



Linguistics 100A

Introduction to Linguistics: I

CRN 12045

September-December 2014

Tues, Wed, Fri 10:30 am - 11:20 pm, Turpin A104

Instructor Dr Leslie Saxon

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Office Hour Wednesdays 12:30-2:00 and by appointment

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Please include "Ling 100A" in the subject line of your messages to me or the TAs. Thanks!

Course Description

Language is at the core of our understanding of the world and of ourselves. It provides the link between us and history, literature, philosophy, science, culture, and identity. As a child each of us is able to acquire any language at all, and we do this without even trying, it sometimes seems. What are the similarities and differences between languages? What do we learn when we learn our native languages? What are the basic systems and building blocks of language?

This course lays the foundation for further study of language and linguistics through an examination of some concepts, principles, and terminology you might now have only a rough understanding of (grammar, compound word, suffix, sound, consonant, vowel, noun, verb, sentence, ambiguity). The course focuses on humans' creativity with language by examining the structural aspects of language (as opposed to aspects of language in use). It emphasizes the ability of language learners and language users to understand language in terms of patterns and regularities.

My Goals and Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

I am interested in linguistics as a scientific study, and I take delight in how we use language in creative, social, political, manipulative, playful, cultural, argumentative, artistic, thoughtful, and other ways. I also am committed to Indigenous languages in this country and elsewhere. In this course I hope to draw you in to the study of language and give you tools to help you think about and appreciate what language is and how it is used.

Many of the tools in the linguist's tool-kit are analytical, useful for understanding the bits and pieces of language. I believe that teaching and learning can be approached from many perspectives. In linguistics, there is plenty of room for a hands-on approach, and I aim to foster an active engagement with the bits and pieces of language and also the larger issues of how language is used. This means I will be asking you to observe language around you and scrutinize it, and think about it using the tools developed in this course.

I see linguistic studies as contributing to your larger education by providing examples and opportunities for analytical reasoning, close observation, appreciation for technical terminology, grammatical knowledge and understanding, and appreciation of the diversity and power of language and languages and the people who speak those languages.

Required Texts (the seventh edition is required)

O'Grady, William and John Archibald. 2012. *Contemporary Linguistic Analysis: An Introduction*, Seventh Edition. Toronto, Ontario: Pearson Canada Inc.

Website www.pearsoned.ca/ogrady see your textbook for registration information

O'Grady, William and John Archibald. 2012. *Contemporary Linguistic Analysis: An Introduction*, Seventh Edition – *Study Guide*, Prepared by Teresa Merrells and Anna L. Moro. Toronto, Ontario: Pearson Canada Inc.

This course has a CourseSpaces site.

On CourseSpaces you will find information about the classes, class slides, assignments, and handouts, and additional information relevant to the class. Check it regularly. I will typically post materials right after class.

Important dates

Wednesday 3 September	First day of classes, first term
Friday 19 September	Last day for adding courses that begin in the first term
Friday 31 October	Last day for withdrawing from first term courses without academic penalty
Mon-Wed 10-12 November	Reading Break, no classes
Wednesday 3 December	Last day of classes, first term
Tuesday 8 to Monday 22 December	Exam period, first term courses [our course has no exam]

Topics for Study (approximately two weeks each)

Introduction	Chapter 1
Morphology (word patterns)	Chapter 4
Phonetics (physical dimensions of language)	Chapter 2
Phonology (sound patterning)	Chapter 3
Syntax (sentence patterns)	Chapter 5
Semantics (meaning)	Chapter 6

Morphology is the study of words, word patterns, and their structures and relationships. A word is language in microcosm: sound paired with meaning. A morphologist asks questions like:

- how do we know what counts as a word in this language? (is a *compound word* a word?)
- does this word have internal parts? (is there a *suffix*?)
- what other words is this word related to?
- how do people make up new words?
- are all words the same in their roles in sentences?

Phonetics is the study of the physical dimensions of language -- the sounds of language and how they are formed in our mouths (articulation) and how they are heard (acoustics). In this course we will focus on articulation and the International Phonetic Alphabet. A phonetician asks questions like:

- how are the parts of the body used in articulation?
- what are the possible sounds of language?
- what are the sounds of this language and how are they formed in the mouth?
- what are the important classes of sounds? (this is where *consonants* and *vowels* come in)
- what interaction is there when different sounds are pronounced in sequence?

Phonology is the study of sound patterning in language and how contrasts in sound make meanings different. For example, *bike*, *pike*, *mic*, *psych*, are exactly the same except for the beginning sound, but they are four separate words with four separate consonants. Or the opposite situation, in *tall*, *stall*, *outlaw*, *mountain*, we can hear four ways to pronounce the "t" sound in English; as speakers of English, though, our ears find it hard to hear the difference in the "t" because the different sounds don't change the meaning! A phonologist asks questions like:

- what are the contrastive sounds used in forming words in this language?
- how are those contrastive sounds actually pronounced and what are the interactions?
- how are sounds classified in this language?
- why does "stimp" look like a possible word of English but not "tsimp"?
- what is the importance of syllables in the organization of sounds in languages?

Syntax is the study of language patterning larger than words, with an emphasis on phrases and sentences. Since we can say pretty much anything we want to say, how we combine words in our languages is vitally important for communication and expression. A syntactician asks questions like:

- what are the different parts of speech? (we will talk about *noun*, *verb*, *adjective*, *preposition*, etc)
- what are the patterns for forming phrases and sentences?
- is there a longest sentence in English?
- how are sentences related to each other?
- are the sentence patterns in different languages comparable?

Semantics is the study of meaning and the content of what we say when we talk, so there is a strong link to thought or concepts when we study semantics. Semantics comes up a lot in everyday conversation, maybe more than other area of linguistics: "I didn't mean what I said the other day" or "What they said didn't mean anything" or "That is an awfully ambiguous thing to say" or even "What do you mean?". A semanticist asks questions like:

- when we know the meaning of a word or sentence, what do we know?
- how do the meanings of the parts of an expression add up to the meaning of the whole thing?
- can a word or sentence be *ambiguous* (have more than one meaning)?
- how does context interact with meaning?
- how can we understand "my feet are killing me", when we can't understand it literally?

Advice

- We will have a large-ish class. Please **focus** on what is happening in class because this is your one chance to experience it. There are **no fines for texting in class**, but ...
- **Attendance** will greatly contribute to your success in the course because you will be offered material besides what is in the textbook.
- Your and your classmates' **contributions** are important and I really appreciate your comments and ideas.
- If you have to come to class late or leave early, that is all right, but do this **without a fuss**.
- **Please talk to me or our TAs** if you have concerns about how the course is going.
- It is very helpful to **form groups** with others to do homework and study together.
- If you are **going to miss** an important date or deadline it is very important to let me know the context beforehand and as soon as possible; **illness or serious hardships** are acceptable reasons for missing coursework or quizzes. Talk to me about it.
- In preparing assignments for handing in, **do your own written work** after your discussions and indicate the other members of your study group on your paper.
- Quizzes and examinations in this course are designed to be **individual work**. See the University of Victoria Calendar for policies on academic integrity <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcl.html>

Notes on How Your Grades will be Calculated

Participation (10%) [required]

In every introductory course, there are a lot of new concepts, ways of thinking, terms, and ideas to contend with, and it can be challenging to grasp them all. The purpose of the class is to help you gain mastery of the subject: in class we will introduce ways of thinking about things that are not necessarily the same as in the textbook, so that you will have another perspective. There will be a lot of us in the room, and this can be really helpful if we work together to reach understanding. This is another way of saying that your attendance and participation in class is important to your success in the course. ***A number of assignments will be handed out during class and these will be registered and counted towards your participation mark, for a maximum score of 10.***

Short Assignments (10%)

There will be a number of short assignments distributed in class or in CourseSpaces. The assignments will be handed out to the class for you to work on individually or in groups. You will hand your responses in one or two classes later, and they will be marked as *pass* (2 points), *non-pass* (1 point), or *no attempt* (0 points). The points awarded will be averaged out to a score out of 10.

When you hand your assignment in, please keep a copy for yourself so that we can discuss them in class.

If you discuss your work with others, please include a list of those you consulted to acknowledge their contributions to your thinking. This could include your study group members. Please make sure that your written work is your own work.

Quizzes (20% and 20%) and Final Examination (40%) [required]

These tests will ask you to use your growing understanding and skills to reason about language information, apply your knowledge to answer questions and do linguistic analysis, recall and use key linguistic terminology, and make connections among the things you know. The exercises in the two textbooks and in the assignments will provide

examples of types of questions that you will find on the tests. You will be encouraged to do as many exercises as you have time for, and we will talk about many of the exercises in class.

Evaluation Summary

Quiz 1	20%	Friday 3 October 2014 (tentative date)
Quiz 2	20%	Wednesday 5 November 2014 (tentative date)
Short Assignments	10%	(see above)
Participation	10%	(see above) [required component]
Final Examination	40%	Examination period (8-22 December 2015) [required component]

University of Victoria Undergraduate Grading Scale

• scores will be rounded to the nearest whole number and the final grade arrived at from there. Please see the link below for fuller information.

<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/FACS/UnIn/UARe/Grad.html>

Passing Grades	Grade Point Value	Percentage *	Description
A+	9	90 – 100	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
A	8	85 – 89	
A-	7	80 – 84	
B+	6	77 – 79	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
B	5	73 – 76	
B-	4	70 – 72	
C+	3	65 – 69	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
C	2	60 – 64	
D	1	50 – 59	A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
Failing Grades	Grade Point Value	Percentage *	Description
F	0	0 – 49	F is earned by work, which after the completion of course requirements, is inadequate and unworthy of course credit towards the degree.
N	0	0 – 49	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.
Temporary Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage *	Description
DEF	N/A	N/A	Deferred status granted. Used only when deferred status has been granted because of illness, an accident or family affliction. See Deferred Status .

* The grading scale for the evaluation of course achievement at the University of Victoria is a percentage scale that translates to a 9 point GPA/letter grade system. The 9 point GPA system is the sole basis for the calculation of grade point averages and academic standing. Standardized percentage ranges have been established as the basis for the assignment of letter grades. The percentage grades are displayed on the official and administrative transcripts in order to provide fine grained course assessment which will be useful to students particularly in their application to graduate studies and for external scholarships and funding. Comparative grading information (average grade [mean] for the class), along with the number of students in the class, is displayed for each course section for which percentage grades are assigned.