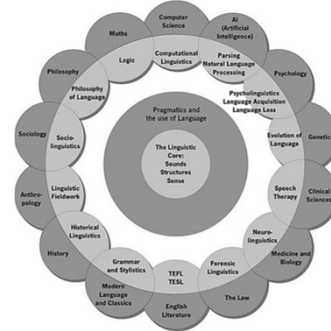


LNGT0101
Introduction to Linguistics



Lecture #1
Sept 10th, 2012

Welcome to the fascinating world
of human language!



Course information and administrivia

Logistics

- Class meets twice a week, on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 2:50pm to 4:05, at Monroe 320.
- Course website is here:
<http://blogs.middlebury.edu/linguistics101/>
- 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 and exams will be posted there as well for you to download. So, check there often.

Instructor

- Usama Soltan
Office: Farrell House, #206
- Email: usoltan@middlebury.edu
- Office phone extension: x5869
- Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday from 10:30am-12noon, and by appointment (e-mail or call to make an appointment).

Course objectives: Content-wise

- Introducing linguists' major findings over the last 50 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: 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.
- Critically think and question popular beliefs about language and determine whether they have any scientific validity.
- Lead discussions about some of these popular 'language myths' as well as other language-related issues.
- Read and write about linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of an unfamiliar language of your choice.

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Required textbooks

- ***An Introduction to Language (9th edition)***, by Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman, Nina Hyams. Boston: Thomson/Heinle, 2011. A copy is available on physical reserve at the Davis Family Library.
- ***Language Myths***, edited by Laurie Bauer and Peter Trudgill. Penguin Books. An interesting collection of essays discussing some of the common (mis)beliefs about language.

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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>.
- Content of the book is also available in audio format at this link: <http://itunes.apple.com/us/itunes-u/the-five-minute-linguist/id452255394>

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Other course materials

- 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.

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Language-related movies

- 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:
 1. Part 1 of the Human Language Series Movie: *Discovering the Human Language* (individually)
 2. *The Writing Code* (group screening)
 3. *The Linguists* (group screening)
- I will announce dates for group screenings in class and by e-mail.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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Attendance and participation

- Please make sure you come to every class. Missing class is only acceptable for one of the academically legitimate excuses. It's really hard, if not impossible, to do well on homework problems or write a good project report without attending classes regularly.
- Also, make sure you read the textbook as well as all 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.

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Attendance and participation

- As part of your participation, you will be called upon to lead discussion in class (normally in groups of 2/3), particularly of one of the short chapters in *Language Myths* and/or *The Five-Minute Linguist*, or of short articles relevant to the course topics.

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Homework assignments

- There will be **FIVE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS** to test your understanding of the material covered in class as well as enhance the 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 8% of your overall grade. So, take them seriously!

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Homework assignments

- While I do not mind you discussing assignment questions with your colleagues, 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.

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Language Adoption Project (LAP)

- In addition, each student will be required to work on a **LANGUAGE ADOPTION PROJECT (LAP)** for an unfamiliar or endangered language, and turn in a double-spaced 8-page report focusing on one or more particular linguistic aspects of this language.
- Further details on this project are posted on the class website.
- A list of suggested languages and resources for the project are posted on the class website.

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Language Adoption Project (LAP)

- Please note that no two LAP projects can be on the same language. Should two students select the same language, choice will be granted on a "first-come, first-serve" basis.
- A mandatory one-page project proposal is required by November 7th, specifying the language of the LAP and aspects of interest to be studied.
- The LAP is due on December 7th by 12noon.

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Exams

- Finally, students are required to take **TWO OPEN-BOOK TAKE-HOME EXAMS**: a midterm and a final.
- The midterm exam is currently scheduled to be assigned on October 26 and is due on Oct 31.
- The final exam is currently scheduled to be assigned on December 8 and is due on December 13.

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Delay policy for required work

- Policy on delay in turning in assignments:
 - 5% off if turned in after the deadline on the day it's due (that means prior to midnight).
 - 10% off if turned in on the next day after the deadline.
 - 20% off if turned in later than that.
 - Not accepted after I post the solutions (I know that's self-evident, but just in case).

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Course requirements percentages

Course requirement	%
Attendance and participation (including in-class presentations)	15
5 homework assignments	40
LAP	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	15%

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Honor Code

- 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, exams, as well as the project report.
- 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>

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Grading

- I will follow the following system in assigning your letter grades:
 - 95%+ is A
 - from 90%+ to 95% 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.

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Enjoy the journey!

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