

LIN 306 (39825): Introduction to the Study of Language

Spring 2023
MWF 9-10AM, CPE 2.206

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Pronouns: she/her/hers

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Office hours: T 9-10:30 AM, F 2:30-4 PM. Zoom meeting ID: 723 377 9584. In-person office hours in RLP 4.304. Alternative meeting times available by appointment.

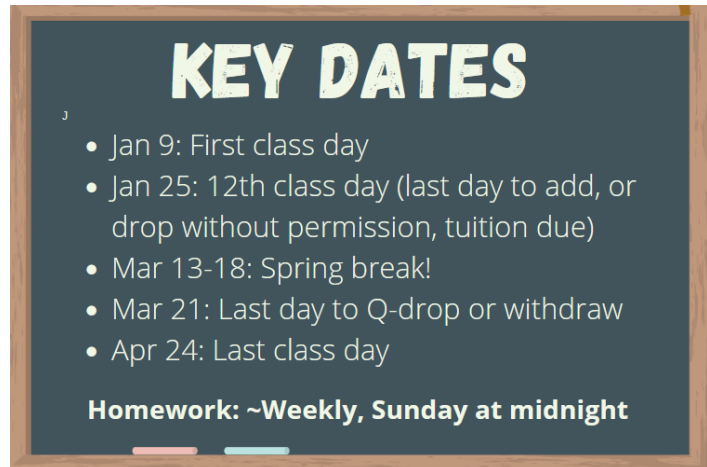
Frequently Asked Questions

'The scientist is not a person who gives the right answers, [they're] the one who asks the right questions.' –Claude Levi-Strauss

What is this document for?

This syllabus tells you everything you need to know about this course (what it's about, what you'll be expected to learn and do, how I'll assess your work, important class policies, etc.). Here's a brief **table of contents**:

- Course description: see below
- Requirements and evaluation: page 3
- Class policies: page 5
- Health & safety: page 6
- Student resources: page 7
- Schedule and standards: page 8



Whose land are we meeting on?

We are meeting on the stolen Indigenous lands of what now is called North America. I would like to acknowledge the Alabama-Coushatta, Caddo, Carrizo/Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Kickapoo, Lipan Apache, Tonkawa, and Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas.

What is this course about?

This course explores the structure of human language including sounds (phonetics/ phonology), the composition of words (morphology) and sentences (syntax), and meaning (semantics). Students will learn how these structures are acquired, change over time, are related to social systems, and relate to structures in the brain. This course considers questions such as: How do we differentiate between languages? Are there structures that are present in all languages? What methods do we use to encode language? How does bilingualism affect language acquisition? How do languages change over time? Why do speakers lie, and how do listeners interpret it?

Over the course of the semester students will also be exposed to a variety of common methodologies used for linguistic description and analysis, and they will practice interpreting and critiquing linguistic information in popular media. Students will engage with media of various types aimed at non-expert audiences and will evaluate these sources through a scholarly lens. This course focuses on understanding the field as a rigorous science, effectively communicating linguistic scholarship to non-expert audiences, and identifying and applying topics studied in class in students' everyday lives.

What are the course requirements/flags?

There are no prerequisites for this course, and it carries a Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present. We will be focusing specifically on indigenous languages and cultures of the Americas this semester.

Is there a textbook?

You should have access to the following textbook for this class:

Dawson, H. & M. Phelan (eds.). 2016. Language files: Materials for an introduction to language and linguistics, 12th edn. Columbus: Ohio State University. ISBN: 978-0814252703.

How will I be graded?

This course uses a standards-based grading scheme. There are 26 skill standards and 4 writing and communication standards. Your grade will be based on how many of these standards you successfully meet throughout the semester. We will determine the quantity of standards needed to meet each letter grade together, on our first day of class.

How do I submit my work, and can I submit it late?

You should submit your work, typed in a reasonable font, as a pdf via Canvas. All assignments are due on Sunday at midnight, unless otherwise stated. I do not accept late work without prior notice, because all standards are available for reassessment if needed. If you are having an emergency and will not be able to meet a deadline for an assignment, please contact me ahead of time to determine a reasonable timeframe for submission.

How can I contact you if I need help?

I will be available via email Monday through Friday, 8AM-5PM, and I will respond as promptly as possible during these hours. You may message me directly via email or through Canvas's messaging system; I prefer if you email me directly because Canvas's system does not always deliver messages promptly. If you send me an email during these hours and do not receive a response within 24 hours, please send a follow-up. Outside of weekday working hours, I will respond to your email as time allows, but I can't guarantee that you'll receive a response before the next workday. Any requests for a re-grade or a grade dispute should be made in writing via email within 2 weeks of receiving the graded assignment.

What is the teaching modality of this course?

I will be teaching this class primarily in person, synchronously. If you will not be able to attend class for some reason, and you contact me ahead of time (no later than 7 am on the day of class), I will set up a hybrid option that will allow you to stream the class on Zoom and/or view a recording later. If you don't let me know ahead of time that you will be unable to attend a class, there will be no class recording. If you have to miss class due to illness (or any other reason), attending online or asynchronously will not affect your grade (except insofar as it affects your ability to effectively learn). For COVID-19 safety information, see 'COVID-19 Safety', page 5.

Requirements and Evaluation

'If you intend to evaluate how your knowledge is applicable, transfer it to others.' –Eraldo Banovac

Linguistics department experimental credit (2%): This course has an experimental requirement. This requirement is designed to allow students to gain some familiarity with how some types of linguistics research are conducted. Students may fulfill this requirement by *either* participating in *one experiment* that lasts approximately one hour, *or* by attending *one lecture* held outside regular class times. There will be options to fulfill the requirement *online*. The experiments are part of ongoing research in the department and will illustrate features of language structure and use that are relevant to topics covered in the core linguistics curriculum. Similarly, the lecture will be on topics covered in the core linguistics curriculum. **Failure to complete this assignment will result in a lowered grade.**

WHAT'S MY GRADE?

98%: Standards, 2% Experimental credit

95%: 23-26 skills, 10 to 12 writing standards

91.5%: 23-26 skills, 8-9 writing standards

88.5%: 20-22 skills, 10-12 writing standards

85%: 20-22 skills, 8-9 writing standards

81.5%: 20-22 skills, 6-7 writing standards

78.5%: 17-19 skills, 8-9 writing standards

75%: 17-19 skills, 6-7 writing standards

71.5%: 17-19 skills, 4-5 writing standards

68.5%: 14-16 skills, 6-7 writing standards

65%: 14-16 skills, 4-5 writing standards

61.5%: 14-16 skills, less than 4 writing standards

60%: less than 14 skills, less than 4 writing standards

Course final grades will be lowered by two points if you fail to complete this assignment. **IMPORTANT:** don't leave this requirement till the end of the semester! The last experiments will be scheduled for the last week of classes, but don't count on sufficient experiment slots being available for everyone to fulfil this requirement at that late date. We highly recommend that you fulfill this requirement by week 15 (the penultimate week of the semester).

Class standards (98%): The remainder of your grade in this course is based on a series of 26 skills-based and 4 writing and communication-based standards. Here's what you need to know:

- Homework assignments
 - Due weekly, on Sunday night (midnight), typed and on Canvas
 - Each question on your homework assignment will be labeled with the skill standard that it addresses

- Each question will be marked either ‘meets the standard’ or ‘not yet’
- For questions marked ‘not yet’, you will get additional written feedback about how to improve your answer; you may also get some notes on the standards you have met
- If you receive a ‘not yet’ mark on a homework question, you can request an additional problem to reassess that standard
 - Reassessments must be requested via email
 - You will have one week to submit the reassessment from the time that I send it to you
 - You should also submit the reassessment on Canvas, via the same assignment page that the original standard was assessed on
 - You may *only request one reassessment per week*
 - You can reassess any given standard up to twice, giving you a total of three attempts to meet each standard
- Once you have received a ‘meets the standard’ mark on a standard, I will enter it as ‘complete’ in the Canvas grade book
- You will also have three, larger writing and communication assignments, which will be assessed based on four writing and communication standards
 - The first two of these assignments will take the form of written papers
 - The third assignment can take the form of your choice (see assignment description)
 - For each writing and communication assignment you will receive a mark telling you which standards you met, and which you have not yet met
 - If you don’t meet all the standards on your first attempt, you can revise and resubmit each writing and communication assignment *once*
 - Writing and communication assignments can be submitted at any time during the semester, but each one must be submitted at least by the deadline listed in the schedule below (that is, do not wait until the last week of the semester and try to submit three!)
- This portion of your final grade will be based on a combination of how many skills standards you have met (26 possible) and how many writing and communication standards you have met (4 standards x 3 assignments = 12)
- We will determine how many standards constitute each letter grade *together* during the first day of class.

Grade calculation:

Your grade will be calculated by multiplying the percent assigned to you based on the standards by .98, and then adding the experimental credit. This percentage will be converted to a letter grade based on the following table:

		B+	87.0%-89.9%	C+	77.0%-79.9%	D+	67.0%-69.9%
A	93% or above	B	83.0%-86.9%	C	73.0%-76.9%	D	63.0%-66.9%
A-	90.0%-92.9%	B-	80.0%-82.9%	C-	70.0%-72.9%	D-	60.0%-62.9%
						F	Below 60%

I reserve the right to slightly adjust these grade thresholds at the end of the semester. I will only ever *lower* the threshold (for example I might make 92.5% an A, but I will never decide to make 94% an A-).

For example:

- You complete 24 skill standards and 8 writing standards, which earns you 91.5%. You also complete the experimental requirement
 - Your final grade: $(91.5 \cdot .98) + (100 \cdot .02) = 91.67$, which is an A-
- You complete 22 skills standards and 11 writing standards, which earns you 88.5%. You do not complete the experimental requirement
 - Your final grade: $(88.5 \cdot .98) + (0 \cdot .02) = 86.7$, which is a B
- You complete 15 skills standards and 7 writing standards, which earns you 68.5%, and you complete the experimental requirement.
 - Your final grade: $(68.5 \cdot .98) + (100 \cdot .02) = 69.13$, which is a D+

Class Policies

‘As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence.’
 –bell hooks

Anti-racism: The Department of Linguistics is committed to supporting all its students and fostering an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment in the classroom and in the broader community; expressions or actions that disparage a person or group’s race or ethnicity will not be tolerated and are contrary to the mission of the University. The study of linguistics has historically been used to alternately maintain and deconstruct racial inequity. This class aims to engage you in a continuous process of reflection and evaluation which can be applied to the work of undoing racial injustice in academia and society in general. Your participation in this process is valuable; if this course falls short of this commitment, I encourage you to contact me, or the Department of Linguistics, with suggestions or concerns. You can view the University’s Diversity and Inclusion action plan here: <https://diversity.utexas.edu/actionplan/>.

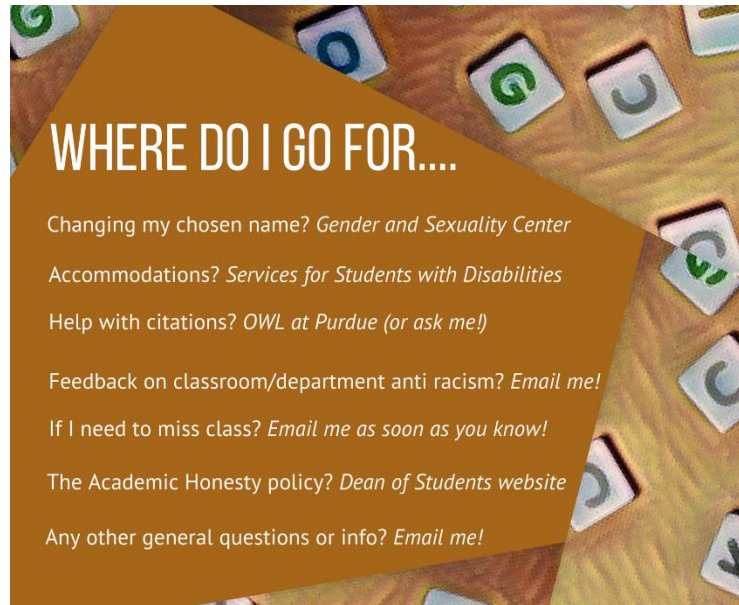
Communication: I will communicate with you via email and Canvas announcements. You should check your email and Canvas regularly (at least once a day) during regular working hours. You may want to change your Canvas settings so that you receive an email every time I post an announcement. Read all messages from me in their entirety.

Personal pronoun use: Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name unless they have added a “chosen name” with the Gender and Sexuality Center (do so here: https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/ais/chosen_name/). I will gladly call you by whatever name and pronouns you request; please advise me of any changes early in the semester so that I can get it right!

Class accessibility: I am committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment consistent with University policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so that I can work with you to ensure that you have equal opportunity to participate fully in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Refer to SSD’s website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with SSD, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so that we can discuss your approved accommodations and needs in this course.

Religious Holy Days: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least 14 days prior to the date observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss class or an assignment in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence

Technology use: You should engage with technology in the classroom in a way that best helps you learn. Feel free to use whatever technology best assists your learning. If you use technology like laptops or cell phones during class, you should be sure that your use facilitates your learning and enables you to stay engaged in class. You should also be sure that your technology use is not a distraction to your classmates (even if you can browse the internet or watch sports while attending to the lecture, your classmates next to or behind you might find this distracting).



Collaboration: All work should be written independently. You may, however, discuss your ideas with your classmates. I recommend that you only discuss problems orally, because writing solutions down as you talk leads to your work being essentially identical. If you discuss a solution in collaboration with someone else, both (all) members of your group should note collaborator names at the top of the assignment. Likewise, cite ideas drawn from discussion with your classmates (in or out of class) in your written work. The OWL at Purdue is a helpful resource for citation information, and it can be found here: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html. If you have questions about how to cite your classmates or class discussion, feel free to consult with me. If in doubt, take a stab at citing it; better to be safe!

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

Health & Safety

‘Sometimes there’s not a better way. Sometimes there’s only the hard way.’ –Mary E. Pearson

Modality and recordings: Class will be taught synchronously in person. If you notify me that you will need to miss class by 7 AM on the day of class, I can stream it on Zoom and make a recording for you to view later, if you’re not able to participate synchronously. Class recordings are reserved

only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

Masking: Face masks are *recommended* for all individuals, regardless of vaccination status. Your mask should cover your nose and mouth. Take care when putting on and taking off your mask to avoid contamination of your nose and face. If wearing a cloth mask, wash it frequently; the CDC recommends KN95 or N95 masks. I will wear a mask during any in-person office hours and during any close contact with students. The University's masking guidelines can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3iOjmYr>.

COVID-19 Testing: Proactive Community Testing is an important part of the University's strategy for containing the spread of COVID-19. **Tests are fast, and free.** Please let me know if you will miss class due to self-isolation or COVID testing. Testing information can be found here: https://www.healthyhorns.utexas.edu/coronavirus_proactive_testing.html.

COVID-19 Vaccination: Vaccines and booster shots are widely available, free, and not billed to health insurance. Vaccination is our best tool to help stop the spread of COVID-19; vaccines help reduce the transmission of the virus to others and reduce serious symptoms in those who have been vaccinated. Though vaccines are not required, **I strongly urge you to get vaccinated if you have not already and are able to do so.** I have been vaccinated; feel free to ask me any questions about my experience with the process. For more information see: <https://uthealthaustin.org/patient-resources/covid-19-updates/covid-19-vaccination>

Sick days: If you are experiencing symptoms of any illness, please do not come to class in-person. Let me know that you are sick and I will make a recording. In the event that I become sick during the semester and cannot lecture in person, lecture will be held online.

Additional information: For more information about UT Austin policy, COVID-19 procedures, or current case numbers, visit <https://protect.utexas.edu/>

Student Resources

'There is immense power when a group of people with similar interests gets together to work toward the same goals.' –Idowu Koyenikan

Counseling and Mental Health Center: <http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu>

Sanger Learning Center: <https://ugs.utexas.edu/slc>, 512-471-3614 (JES A332)

STAY HOME WHEN SICK
WEAR A MASK
GET VACCINATED
TEST REGULARLY
SOCIAL DISTANCE
STAY INFORMED

#PROTECTTEXASTOGETHER



Undergraduate Writing Center:<http://uwc.utexas.edu>**Information and Technology Services:**<https://it.utexas.edu/students>**Libraries:** <http://www.lib.utexas.edu>**Student Emergency Services:**<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>**Services for Students with Disabilities:**<https://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>

Title IX Reporting: Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. Faculty members (myself included) are considered ‘Responsible Employees’, which means that they are required to report any Title IX related incidents that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one to the Title IX coordinator. If you want to speak with someone for support without making an official report, email advocate at austin dot utexas dot edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit www.titleix.utexas.edu or contact the Title IX office at titleix at austin dot utexas dot edu.

**Schedule**

‘A schedule defends chaos from whim. It is a net for catching days. It is a scaffolding on which a worker can stand and labor with both hands at sections of time.’ –Annie Dillard

This schedule is subject to change.

Date	Topic/Reading	Due
Jan. 9-13	Introduction <i>Language Files ch. 1</i>	HW 1 (Jan. 15)
Jan. 16-20	Phonetics <i>Language Files ch. 2</i>	HW 2 (Jan. 22)
Jan. 23- 27	Sociolinguistics <i>Language Files ch. 10</i>	HW 3 (Jan. 29)
Jan. 30-Feb. 3	Phonology <i>Language Files ch. 3</i>	HW 4 (Feb. 5)
Feb. 6-10	Historical Linguistics <i>Language Files ch. 13</i>	HW 5 (Feb. 12)
Feb. 20- 24	Morphology <i>Language Files ch. 4</i>	HW 6 (Feb. 26) Reflection paper 1 due!
Feb. 27- Mar. 3	Language Acquisition <i>Language Files ch. 8</i>	HW 7 (Mar. 5)

Mar. 6-10	Syntax <i>Language Files ch. 5</i>	HW 8 (Mar. 12)
Mar. 13-18	SPRING BREAK	
Mar. 20-24	Syntax <i>Language Files ch. 5</i>	HW 9 (Mar. 26)
Mar. 27-31	Language Contact <i>Language Files ch. 12</i>	HW 10 (Apr. 2) Reflection paper 2 due!
Apr. 3-7	Semantics/Pragmatics <i>Language Files ch. 6-7, File 11.4</i>	HW 11 (Apr. 9)
Apr. 10-14	Language and the brain	HW 12 (Apr. 16)
Apr. 17-21	Writing systems TBD Building a constructed language TBD Seyeon--Information structure	No homework due!
Apr. 24	Class wrap up	Writing/communication assignment 3 (Apr. 24)

Skills standards

- Introduction
 - S1: I can describe the difference between prescriptive and descriptive grammars and classify grammatical rules as one or the other
- Phonetics
 - S2: I can write articulatory descriptions of sounds and signs and match sounds to the proper IPA symbol.
- Sociolinguistics
 - S3: I can describe the difference between how linguists use the terms ‘language’ and ‘dialect’
 - S4: I can debunk common myths about nonstandard dialects of a language and articulate factors that lead to the selection of a standard dialect
 - S5: I can list factors that affect dialect variation and provide examples from my own linguistic experience
- Phonology
 - S6: I can list the phonetic environments of sounds in a dataset and use the environments to identify contrastive and complementary distribution
 - S7: I can determine whether two sounds are allophones of a single phoneme or different phoneme and write rules to derive surface allophones from the underlying phoneme
 - S8: I can group articulatory units (sounds or signs) into natural classes based on their features
- Historical linguistics
 - S9: I can list correspondence sets between related languages in a dataset and use them to reconstruct proto-sounds and proto-words
 - S10: I can write rules to derive daughter languages from proto languages
 - S11: I can draw language family trees based on proposed sound changes during language evolution
- Morphology

- S12: I can break words in a dataset into their component morphemes and write rules to derive allomorphs from their underlying morphemes
- S13: I can subdivide a lexicon based on several overlapping properties of morphemes (open vs. closed, content vs. function, free vs. bound, derivational vs. inflectional)
- Language acquisition
 - S14: I can explain features of language acquisition that identify it as an innate behavior and debunk myths about bilingual language acquisition
 - S15: I can debate the Universal Grammar hypothesis by using case studies of the critical period and referring to principles of the scientific method
 - S16: I can hypothesize about the acquisition order of morphemes in a dataset and support my hypotheses by referring to principles that govern morpheme acquisition
- Syntax
 - S17: I can test for syntactic constituency using several different constituency tests and use phrase structure rules to draw syntax trees in English
 - S18: I can use syntax trees to disambiguate structurally ambiguous sentences and to distinguish complements and adjuncts
 - S19: I can apply structural tests for word classes to English words and I can label parts of speech for words in English sentences
- Language contact
 - S20: I can name causes of language contact and describe the different possible power relationships between languages using appropriate terminology
 - S21: I can identify the Matrix Language in a code-switched utterance using the Matrix Language Framework as defined in class
 - S22: I can explain the process of the development of Nicaraguan Sign Language and explain why it is important to the study of creoles, pidgins, and sign linguistics
- Semantics/pragmatics
 - S23: I can identify different types of relationships between words and sentences provide examples in English or from my daily life.
 - S24: I can assign a thematic role to each noun phrase in a sentence of English
- Language and the brain
 - S25: I can describe the Classic Model of language in the brain and explain why modern neuroscience does not support it
 - S26: I can argue for or against linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity using predictions and examples

Writing and communication standards

- W1: I can assess content about language and linguistics that I see in popular media and relate it to things we have learned in class.
- W2: I can present my analysis using a clear thesis statement
- W3: I can use examples from other sources to support my own argument and I can appropriately cite those sources
- W4: I can communicate my argument clearly, dividing my analysis up into appropriate units (paragraphs, slides, etc.) and linking each unit back to my main point.