
1st and 2nd quarters, Sophomore

Instructor	MINASHIMA HIROSHI, Ivan Lombardi
Style of Class	Lecture
Number of Credits	2
Day and Period	Tuesday period 4/, Thursday, period 2/ Friday, period 2

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of language and the areas of study within linguistics. Its goal is to familiarize students with key concepts and tools used to describe and analyze language as used in human communication. Starting from a description of the faculty of language, the course will initially focus on a number of topics of general linguistics. The second part of the course will introduce the basics of some language sciences, like historical linguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, sociolinguistics, non-verbal communication and the study of writing systems.

Course Objectives

Students will:

1. come to think of language as a concept that can be broken down and analyzed scientifically;
2. acquire a basic knowledge of key terms and notions in linguistics and its ancillary sciences;
3. understand and experiment with tools to describe language(s);
4. tackle and debunk a number of myths associated to language;
5. reflect on their experience as users of more than one language.

Prerequisites

None

Class Materials

Textbook: G.Yule (2014, 5ed), The Study of Language, Cambridge University Press:
978-1-107-65817-2

Additional materials for classwork will be made available each week.

Course Methods

The course is set up as a seminar-style class. Each week the instructor will introduce a new topic and guide students to relate the content of the required readings to their personal experience as speakers of more than one language. Students should come to class prepared to actively discuss the assigned readings and engage in practical activities related to the weekly topic.

Evaluation/Assessment

Attendance and participation are strongly encouraged and taken into account when evaluating. In addition, students will be evaluated on their performance in three focus groups. (called “challenges”)

Grading

25%	Challenge 1
25%	Challenge 2
25%	Challenge 3
25%	Attendance and participation

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction: Language and its Study

Orientation and introduction to the nature of language and its scientific study.

Week 2: The Language User

Humans and the readiness for language: the brain functions and cognitive processes that allow language production and comprehension.

Week 3: First and Second Language Acquisition

A study of the stages in language development, the differences between monolingual and bilingual acquisition, and discussion of relevant theories on second language acquisition.

Week 4: Challenge 1 Language and Languages**Week 5-6: Phonetics and Phonology**

Experimenting with phonetics, the study of the characteristics of speech sounds, and phonology, the descriptive system of speech sound patterns in language.

Week 7: Morphology and Word Formation

A description of morphemes, the minimal units of meaning, and how morphological rules shape word formation in every language of the world.

Week 8: The Structure of Languages: Syntax

How are words organized in sentences? A study of syntax and the tools used to describe syntactic constituents and their relationships.

Week 9: Semantics and the Quest for Meaning

How is meaning constructed? An overview of the semantic features of language and how word meanings change over time.

Week 10: Challenge 2: Linguistic Analysis**Week 11: Historical Linguistics and Language Change**

An introduction to historical linguistics, its research methods, and findings: language families, language origin and evolution, language contact.

Week 12: Psycholinguistics and Neurolinguistics

An overview of the main established theories and findings in psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics, and a synopsis of speech impediments.

Week 13: Introduction to Sociolinguistics

Key topics in sociolinguistics: speech communities, language varieties and their prestige, dialects, register, slang.

Week 14: Non-Verbal Communication

An analysis of wordless communication: body language (eye contact, mimic and gestures), touch, proxemics, the role of clothing and accessories, and cultural differences in NVC.

Week 15: Written Language: An Overview

An investigation of the origins of writing, the different types of symbolical representations found in the history of the world, the historical development of the written word, and what learning to write entails.

Week 16: Challenge 3: Language Sciences

Preparation and Follow-up

- Preparation: Read the relevant portions of the reference materials (about one hour)
- Follow-up: Review the content of the class and note any points you are not sure of (about one hour)