

HOW LANGUAGE WORKS

LING A101 SECTION 604 CRN 71939

LING A101 SECTION 7V1 CRN 77599

LING A101 SECTION RV1 CRN 77763

LING A101 SECTION IV1 CRN 77764

FALL 2019

MOWE 1:00 TO 2:15 PM

AHS 147 AND BY VIDEO TRANSMISSION

THE OFFICIAL SYLLABUS: The official syllabus and schedule for this course can be found on the Blackboard site for the course, accessible via <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/classes/>. Please note that you are required to read and become familiar with this syllabus as part of taking this course. Course assignments and other information are available through that site, as well.

INSTRUCTOR: I am David Bowie, a professor in the Department of English. My office is in ADM 101P, and for general inquiries I can be reached by email at david.bowie@alaska.edu. However, for course-related inquiries, please *only* use the secure messaging function built into the Blackboard site for the class; this will ensure that what you send to me doesn't get lost in my inbox. Also, if I happen to be in my office I can be reached by phone there at 907.786.4359, but you should be warned that Blackboard's message system is a much more reliable way of getting in touch with me (outside of office hours and the classroom, of course) than anything else. Because I am teaching both via videoconferencing and in Anchorage this semester, I will hold office hours simultaneously in person in my office and via Zoom; the link to my Zoom office hours is <https://alaska.zoom.us/j/483280714>.

OFFICE HOURS: My office hours this semester are 10:30 AM to 12:00 N on Wednesdays and Thursdays (except for university holidays, when they are of course not held) or by appointment. I will be in my office at those times, and so they're a good time to catch me in person and via Hangouts. Please note, though, that whether you come into my office or contact me via Hangouts while I'm already in consultation with another student, I'll ask you to wait until I'm done with that consultation before I confer with you so that I can focus on one student's needs at a time. Please don't take it personally if you're asked to wait a few minutes—doing so will let me avoid multitasking that part of my job (and I am admittedly horrible at multitasking).

EMAIL RESPONSE TIMES: As stated above, I ask you to avoid email and use Blackboard's secure messaging function for written contact about course-related topics. (Part of the reason for this is that it allows me, if there is a need, to discuss certain issues that would actually be, according to the university system's general counsel's office, a violation of federal law to discuss over regular email.) Once you have sent me a message, I may need some time to properly consider the questions that you have; therefore, I ask for up to a full day to respond. (Note: This is a full day not counting weekends and university holidays. I am likely to check my messages over the weekend, but I don't guarantee it.) Also, sometimes students send me messages and it's unclear whether they're actually making an inquiry or just pointing something out, so please make it clear in what you send me if you would like a response. Naturally enough, of course, if you requested a response but 24 non-weekend/holiday hours have gone by and I haven't responded, you can then feel free to start to nag me about whatever issue you brought up.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: There are no prerequisites for this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION, OUTCOMES, AND OBJECTIVES: The university's description of this 3-credit course, in its entirety, states that it "introduces systematic analysis of human language and description of its phonological structure, grammatical structure, distribution, diversity, and historical development".

Broadly stated, then, this course is intended to provide an overview of a number of the subfields of linguistics. As such, you will of course learn specifics about things such as the sounds used in human languages, but you will also learn larger underlying principles underlying the structure of human language generally. There are specific outcomes listed in the university's curriculum guide for this course; these state that by the end of the course, you should be able to

- use linguistic concepts to analyze the structure of sounds, words, sentences/clauses, and interactions in language;
- discuss examples, reasons, and linguistic impacts of historical shifts in phonology, morphology, syntax, and social interaction;
- describe the impact of physiological, cognitive, and social factors on language development and use;
- and describe linguistic and non-linguistic factors that affect first- and second-language acquisition.

I also hope for this course to teach you principles underlying the use of objective evidence to provide support for claims about the world at large—or, in other words, how to think *scientifically*. This objective seems to frighten many students somehow—I guess it's very easy to tap in to the cultural vibe that holds that science is somehow a really, really difficult thing to understand and use. As you actually see the results of scientific analyses of language in this class, though, you will find out that it's not really a hideously difficult thing to do, it's just a matter of looking at the world in a slightly different—and, surprisingly to some, very interesting—way. Also, since the course objectives listed above are rather broad, each unit of the course has specific outcomes and objectives designed to implement the broader course objectives, and these are listed in the introduction to each unit in the attached schedule.

Finally, this academic year the Department of English is, as a whole, focusing on one specific outcome for its baccalaureate program—specifically, that students will develop the ability to “interpret texts in context with reasoned evidence drawn from English Studies’ research methods”. This course has some assignments designed to assess that (with a linguistics spin on what things like *text* and *evidence* mean, of course). This should be fairly transparent to you, but I wanted to let you know about it.

TEXTS AND READINGS: This course has one textbook: *An Introduction to Language*, written by Kirk Hazen (ISBN 978-0-470-65896-3). There are additional required readings linked to the course homepage. Readings of a few pages are assigned for every class session.

The readings from the textbook are listed in the syllabus with the word “Language” (short for the title of the book, naturally enough), followed by the section name(s) you are to read, along with page numbers; other assigned readings (which you can get via the Blackboard site for the course) are listed as “Online” followed by the title of the link. For example, if you were assigned the sections of *An Introduction to Language* that deal with aspects of the creation of words, that would appear in the syllabus as: Language “How to create new words” to “Slang” 153–169.

One quick but important note about the readings: While the readings do a good job of discussing general issues and providing specific examples of those issues, they will not tie it together into a coherent whole, and they give a minimal amount of information on certain specifics of linguistic theory and practice. That will generally come from the additional material that I present in class—but the required readings provide background I will assume in what I present, and that you will need to know to be able to successfully apply what you're being taught. This means that to be completely successful in this course it is necessary to read all of the required readings *when they are assigned*.

COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS: Some course materials will be distributed online and some assignments are to be completed and/or turned in online, and therefore you need access to a computer with an internet connection (a broadband connection is recommended, but not required) and the software

necessary to access Blackboard. You will need to be able to read Adobe Acrobat (i.e., PDF) documents, and for those assignments you turn in online, it is recommended (though not required) that you submit them in that format. You will also need to be able to record audio; most (probably all) of you have that built into your phone.

CLASS BEHAVIOR: Everyone in this course is expected to follow the guidelines outlined in the student handbook and other presentations of university policy. In order to allow everyone to participate in this course fully, you are asked to keep distractions to a minimum—in particular, please silence your cellphones and laptops and such while in class, and if you must use your connection to the internet to check social media or something please do so in a way that you don't distract the students around you. Also, please be respectful of other students in discussions, and remember that there is sometimes a fine line between witty and caustic, and though I'm certainly a fan of lightheartedness in the classroom context, you should be aware of that and try to stay away from the caustic side.

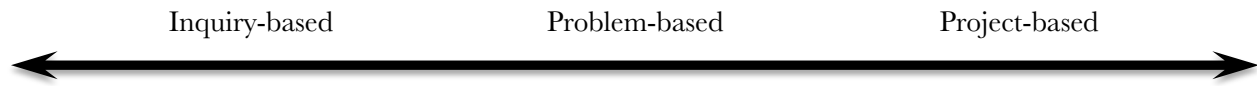
PET PEEVES: In general, I try to be a reasonable human being. Everyone, however, has a few pet peeves, and I am no exception—and it's always useful to be aware of the pet peeves of your teachers. I have three that are of importance to you in this class: lateness, neatness, and writing too much.

- **LATENESS:** With the exceptions of the reading quizzes and question posts, all assignments are due by the end of the class session on the day they are listed due in the syllabus; the reading quizzes are due when I take the quiz down (generally a couple minutes after the start of the class session), and question posts are due outside of class by the time and date listed in the syllabus. (Note those due dates and *times* again. I am firm on these. Very firm. Seriously—deadlines in this course are figured to the *minute*.) Assignments will not be accepted late, even by a few seconds, except in verified cases of hospitalization or a death in one's family (please note the word *verified*). If you will not be able to turn an assignment in at the deadline for any other reason—including university-approved reasons for missing days such as religious observances or participation in certain sporting events—you should complete and submit it early. Note that such reasons as your internet connection not working or the copiers on campus being broken or parking or traffic being horrible right before an assignment is due are *not* valid reasons for turning in an assignment late. (If Blackboard goes down at the deadline for an assignment you are to complete using that system, however, I will consider that to be beyond your control and the fault of the university, and so will extend the deadline; the parameters of that extension will be announced via Blackboard and email. Please note, however, that this will only be done if Blackboard is actually down—problems resulting from connecting on your end will not result in a deadline adjustment.) I trust Blackboard's timestamps, by the way, so I'd suggest not waiting until the very last moment to submit your assignments—if you do so and Blackboard disagrees and says you're late, sorry, but I'm going with Blackboard. (Please note, relatedly, that I do not accept assignments via email, *ever*—there's too much that can go wrong that way.)
- **NEATNESS:** All assignments are required to be typed unless you are specifically authorized otherwise. Let me repeat that: All assignments are required to be typed unless you are specifically authorized otherwise. Anything you turn in that isn't typed will summarily receive a 0% (that's a zero), with no exceptions made. Further, if what you turn in is illegible or unreadable for some reason, you will not receive credit for what I can't read, and you will not be given an opportunity to correct it.
- **WRITING TOO MUCH:** Assignments may include length limits on answers, expressed in terms of the number of words you are allowed; these are strict limits and any text exceeding the limits will not be read (which may do severe violence to your grade). For your reference, there are usually about 300 to 350 words, depending on font choice and point size, on a single page of double-spaced typed text.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND SCHEDULE: For convenience, the course is divided into six sections: Administrivia, Sounds, Words, Structures, Meanings, and Communities. There are assignments of several types due at various points relatively evenly spaced through the semester.

ASSIGNMENTS, TESTS, AND QUIZZES: As mentioned above, there will be several assignments spread out relatively evenly through the semester. There are a few small “mini-quizzes” intended mainly to allow me to tailor my teaching to the needs of the students in the class (and you will get full credit just for completing each of those); a quiz on the syllabus near the beginning of the semester (which you can take multiple times); an assortment of brief assignments, many to be completed using Blackboard’s discussion groups; a fieldwork assignment near the beginning of the semester; five problem sets spaced over the course of the semester (which will all, in part, involve analyses of audio you collect); and a brief reading quiz given each class session after the period for freely adding the class ends. There is also a research paper due late in the semester that is designed to get you to think about specific issues in linguistics, with a few related assignments throughout the term.

Let me insert a note here on course assignments before moving on. In general, diagnostic assessments of student learning (or, put more simply, things you get graded on) fall along a continuum like this:



Inquiry-based assessments focus on the memorization of facts (and the most common inquiry-based assessments are quizzes and exams). Problem-based assessments, on the other hand, are focused on the use of facts and processes to analyze a problem (so they often take the form of, e.g., exercises presenting data and asking for a particular method to be used in coming up with a solution to a problem using that data), while project-based assessments focus on the acquisition and development of knowledge, without necessarily centering on assessing the knowledge that is involved (which often involves simulations and fieldwork projects). Of course, it is possible for an assessment tool to mix these methods, which is why they are placed on a continuum rather than being listed as categories.

This course uses a mix of these assessment types—the reading quizzes are necessarily inquiry-based, while the series of assignments leading up to the research paper are largely project-based. The research paper and problem sets are, if done correctly, a mix of all three types, but mostly problem- and project-based. When completing your assignments, you may find it useful to consider the type of assignment you are working on at the time, since each type calls for a somewhat different focus on your part.

EXTRA CREDIT: Extra credit opportunities may be offered during the semester, but they will be offered entirely at my option. (In fact, if I feel like I am being pestered unduly about the possibility of extra credit, I will be less likely to offer it, even if I feel it is warranted; this is simply a reflection of the contrarian nature of my personality.) Any extra credit that is offered will be offered to the entire class—there will be no extra credit possibilities offered only to any particular individual or subset of class members. Any extra credit opportunities will be announced in class along with guidelines for them, how much they are worth, their deadlines, &c. However, there is one type of extra credit that I’m announcing here and only here, in part as a way to reward students who actually read this document and in part to improve my own course documents: The first student to inform me (in writing, via Blackboard’s internal messaging system) of any typos or errors in my written course materials will receive extra credit in the form of an addition to the final grade; for a simple typo that doesn’t change the meaning of anything this may be as low as a tenth of a percentage point for each typo caught, while an actual error of fact that would mislead students could be as high as a full percentage point. Of course, these must be actual errors (e.g., I use British punctuation style for quotation marks, so suggesting changing the sequence “*this thing*”, to “*this thing*,” isn’t correcting an error), and I reserve the right, especially since this is an introductory course, to simplify my presentation of course material, which may mean important nuances are left to the side. In any event, if you point something out and it actually isn’t an error, we can have an exchange about that, which could ultimately be useful for both of us.

GRADE ASSIGNMENT: A few assignments will be graded on a pass-fail basis (that is, you get full credit if you complete the assignment, no credit if you don't), but most will be graded in the ordinary way; which method is used will be stated in each assignment outline. Grades are reported to the nearest tenth of a point; there will be no further rounding of grades. Note that, regardless of the grade you would have earned on an assignment, if I find evidence of academic dishonesty you will be awarded a 0% (and, therefore, an F) on the assignment. (More on that below.) Assignment grades will be distributed directly to you in class, and will not be recorded using Blackboard's gradebook function, because it doesn't have certain functionalities I need (plus, it's distressingly clunky). Grades for assignments are awarded according to the following scale:

SCORE	GRADE
90.0% and up	A
80.0 to 89.9%	B
70.0 to 79.9%	C
60.0 to 69.9%	D
below 60.0%	F

Final grades are awarded according to the same scale, and are calculated as shown below:

ITEM	EACH	TOTAL	NOTES
Mini-quizzes #1 and #2	1%	2%	Full credit if completed
Syllabus quiz	2%	2%	Multiple attempts allowed
Academic integrity quiz	2%	2%	Multiple attempts allowed
Fieldwork assignment	2%	2%	Must be done to complete problem sets
Research assignments #1 to #6	2%	12%	Several different types of assignments
Problem sets #1 to #5	10%	40%	Lowest grade dropped
Research paper: Written report	10%	10%	Other assignments affect grade
Research paper: Visual report	5%	5%	Involves in-class presentation
Question posts #1 to #15	1%	15%	Uses Blackboard's discussion boards
Reading quizzes #1 to #27	~.37%	10%	Given at the beginning of each class

Speaking of grading, if you are unsure about the way I have arrived at a grade that I have given you, you should feel free to ask me for clarification. In addition, if you feel I have made an error in grading, please bring it up with me as soon as possible. I can honestly say that I make mistakes in grading very rarely, but mathematical errors are certainly an occasional possibility. In any event, even if you ask about a grade and there was no error made, you will learn more about the way grades were assigned and how to improve in the future.

If you wish to appeal a grade that you have been given, please make your case in writing and submit it via Blackboard's messaging function *within five calendar days* of the date the grades for that assignment were distributed to the class. Note that I ask for this to be done in writing so that I can properly weigh the points you bring up; I am willing to listen to oral arguments regarding grades, but I will not take action based on them.

INCOMPLETE AND NO BASIS GRADING POLICY: Incompletes may be given when requested by students, but they are given at my discretion. The guideline I will use on whether to give an incomplete is first, whether the student couldn't complete coursework due to one of the acceptable reasons for having coursework deadlines extended as listed elsewhere in the syllabus and second, whether the student has already completed at least half of the work for the class. (As you may have guessed, if the answers to both of those are yes, then an incomplete may be given; if either answer is no, then not.) However, if it is clear that a student wouldn't be able to receive a passing grade even with the time extension that an incomplete

grade would allow, I reserve the right to summarily deny a request for an incomplete—might as well save us both the bother and paperwork, right?

You should also recognize that an incomplete grade will revert to a failing grade if it isn't changed within a certain amount of time, per university policy. I will not bug you about finishing your incomplete coursework—if you receive an incomplete, turning in the coursework (and making sure I know you turned it in) is your responsibility. I will, in any event, not change a grade of incomplete to a passing grade for any reason other than your fulfillment of the incomplete contract, even if that means you will lose a scholarship or you'll have to delay graduation or your family will be angry. I really am heartless that way—it ties in to my whole issue with lateness (for more on that, see the “pet peeves” section of this syllabus).

This course is ineligible for deferred grading. Please be aware that I do not award no basis (NB) grades.

COLLABORATION VS. PLAGIARISM: I very strongly urge you to set up study groups, whether virtual or face-to-face, to discuss the problem sets and research paper and so on. (If nothing else, it's useful to band together in common defense against me.) In fact, I feel strongly enough that collaboration is worthwhile that you may turn in any of the problem sets as a group—just make sure that everyone's names are included on the first page, so that everyone in the group gets credit for it. Note, however, that every other assignment must be entirely your own work.

So, to sum that paragraph up, I see collaboration as a good thing. However, there are limits—and so if I find evidence of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty on any assignment, you will be awarded a 0% (yes, that's a zero) on it and the case will be referred the appropriate disciplinary office for further action. Academic dishonesty that is in my opinion egregious, or multiple cases of academic dishonesty of any sort, will result in a failing grade for the course—and you should be warned that I have a very low bar regarding what sorts of academic dishonesty I consider “egregious”.

Given that, it seems reasonable to ask what, exactly, academic dishonesty is. Therefore, I refer you to <http://www.consortiumlibrary.org/blogs/ahi/>, the Consortium Library's page on academic honesty, which has links to UAA's policies as well as definitions and examples of academic dishonesty and ways to avoid it. In light of the information at that link, you should know that you have my permission to have others do simple copy-editing of your papers, but not editing for content. You are also allowed (encouraged, actually) to work with consultants at the Writing Center to improve your papers.

(My personal definition of the plagiarism part of academic dishonesty, by the way, is perhaps a bit overly simple but it still works for me: The academic world runs on the currency of ideas. Therefore, if you got an idea from someone else, their contribution needs to be acknowledged. To take someone else's ideas and not recognize them as the original owner of those ideas is, in a real sense, theft of currency.)

Finally, I reserve the right to submit items that you turn in to SafeAssign or other such services to check for plagiarism. I would say that it's not because I don't trust my students, but in the interest of being honest, I'll admit that it's actually because I don't trust my students. That is, most students are quite trustworthy, but I've been burned often enough by now to be realistic in recognizing that there's sometimes a bad apple in a class, and I don't want that one person to mess up life for the rest of you.

ON “BAD WORDS” AND RELATED LANGUAGE: This is a course about language, and will include discussion of some of the negative uses of language, including words that are considered not just impolite, but abhorrent. Therefore, you are forewarned that there may be some discussions of words and phrases and their use which may make you uncomfortable or perhaps even offend you. However, in order to fully and accurately understand language and its use, sometimes we have to analyze uses of language that some

may find wrong. When such cases come up I will attempt to handle them with as much sensitivity as possible. Even if you feel that such discussions have no place in the classroom, please be aware that I am not attempting to insult or attack you in any way, but rather that I am attempting to bring us all to an understanding of the ways language is used in real life, and you should recognize that not all language use in real life is entirely positive—but if such a situation occurs and you are disturbed by the language under discussion, please do approach me to discuss it. It would be a conversation I would welcome, and we may, in the best of all possible worlds, both learn something from the interchange.

MY RESEARCH: My primary research focus is phonetic variation in English, with a particular focus on the role of individuals in language change. So that you know what I'm working on at the moment, here are the research projects that I'm conducting right now; in no particular order, they are:

- The degree to which individuals change linguistically over the course of their lives
- Regional variation in Englishes of the Western United States (including Alaska)
- The historical development of regional dialects
- Language and religious identity

If you're interested in something related to these issues, or for that matter if you're interested in any other sort of research into language, feel free to ask me about it. I'll do what I can to help you learn how to find out more about it.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, and activities, as well as student-to-student sexual harassment. It covers not only employees of the university but also students. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please contact the university's compliance coordinator. The campus compliance coordinator is located in the Office of Equity and Compliance, which can be contacted by phone at 907.786.0818 or in person in ULB 106.

Relatedly, you should be aware that I (like all faculty members in the University of Alaska system) am what is called a "mandatory reporter" for issues related to sexual harassment and assault. This means that if you choose to disclose such issues to me, I am required to report those to authorities empowered to enforce laws and policies related to sexual harassment and assault. (I will, of course, also help you gain access to appropriate counseling services and such, should you desire help with that. That's not so much because of university regulations, though, and more because that simply seems like a decently human thing to do.)

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you have a disability that may impair your ability to complete this course successfully without a reasonable accommodation, you are urged to contact Disability Support Services. (Please know that I have neither the expertise nor the authority to determine what accommodations may be necessary or useful in any particular case.) Disability Support Services can be reached by phone at 907.786.4530, using text at 907.786.9609, in person in RH 112, or by hearing- or speech-impaired callers using the Alaska Relay service at 1.800.770.8973 (TTY) or 1.866.355.6198 (speech to speech). In particular, if you have a hearing or visual impairment, you are urged to contact both Disability Support Services and me about it as early as possible, because (given that this is a course about language and, to a great extent, its documentation through technical means) some necessary accommodations may require advance work on my part to give you the fullest opportunity for learning. (You should be aware that pregnancy is not considered a disability, and so issues relating to pregnancy should go through the university's Title IX compliance coordinator.)

STUDENTS WITH OTHER NEEDS: If you or someone you know needs support, is distressed, or exhibits behavior that concerns you, you can help by making a referral to the University of Alaska Anchorage Care Team. The Care Team's purpose is to promote a safe and productive learning, living, and working environment by assessing the needs of students and helping find support as needed. I encourage you to fill out a referral if you or a classmate may be in need of help. The Care Team can be contacted by email at care@uaa.alaska.edu, on the web at <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/students/care-team>, or by phone at 907.786.6065. (Of course, if there is an emergency, you should call the University Police Department at 907.786.1120 or 911.)

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A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS THAT DIDN'T FIT ANYWHERE ELSE: In a legalistic turn, note that the assignment descriptions you will receive during the semester are to be considered part of this syllabus. This syllabus is subject to revision at my discretion; any revisions will, however, be announced on the Blackboard site for the course as a class announcement as early as is practical. Finally, this syllabus has listed a few behaviors that you are or are not to engage in for this class; please note, however, that my failure to list some particular clearly idiotic behavior as prohibited should not be read as giving you permission to behave in that particular clearly idiotic way. Thank you for your attention.

USING THIS SCHEDULE: Aside from the introductions to and objectives for each unit, you will see that there are four recurring entries in this schedule: readings, topics, events, and deadlines. Readings are assigned for each class session; you are to read them before the associated class. Topics give what is projected to be discussed during each class session. Events include such things as university holidays, and the listed deadlines are assignment deadlines (note that reading quizzes are not listed, since they're conducted nearly every session). Assignment deadlines consistently come at the end of the class session on the day listed, except for reading quizzes (which come due when the quiz closes) and the question posts (which come due at the same time as the other assignments, but on Fridays). Entries for days other than Mondays and Wednesdays are highlighted by being set *in italic type*.

ADMINISTRIVIA

The somewhat cynical title for this section reflects the fact that at the beginning of every course there is an adjustment period in which there is little in the way of subject-matter content. During this adjustment period, students should become aware not just of the policies of the course they are taking, but also the expectations of the field they are learning about.

UNIT OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES: Students will: understand course policies and procedures; gain a basic understanding of the scope of linguistics.

26 August	Topics:	Course overview and structure; A few bits of administrivia; Subfields of linguistics
28 August	Readings:	Online “Course syllabus & schedule”; Language “This book’s structure” to “A path to education: Confusion” xxi–xxv; Language “Chapter overview” to “Language similarities” 2–8
	Topics:	Defining language; Ways (not) to talk about language
2 September	Event:	No class (Labor Day)

SOUNDS

So if we're going to talk about language, it works best to start small—and the smallest parts of language, so small they don't even contain any inherent meaning, are individual sound. The study of the individual sounds people use to communicate is called *phonetics*; we will focus on the branch of phonetics that deals with classifying and describing those sounds. This is also the unit of the course that you learn to use the phonetic alphabet, a system for recording sounds clearly and unambiguously in writing—a task for which ordinary writing systems are spectacularly unuseful.

UNIT OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to: identify relationships between speech sounds and distinctive features; read phonetic characters and transcriptions using the International Phonetic Alphabet; perform phonetic transcriptions; conduct phonemic analyses.

4 September	Event:	Reading quizzes begin
	Readings:	Online “IPA chart”; Language “Chapter overview” to “Consonants and vowels” 32–41
	Topics:	Types of phonetics; Vocal tract anatomy
	Deadline:	Mini-quiz #1
	Deadline:	Syllabus quiz
6 September	Deadline:	Question post #1

- 9 September Readings: Online “Sounds: Consonants”; Language “Consonants” 41–49
 Topics: The articulation of consonants; A couple small but important points of disagreement with your textbook
 Deadline: Academic integrity quiz
 Deadline: Research assignment #1
- 11 September Readings: Online “Sounds: Vowels”; Language “Vowels” 49–54
 Topics: The articulation of vowels
- 13 September *Deadline: Question post #2*
- 16 September Readings: Online “IPA chart” [yes, again]; Language “Are all sounds important to all languages?” to “Making a difference: Contrasting sounds with minimal pairs” 54–56
 Topics: Writing sounds; Diphthongs and affricates
 Deadline: Fieldwork assignment
- 18 September Readings: Language “Chapter overview” to “Structure” 74–86
 Topics: Sounds as system; Phonotactics
- 20 September *Deadline: Question post #3*

WORDS

Moving past sounds, we get to words, and we discover that words are weird—for example, you can combine words to create new words, but a *blackboard* isn’t necessarily a *black board*. In addition, we have things that aren’t quite words but still create meaning—the *s* at the end of *hats* and *books* has meaning (it tells us that there is more than one of each of those things), but should we call it a word? And what about things that some people insist “aren’t words”, like *ain’t* and *irregardless*? If they’re not words, what else in the world could they be?

UNIT OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to: identify morphemes; identify grammatical categories; perform morphological analyses; analyze instances of morphological ambiguity.

- 23 September Readings: Online “Erin McKean: The joy of lexicography”; Online “Go ahead, make up new words!”; Language “Chapter overview” to “Structure” 110–117
 Topics: What is a word, actually?
- 25 September Readings: Language “How to identify lexical categories” 117–135
 Topics: Lexical categories
 Deadline: Problem set #1
- 27 September *Deadline: Question post #4*
- 30 September Readings: Language “Function words: The mortar for the bricks” 135–139
 Topics: Lexical categories [cont’d]; Words and morphemes
- 2 October Readings: Language “Chapter overview” to “Word trees” 178–192
 Topics: Hierarchical structure
- 4 October *Deadline: Question post #5*
- 7 October Readings: Language “Morphemes and other systems” 192–197
 Topics: Recursion; Bracket and tree notation
- 9 October Event: No class (NWAV)

MEANINGS

Now we move from items that somehow contain meaning to meaning itself—semantics being the study of meaning. Meaning is more than just dictionary definitions, though, as you’ll discover, since meanings can be fuzzy—but oddly enough, communication works pretty well anyway. So semantics gives us an idea of how meaning works in language, but sometimes linguistic meanings don’t fully match the intended meaning. For example, the sentence *It’s cold in here* isn’t always just an observation, but sometimes it’s a command—*Close that window right now!*—and people understand it, anyway. How, precisely, does that second meaning come out of what was said, and how in the world can people make sense of it? This leads us to pragmatics—the study of meaning as people actually use it.

UNIT OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to: describe set relationships in language; identify entailments; identify speech acts; identify and describe implicatures in terms of Gricean maxims.

- 6 November Readings: Language “Meaning and ambiguity” to “Another realm of language structure” 296–300
 Topics: Some thoughts on dogs; Sets and subsets
 Deadline: Problem set #3
- 8 November *Deadline: Question post #10*
- 11 November Readings: Language “Structure and constraints” to “Structure of intent and effect” 300–306
 Topics: Grice’s maxims; Some thoughts on children and cookie jars
- 13 November Readings: Language “The structure of implicature” to “ 306–309
 Topics: Entailment, contradiction, and paraphrase; Entailment and implicature
- 15 November *Deadline: Question post #11*
- 18 November Readings: Language “Direct and indirect: Getting the job done” to “Communicative competence” 309–318
 Topics: How to do things with words

COMMUNITIES

A lot of what we’ve been talking about to this point involves language in isolation—but language doesn’t exist in isolation. Rather, it interacts with any number of social processes and events in everyday life, and this leads to some weirdnesses. One of the weirdest things that happens is that language isn’t constant—its form varies over time (English spoken now isn’t the same as English spoken in Shakespeare’s time), place (English spoken in Fairbanks isn’t the same as English spoken in London), and social circumstance (if you complained to me about this class you’d use language a bit differently than if you complained about it to a friend). This isn’t necessarily the most efficient way of going about things, but it seems to work pretty well for humans generally—there is no living language that doesn’t show such variation, and so we’ll spend the last few weeks of class investigating how people learn such variation, the ways these sorts of variation work, and how they get used by linguists.

UNIT OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to: identify types of linguistic variation and change; identify the effects of sociolinguistic factors; use valid historical sources to trace the history of words; draw generalizations from a dialect atlas map; identify areas of the brain involved in language use and their functions.

- 20 November Readings: Language “Language in education” to “Correct English” 328–340
 Topics: A few basic ground rules
 Deadline: Problem set #4

- 22 November *Deadline:* *Question post #12*
- 25 November Readings: Language “Synchronic variation” to “Communication with so many Englishes” 369–387
 Topics: Language change and variation
 Deadline: Research paper: Written report
- 27 November Event: No class (Thanksgiving break)
- 29 November *Deadline:* *Question post #13*
- 2 December Readings: Language “Lexical semantic change and the arbitrariness of language” to “Slang” 151–169
 Topics: A note on arbitrariness
 Deadline: Research assignment #5
- 4 December Readings: Language “The story of R: Part 1” 58–60; Language “The story of R (and L): Part 2” to “Variation today” 92–98; Language “Variation through time: A shift from more synthetic to more analytic” to “Variation today” 237–241; Language “Variation today” 283–285
 Topics: Linguistic variation as a natural phenomenon
 Deadline: Mini-quiz #2
 Deadline: Research assignment #6
- 6 December *Deadline:* *Question post #14*
- 9 December Event: Final exam slot (note different time: 1:00 to 3:45 PM)
 Readings: Online “How I got into linguistics, and what I got out of it”; Online “Linguistics as a profession”; Online “Why major in linguistics?”
 Topics: How this happened; The take-home message
 Deadline: Problem set #5
 Deadline: Research paper: Visual report
 Deadline: Question post #15