

LINGUISTICS 481 – FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS

Course Syllabus

Department of Linguistics - Simon Fraser University – Fall Semester 2003

INSTRUCTOR: **DR. MAITE TABOADA**

Office: RCB 9202

E-mail: mtaboada@sfu.ca

Phone: 604-291-5585

Office hours: M 2-3pm and W 1-3pm (or by appointment)

Course Web Page: <http://www.sfu.ca/~mtaboada/ling481/ling481.html>

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Ling 322, Ling 324, plus 6 credits of upper-level Linguistics courses.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course provides an introduction to the functional study of language. From this point of view, linguistics is the study of what language *does*, not of how it is structured. We will start by comparing formal and functional approaches to language. Then we will concentrate on one particular approach, systemic functional linguistics.

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) is concerned with how language is put to use. It examines language in its cultural and social context, and studies how the structure of language has been shaped by the goals and needs of language users, i.e., it studies language as a meaning-making device. We will cover fundamental concepts in a functional approach to language, such as genre and register; metafunctions (experiential, interpersonal and textual); and the grammatical devices that are used to encode those metafunctions (systems of Transitivity, Mood and Theme).

The course will consist of lectures and in-class exercises that will focus on analysis of texts collected by the students (both spoken and written). Assignments will also analyze texts using the SFL perspective. There will be an emphasis on writing-to-learn approaches.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, students will understand the functional approach to language, and will have learnt the basic constructs in systemic functional linguistics.

Assignments and final papers will involve analyses of texts from different perspectives. However, the emphasis is not on a simple identification of patterns and labelling of text structures. The ultimate goal is to be able to write a descriptive account of the analysis, and to explain how SFL tools contribute to a better understanding of language phenomena.

The course will use writing as a means of learning. Writing will consist of informal and formal assignments, some of them in-class and in groups (in-class short essays, reports, reading logs, peer evaluation, etc.). There will also be a final paper, for which a preliminary draft and an in-class presentation are required.

Note that this is neither a remedial course nor one suitable for students seeking ESL writing instruction. The course will foster the ability to write; it will not teach basic writing skills. An excellent command of the English language is expected.

REQUIRED TEXT

Eggs, Suzanne (1994) *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. London: Continuum.

Further readings will be available on reserve in the library.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- Downing, Angela and Philip Locke (2002) *A University Course in English Grammar*. London: Routledge (2nd edition).
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1994) *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold (2nd edition).
- Martin, J. R., Christian Matthiessen and Clare Painter (1997) *Working with Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold.
- Thompson, Geoff (1996) *Introducing Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive on time so that classes may begin promptly. Announcements will be made at the beginning and end of classes regarding the assigned readings and the expectations for exams.
2. Students are expected to have read all assigned readings *before* class. Because many students will be learning about a new field of study in this class, some of the materials and concepts may seem fairly complex. In such cases, students should read assigned readings and go over the lecture notes multiple times.
3. Students will be responsible for all materials covered in the assigned readings and lectures. Examinations will require students to refer to readings, lecture notes, and their own notes.
4. If you have to miss an in-class exam because of illness, you are required to contact me prior to the exam. You may notify me by e-mail or leave a message at the office. When you return to class, I will need a note from your medical doctor specifying the date of your absence and the reason. There is a good chance that I will call the doctor of record to confirm the note. Following departmental policy, make-up exams will not be given under any circumstances. If you have a doctor's note for the date of the exam, the weight of that exam will be added to the final exam. Unexcused absences from exams will result in a grade of zero for that exam. Further, under no circumstances will students be allowed to write the final exam early. If you have travel plans or career plans in December, you are responsible for ensuring that they do not conflict with the final examination schedule.
5. Assignments are to be submitted on the due date. Late assignments will receive a penalty of 20%. You need to notify me if your assignment is going to be late.
6. Students will be respectful of other students and the instructor. In particular, students will not talk while the instructor or another student is talking.
7. Academic dishonesty in all forms violates the basic principles of integrity and thus impedes learning. More specifically, academic dishonesty is a form of misconduct that is subject to disciplinary action and includes the following: cheating, fabrication, fraud, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. For more information on academic honesty and student conduct, please visit the following websites:
http://www.reg.sfu.ca/calendar/General_Regs.html#897900
<http://www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/index.htm>
8. Please note that students requiring accommodations as a result of a disability must contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (604-291-3112 or csdo@sfu.ca).

COURSE GRADE

The participation grade includes attending class regularly and participating actively. Other in-class activities (written questions about the reading, reading logs, reports, group work) will also count towards your participation grade.

There will be two assignments, each a short analysis of a text. The final paper is also an analysis of a text, spoken or written. The midterm and final exams will test your general knowledge of concepts and terminology learned throughout the semester, through multiple choice, short answer or short essay questions.

	<u>WEIGHT</u>
Participation	10%
Assignments	15%
Class presentation	10%
Final paper	30%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	15%

The following table provides a rough estimate of grade breakdowns for the final grade. Due attention will be given to the verbal descriptions listed below.

97-100%	A+	Extraordinary performance	73-76%	C+	Satisfactory performance
93-96%	A	Excellent performance	69-72%	C	Marginal performance
89-92%	A-		65-68%	C-	
85-88%	B+	Good performance	57-64%	D	Unsatisfactory performance (fail)
81-84%	B		< 56%	F	
77-80%	B-				

TOPICS AND READING OUTLINE

Unless otherwise noted, chapters are from the main textbook.

Week	Date	Topic	Read	Hand in/Do
Week 1	- Sept. 3	Introduction	Chapter 1 Newmeyer	
Week 2	Sept. 8 Sept. 10	Genre	Chapter 2	
Week 3	Sept. 15 Sept. 17	Register	Chapter 3	
Week 4	Sept. 22 Sept. 24	Cohesion	Chapter 4	
Week 5	Sept. 29 Oct. 1	Lexicogrammar	Chapter 5	Assignment 1
Week 6	Oct. 6 Oct. 8	Mood	Chapter 6	Midterm
Week 7	Oct. 13 Oct. 15	Thanksgiving, no class Transitivity	Chapter 8	Paper topic
Week 8	Oct. 20 Oct. 22	Theme	Chapter 9	
Week 9	Oct. 27 Oct. 29	Systems	Chapter 7	Assignment 2
Week 10	Nov. 3 Nov. 5	Applications	Chapter 10	
Week 11	Nov. 10 Nov. 12	Other functional approaches: Functional grammar	Dik	Paper, first draft Workshops
Week 12	Nov. 17 Nov. 19	Student presentations		Presentations
Week 13	Nov. 24 Nov. 26 Nov. 28	'West Coast' functionalism (Friday, 12 noon)	Noonan	Final paper
Week 14	Dec. 1 Dec. 3	Review Final exam, 12-3pm		