

(Office Hours: Tues. 10:00-11:00 AM on Zoom)

Syllabus for LING D001.5Z (Spring 2024)

- (4 units): CRN# 46210
- Instructor: Charles Gray
- Instruction: online (asynchronous)
- Instruction dates: 04/08/24-06/28/24
- email: charlesleonardgray@gmail.com
- Office Hours: Tues. 10:00-11:00 AM on Zoom

Important Dates:

- Last Day for Adds 4/21/'24
- Census Date 4/22/'24
- Last Day for Drops w/ Refund 4/21/'24
- Last Day for Drops w/o W 4/21/'24
- Last Day for Drops 5/31/'24

Required Texts and Materials

- Nearly all of the required reading and viewing materials for this class are in the public realm and will be available on our Canvas website.
- Some special projects may require access to novels or commercial broadcasts that are not in the public realm and must be purchased. However, since these are almost all mass market items, they can be obtained at modest costs.
- Since this class is entirely online and asynchronous, it can only be accessed through an online computer, so students must have access to such a device. There are online computer labs in campus, but students will have to find out where they are and when they are available.

Course Description (time requirements)

- The course outline for INTRO TO LINGUISTICS states that there are 4 in-class hours per week and eight out-of-class hours per week. Since there are NO in-class hours in this totally online and asynchronous class, ALL of the recommended hours (12 per week) are out of class.
- Since people read and study at different speeds, it is not possible to say exactly how many hours individuals should devote to class work each week, but I recon that 12 hours weekly would be the minimum required to perform satisfactorily in this class.

Course Description (content)

- This course is listed as an introduction to the discipline of linguistics and as such requires no previous knowledge of any facet of the study of linguistics. But since linguistics is an extremely broad and complex field, gaining knowledge of even its **basic** hypotheses, literature, and techniques requires many more hours than are available to us as a class.
- Therefore, I will be posting numerous links to texts and videos presenting huge amounts of information from which I hope that students will be able to glean a helpful core of terms, knowledge, and techniques with which they can conduct further inquiries and plumb this gigantic field to its most profound depths should they so choose.
- The basic plan is to spend the early weeks of the course learning the terms and basic content of the most commonly studied branches of the field of linguistics. Fortified with these terms and information, students will work in groups of 5-7 to produce 2 mainly textual projects in which they will describe or create some substantial linguistic event or artifact. A list of such projects appears elsewhere in this syllabus.
- I STRONGLY recommend keeping a detailed **hand-written** learning journal in a lined composition book chronicling what you do and learn in this class.
- Since almost the entirety of what is known in this field is available for free online, I consider the biggest part of my role in this class to be asking appropriate

- questions and pointing out various sources for, and methods of, finding answers.
- Since I am not a fair or just person, but rather a demanding old Boomer, I expect EACH of you to gain such a vocabulary and facility for reasoned expression that wherever you go after our time together, you will be thought of as the smartest person in the room. All that is required for this is possessed by all of you; you just have to genuinely want it.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Comprehend and analyze the descriptive systems of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.
- Analyze language universals contrasted by variations in social class, gender, age, ethnicity, geographic area, and idiosyntactic usage.

Course Objectives

- Identify universal attributes of human languages; evaluate explanations from language development theories based on physiological, psycholinguistic, cognitive or behavioral perspectives of language origin. Compare/contrast stages and strategies of language acquisition in first and second language learning.
- Use the major descriptive systems of phonology, phonetics, morphology, syntax, and semantics to gather, analyze, and formalize the description of language samples of some of the world's major language groups, such as Indo- European (the prototype of English) Altaic, Sino-Tibetan, Afroasiatic, Austronesian, American Indian and sign languages.
- Describe the major historical, political, social (cultural), and linguistic factors affecting the changes in languages, using English as a primary example, and using selected diverse examples from languages such as Hindi, Chinese, Spanish, Japanese and American Sign Language (ASL).

- Examine language universals as contrasted to variations by social class, gender, age, ethnicity, geographic area, and idiosyncratic usage.

Proposed Student Projects (subject to change and additions)

I. Project 1: Linguistic Issues in Science Fiction Writing

The narratives *Embassytown*, *A Clockwork Orange*, and “The Story of Your Life” have major themes involving language. The project here is to write a monograph of these themes as if it were from a team of PhD linguists. One novel may be substituted for any of the three listed here.

II. Project 2: Navaho Code Talkers

You are a team of PhD linguists writing a monograph on the background of and various linguistic issues suggested by the government project of the Navaho Code Talkers of WW II.

III. Project 3: Star Trek, Myth, Metaphor, and Constructed Language

The creators of the Star Trek franchise have given us at least two constructed languages: Klingon and Darmok. Your team of PhD linguists take linguistic deep dives into Klingon and Darmok.

IIIa. Project 3a: A Darmok of Your Own

Your team of language experts will develop your own Darmok-like language by choosing a widely-known narrative source and constructing a lexicon of metaphors from it as was done in the *Star Trek* episode. You will then create a short text that anyone familiar with your source narrative should be able to make some sense out of.

IV. Project 4: Linguistic Issues in Comedy

Your team will give an expert account of the linguistic issues powering the comedy of Ismo, Andy Kaufman, and Victor Borge.

IVa. Project 4a: Bad Words? Bad thoughts? Bad People?

Your team will give a linguistic analysis of the famously transgressive comedy of George Carlin, Lenny Bruce, Richard Pryor, and possibly others.

V. Project 5: Linguistic Issues in AI

Your team of PhD linguists will explicate the language issues raised by John Searle with his Chinese Room thought experiment. Additionally you will tackle related computational linguistic issues of your choice.

VI. Project 6: The Codebreakers

Your team of PhD linguists will detail the background, linguistics, and logistical challenges of the Rosetta Stone and the Enigma Machine (Jean-François Champollion, Thomas Young, and Alan Turing).

VII. Project 7: The Origin of Writing (Primary and Secondary Literacy)

Your team of PhD linguists will write about the history of writing, primary literacy and secondary literacy.

VIII. Project 8: What Can Linguistics Tell Us about Language, Mathematics, and Music?

Tell me something new, or at least interesting, about the relationships among these systems. Dazzle me!

IX. Project 9: Personal Pronouns

What can linguists contribute to this vexed issue?

Course Grade

The grade in this course will be a letter grade with +/- . That grade will be mostly determined by the student using a number of criteria enumerated on a checklist available on the Canvas website for this course. Among these criteria are grades on the two group projects, grades on graded discussions, grades on module checklists, and participation in module discussions.

Here are the approximate equivalences between numerical and letter grades: 60-F, 61-D-, 62-D-, 63-D, 64-D, 65-D, 66-D+, 67-D+, 68-D+, 69-D+, 70-C-, 71-C-, 72-C-, 73-C, 74-C, 75-C, 76-C+, 77-C+, 78-C+, 79-C+, 80-B-, 81-B-, 82-B-, 83-B, 84-B, 85-B, 86-B+, 87-B+, 88-B+, 89-B+, 90-A-, 91-A-, 92-A-, 93-A, 94-A, 95-A, 96-A+, 97-A+, 98-A+, 99-A+, 100-A+

Basic Rules for Everyone (These are always in force.)

- 1) All course work must be turned in to the Canvas website unless otherwise instructed.
- 2) All assignments must be turned in on time! Do not fool with this! The Canvas time stamp will be the final arbiter of lateness. Since life sometimes presents us with unexpected challenges, work can be turned in up to seven (7) days late, but 10 percent of the total possible points for the assignment **may** be deducted starting at one minute late, so be very careful. **No excuses will help you here, and no exceptions will be recognized, so please do not waste your time (and mine) explaining to me why your work is late. Simply submit it as soon as possible and prepare for the possible consequences.**
- 3) There are no extra credit assignments though I may add small assignments (such as quizzes or short essays) to the course point total in the course of the semester.
- 4) No incomplete grades will be awarded, so be aware of the final drop date with "W." After that date, you must be given a letter grade.

Help for Students

Need help? Student Success Center peer tutors can relate and are ready to help! Go to the SSC homepage and click on the yellow links for on-campus schedules and Zoom links.

- Individual Weekly or Drop-in Tutoring: Come with assignments or questions, or just drop by to see how tutoring works.
- Workshops, group tutoring and group study: Most people learn better with others...give it a try!
- Support for online learning: Speak with a friendly peer tutor or SSC staff member about motivation and organization strategies for online classes. We get it and are going through the same things, so let's support each other!
- Need after-hours or weekend tutoring? See the Online Tutoring page for information about NetTutor (via Canvas) or Smarthinking (via MyPortal).