed 12/3	Final review		

Feedback

If you have comments, complaints, or ideas you'd like to send me, please feel free to contact me via email or in person. If you prefer to remain anonymous, you can contact me anonymously from my web page (<http://www.ling.osu.edu/~scott/contact/>) or leave a note for me in my mailbox in the linguistics department (225 Oxley hall).