LNGT0101
Introduction to Linguistics

Lecture #1 – Part I
Sept 16th, 2015

Logistics

• Class meets twice a week, on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 2:50pm to 4:05, at RCD B11.

Class website

• Class website is here: http://sites.middlebury.edu/lngt101fall2015/

• This is where all information pertinent to this class is posted, including the syllabus, assigned readings, links to articles and video-clips, etc. Homework assignments will be posted there as well for you to download. So, check there often.

Instructor

• Usama Soltan
  Office: Voter Lower Level, room #016
  Email: usoltan@middlebury.edu
  Office phone extension: x5869
  Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:00am to 12:30pm, and by appointment. (Note: You do not need an appointment for office hours; simply stop by; for appointments outside office hours, please e-mail me first.)

Course objectives I: Content-wise

• Introducing linguists’ major findings over the last 60 years or so regarding the study of human language in the areas of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, cross-linguistic variation, first language acquisition, sociolinguistics, language change, historical linguistics, pidgins and creoles, language endangerment, language and the brain, as well as human language vs. animal communication systems.

Course objectives II: Learning skills targeted

— Problem-solving skills: Find patterns in a set of data from familiar and unfamiliar languages; draw generalizations from a set of data; make a hypothesis to explain a linguistic pattern and revise it in light of further data.

— Formalize linguistic facts into concise rules and diagrams.

— Argue for or against a view using objective and empirical evidence.
Course objectives II: Learning skills targeted

– Critically think and question popular beliefs about language and determine whether they have any scientific validity.
– Present and lead discussions of articles on a variety of language-related issues.
– Research sources and write a paper about a linguistic topic of your choice.

Textbooks


Other course materials

• In addition to the required textbooks, further readings may be assigned from some supplementary materials. These will be mainly articles or chapters from books or online sources.

  • One useful source is *The Five‐Minute Linguist: Bite‐sized Essays on Language and Languages*, by E. M. Rickerson and Barry Hilton. London : Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2006. Available online through our library database via this link:
    [http://biblio.middlebury.edu/record=b3113227](http://biblio.middlebury.edu/record=b3113227).

  • Content of most chapters of the book is also available in audio format at this link:

• Other articles will be made available as the term unfolds via links on the syllabus table on the course website.

• Some references will be available on physical reserve. Currently, the following source is on physical reserve at the Davis Family Library: David Crystal’s *“The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language”*. It’s a good general reference for some of the topics that we’ll be covering in this class and for your final paper.

Movies on linguistic topics

• We will also watch, either individually or as a group, three language‐related movies, all of which are on reserve at the Davis Family Library for this class:

  2. *The Writing Code*
  3. *The Linguists*
  4. Possibly others

• I will announce dates for group screenings in class and by e‐mail.

Course requirements percentages

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<tr>
<th>Course requirement</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation (including in‐class presentations and discussions)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 homework assignments</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Attendance and participation (10%)

- You are expected to come to every class. Missing class is only acceptable for one of the academically legitimate excuses. It’ll be really hard for you to do well on homework assignments or write a good paper without attending classes regularly.
- Also, please make sure you read the textbook as well as any materials on reserve or on the course website that are assigned in class every week BEFORE coming to class. It will help you (and help me too) a lot if you come to class prepared.

Attendance and participation (10%)

- As part of your participation, you will be called upon to lead discussion in class (normally in groups of 3) of short articles relevant to the course topics.

Attendance and participation (10%)

- Also, part of class participation may require you to attend linguistics talks or linguistics events on campus and answer homework questions on them.
- These will be posted on the class schedule webpage, and will also be announced in class and/or via e-mail.

Homework assignments (50%)

- There will be FIVE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS to test your understanding of the material covered in class as well as enhance the general learning skills targeted in this course, applying the same reasoning and analytical tools of linguistic analysis that we’ll be discussing in class.
- Each homework counts for 10% of your overall grade. So, take them seriously!

Homework assignments (50%)

- Bear in mind that the work you turn in has to be yours, and yours alone. Copying someone else’s work will be treated as cheating, will receive no credit, and will be subject to the consequences of violating academic integrity, as described in the College’s Academic Honesty Statement, a link to which is provided near the end of this document.
A midterm exam (20%)
- Finally, students are required to take an OPEN-BOOK TAKE-HOME midterm exam.
- Unlike with homework assignments, you are NOT allowed to discuss questions on the midterm with anyone.
- The midterm exam is currently scheduled to be assigned on Nov 2 and is due on Nov 9.
- There is no final exam for this class.

A paper (20%)
- In addition, each student is required to write a 2000-word paper on a linguistic topic of your choice, subject to the approval of the instructor.
- A 250-word paper proposal specifying the topic, aspects of linguistic interest, why you want to research it, and a list of at least 3 relevant references, is due on Nov 16th.
- The paper is due by e-mail on Thursday Dec 16th at 1pm.

Delay policy for required work
- I will not accept assignments turned in after the deadline, unless the delay is caused by one of the academically legitimate reasons and supported by a Dean’s excuse and/or a doctor’s note.
- From experience, one main reason for missing deadlines is starting late on the assignment. So, make sure you start working on the assignments early.

Class rules
- Cell phones have to be turned off before you come in to the class.
- You cannot use your laptop/iPad/etc., during the class, unless explicit permission is given.
- Eating is not allowed during class time. Beverages are fine, though.
- Coming to class late is disruptive, so please do show up to class on time.

E-mail etiquette
- Not trying to be a stickler to formality here, but it does make sense, when corresponding with me, that you follow standard e-mail etiquette. Remember: You’re e-mailing (not texting) me.
- Your message should have a meaningful phrase in the subject line. You have to start with an appropriate salutation (e.g., Dear Prof. Soltan). Your message should be well written and clear. You should end it with one of the usual closing expressions (e.g., Sincerely, Regards, etc.), and your signature.

E-mail correspondence
- I do check my e-mail regularly on weekdays, and I respond to e-mails as soon as I can.
- While you can e-mail me at any time on any day, please understand that e-mails received over the weekend may not receive an immediate answer since I may be away from my PC. But do not let that discourage you from e-mailing since I answer e-mails once I access my account.
Office hours and appointments

• You do not need an appointment for office hours. Simply stop by during the office hours. If I’m busy with another student, please do wait at the meeting room in Voter Lower Level (room #005) until I’m finished with the person ahead of you.
• When requesting an appointment outside office hours, you do need to give me at least a 24-hour notice. You cannot possibly e-mail me one morning asking to meet in the afternoon of the same day. If something is really urgent, do e-mail, but there’s no guarantee that I’ll be able to meet with you at a notice shorter than 24 hours.

Honor Code

• Please remember that the Honor Code is in effect in this class. Please make sure to write the Honor Code Pledge “I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment,” on all homework assignments, the midterm exam, as well as the final paper.
• Submitting work that is not your own or receiving unauthorized help is a violation of the code.
• If you have any questions about the Honor Code, please ask me, or check the following link on the college’s website:
  http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/administration/newfaculty/handbook/honorcode

Accommodations

• Students requesting accommodation must first complete the certification process with the Student Accessibility Services Office (formerly the Americans with Disabilities Act Office). The ADA committee will provide certification to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.
• Full information is available here:
  http://www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/doc/ada

Grading

• I will follow the following system in assigning your letter grades:
  93%+ is A
  from 90%+ to 93% is A-
  from 87%+ to 90% is B+
  from 83%+ to 87% is B
  from 80%+ to 83% is B-
  from 75%+ to 80% is C+
  from 70%+ to 75% is C
  from 65%+ to 70% is C-
  from 50%+ to 65% is D
  50% and under is F.

Enjoy the journey!