

Linguistics 306: Introduction to the Study of Language

Spring 2010
MWF 1-2pm PAR 206

Instructor: Sarah Wagner
Office Hours: Tues 9-10am, Weds 2-4pm, and by appointment
Office: CAL 519D
Email: swagner@mail.utexas.edu

Course Description:

This course will introduce you to linguistics, the scientific study of language. We will explore many questions throughout the semester. How are human languages structured? Do humans have an innate capacity for language? How do children learn language? How is adult language learning different? How did the languages of the world evolve? What are the differences between verbal and non-verbal communication? Is there a "universal grammar"? How diverse and different are the languages of the world? How much does "language endangerment" and language extinction around the world affect global cultural diversity? Should every country have one "official" language? Are standard languages preferable to regional dialects? In short, this class is about everything you always wanted to know about language, and maybe a few things you never even thought to ask!

Texts

Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams. *An Introduction to Language*. 8th edition. Available at the Co-op.

Class Policies:

- ☞ Attendance: You're expected to attend class on time every day. Not everything in the book will be covered, and not everything covered will be in the book. Aside from University-approved absences (official activities, religious holidays, military service), you may miss, for whatever reason, up to 3 classes. After that, for each class missed, you will receive 2.5 points off of your final grade. For example, if you miss 5 classes total and your final grade is an 83 (B), you will receive a 78 (C) in the course. This is roughly equivalent to lowering your grade one level for every four classes missed, beyond the 3 freebies. Extended illnesses and other real emergencies will be addressed on a case-by-case basis & will *require documentation*. Please contact me as soon as you can.
- ☞ Cell phones: Turn 'em off! Also, please get your water, phone calls and other needs taken care of before class starts.
- ☞ Participation: This course will be lectures, discussion and in-class practice activities. I

expect that everyone will join in and will ask questions regularly. Please respect your classmates' different skills, opinions, needs, and goals for the semester.

☞ Homework: All homework is posted under the "Assignments" section of our Blackboard page. You will submit the homework online, unless otherwise noted. Late homework will *not* be accepted. You are responsible for keeping track of due dates for assignments. More information on homework is included at the end of the syllabus.

☞ Blackboard: I also use Blackboard to post extra readings, the syllabus, office hours and grades. Please don't ask me for a new syllabus or for my office location, etc. If you do not know how to use BB, ask a classmate or come see me during office hours.

☞ Academic honesty: I take academic honesty very seriously. While you are welcome to work together to figure out the concepts necessary for answering homework questions, you must make sure that you are turning in your own answers. Plagiarism and collusion are impermissible. In the case of academic dishonesty, intended or not, the possible penalty ranges from failing the assignment to expulsion from the University. It is your responsibility to learn about this subject—it that can affect you in academic as well as in non-academic careers. If you haven't already, go to <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>. They've got a good, short tutorial that should answer most of your questions. If you are ever in doubt, *ask me*.

Special Needs

If you have any special needs associated with any learning or physical disability, please feel free to let me know. Before course accommodations can be made, you may be required to provide documentation for the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

Grading

Following is the coursework required for this class, and the grading scale. For your final grade, I will give pluses and minuses.

Exams: 60% (3 at 20% each)

There will be three exams, each over approximately a third of the course. There is no final exam. Please note: I do not curve test grades, nor can you make up a missed test!

Quiz: 10%

There will be one quiz on transcription.

Homework: 30%

There are eleven homework assignments total. You will be able to drop your lowest grade. Each of the remaining assignments is worth 3% of your final grade.

Homework Assignments

Your homework is due before class on the day it is listed in the syllabus. No late homework will be accepted. The assignments will be on Blackboard, under the Assignments section. For most chapters, the assignments come from the class textbook. Every so often, other questions have been added as well.

The homework will be “available” for you to fill out by the time we start the subject matter; it will close down at classtime the day it is due. Please feel free to come by my office or email if you have trouble accessing the material.

Other Resources

- * Use my office hours! That’s what I’m there for—come with homework questions, questions on writing, time management, research or other things. Often students just need to ask a question or two and the whole assignment (or what I’m looking for) becomes clear.
- * Though we won’t have papers due in this class, you should know about the Undergraduate Writing Center. <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/uwc/> Students I’ve had in several classes have found them very helpful.
- * Get yourself to the PCL (the building and the website). There are librarians who specialize in different areas of research: Susan Macicak is the linguistics specialist. She can help you learn more about specific topics, find sources, and use different library tools. You can also ask general questions of a librarian on-line or in person.