

Linguistics 220, Introduction to Linguistics

Mon 12:30-2:20, Wed 12:30-1:20 AQ3003

Contact information

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General description

Linguistics 220 introduces the complexities of human language by focusing on the core areas of linguistics: *phonetics* (production, transmission, and perception of speech), *phonology* (the patterning of speech sounds in language), *morphology* (word structure and formation), *syntax* (sentence structure and formation), and *semantics* (analysis of meaning in language). There are no prerequisites for this course.

Required text

Contemporary Linguistic Analysis: An Introduction (CLA). Edited by: William O-Grady and John Archibald. 8th Edition. Toronto: Pearson Canada. Pearson. ISBN 978-0-13-404679-2 (loose leaf version, no companion website access code). Paperback version, ISBN: 978-0-321-83615-1

Lecture notes and supplemental material

The slides of the lectures notes, special handouts, and supplemental problems are available from the course website (see above). There is some overlap with the lectures and the textbook reading, *but there are many cases in which the lectures extend and develop new material*. Exams will draw on material from the textbook, the lectures, and all problem-solving work, so they are important student resources. It is recommended that the lecture notes be printed out prior to each class and commented on during lecture.

Course goals

- By the end of the course, you are expected to have a good basic understanding of the key concepts that are used in the five core sub-disciplines of contemporary linguistics to describe and analyze linguistic data.
- You are also expected to have developed analytical and problem-solving skills that will provide the foundations for more specialized linguistics courses, and courses in other disciplines as well.

Important dates

- Midterm 1 (in-class): May 31
- Midterm 2 (in-class): June 28
- Final exam (location TBA, cumulative): Aug. 11, 3:30-6:30

Acceptance of course policies

This document can be downloaded from the web address above. Please do so and read it. It contains my expectations as the instructor. By enrolling in this course, you are accepting the course policies described in this document.

Course assignments and basis for grading

Final exam (Aug. 11): 40% of your course grade. The final exam is cumulative, but there will be more emphasis on the material presented after the second midterm. See policy below for missed exams.

Note: this is an important date, so mark your calendars now. If you have work or travel plans for August, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they do not conflict with this date.

Midterm exams (May 31, June 28): 60% of your course grade, or 30% each. They are scheduled during normal class hours on Wednesdays from 12:30-1:20. Be early and prepared to take your test.

Note: there are no make-up mid-term exams. A missed exam equals a 0% unless (1) you are seriously ill on the day of the test or have an extenuating circumstance on that day, and (2) you've informed the instructor by email prior to the beginning of the test, and (3) you subsequently provide the relevant documentation (e.g., a doctor's note) specifying the exact dates of your illness/circumstance and that you were unable to take the exam because of it. If a student misses the final, and if (1-3) apply, a parallel exam may be given as soon as possible. However, the specific questions and data tested on the exam will be significantly different than the normal exam.

Textbook drills: Not a direct factor in your grade, but important to learning. These homeworks are designed to give students the chance to turn the information in the reading and lectures into active knowledge. Students may collaborate on the assignments, and it is expected that you will have completed the drills by the dates they are assigned (see schedule). We will review them in class.

Supplemental problems: to extend the knowledge generated in the lectures and drills, we will engage in a set of supplemental problems that are more challenging than those in the book. These too are important 'core material' and are fair game for exams.

Research Participation System (RPS): this system provides students with the opportunity to see how linguistic research is conducted, and it can enhance your understanding of course themes. For that reason, students can be rewarded for participating on one experiment in the following way. Use the RPS system to register for one study and at the end of the semester I will boost one of your midterm exams by 2%, e.g., 90% → 92%.

Academic honesty

In Linguistics, we take a very hard line on all forms of academic dishonesty, because it's unfair, and what is more, it is an obstacle to learning. You should be aware of what academic dishonesty consists of, and its consequences, by visiting the website below, as well as other department standards.

<https://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/student.html>

How to succeed in Linguistics 220

1. Do all the readings in advance of the lecture, then reread them again and go over your notes after the lecture. This is not material that can be grasped after a single read.
2. Print out the course materials. Don't just download the PDFs and look at them. The slides, handouts, and problems are designed to be examined in hardcopy form.
3. Come to the lectures with your assignments completed. Learning linguistics is like learning to dance—the only way to learn is *by doing it*.
4. Don't let small problems become big ones. If something is unclear or you are struggling: tell us so we can help. Also, seek out a good study partner.
5. Don't fall behind. In some courses you can put stuff off to the end and catch up with a big push at the end. Linguistics has something in common with weight-training: you succeed by making regular progress.
6. Ask questions. No question is unimportant, and more than likely you are not alone in wanting an answer to your question. We all benefit from good questions.

Class schedule

All page numbers below are to the textbook, *Contemporary Linguistic Analysis* 'CLA' henceforth. I expect the readings to be done before the lectures. The lecture notes extend the content of the textbook significantly, so you need to come to lecture and engage with this material. Drills are due the day listed.

May 8

Reading: CLA 139-150

Lecture: Course introduction, Input-output processes, Lexical and phrasal categories

May 10

Drills: CLA 177-178 #2 and CLA #6 and #7 (lexical categories and constituency tests)

Supplemental problem: More Tag Questions

May 15

Reading: CLA 150-153, 173-175

Lecture: The lexicon and the Phrase Structure Rules, Subcategorization and complements

May 17

Textbook drills: CLA 177-178 #1, #3, #4, and #5

Supplemental problem: Some more complex sentences, Complement options

May 22

No class, stat holiday

May 24

Reading: CLA 154-161, 173-176

Lecture: Syntax review, Transformations

May 29

Lecture: Transformations cont'd

Drills: CLA 178-179 #8 (just a-h), #9, #10, #11

Supplemental problem: Yoda Talk

May 31. Midterm 1, entire class. You will be given a copy of the class grammar as a 'cheat sheet'.

June 5

Reading: CLA 181-190, 198-200

Lecture: Review midterm, The nature of linguistic meaning and set-theoretic semantics

June 7

Drills: CLA 213 #3, #4 and the Set World Problem

Supplemental problem: Structural Ambiguity

June 12

Reading: CLA 207-212

Lecture: Nature of linguistic meaning cont'd, Pragmatics and implied meaning

June 14

Drills: page 217 #18 and From Trees to Meanings Problem

June 19

Reading: CLA 100-130

Lecture: Morpheme-based morphology, derivation, and inflection

June 21

Drills: CLA 130-131 #1, #2, #3

Supplemental problem: CLA 133 #9 #11

June 26

Lecture: Syntax-semantics review

Drills: CLA 131-132 #4, #5, #6

Supplemental problem: CLA 135 #14, #15, #16, #17

June 28. Midterm 2, entire class in new location: WMC 3520. Cumulative, but natural focus on June material. You will be given an updated class grammar as a ‘cheat sheet’.

July 3, no class, stat holiday

July 5

Reading: CLA 14-40

Lecture: Review midterm, Articulatory phonetics, English consonants and vowels

Please print: Charts for English Consonants and Vowels

July 10

Lecture: Articulatory phonetics, English consonants and vowels cont’d

July 12

Drills: CLA 53-54 #1, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8

July 17

Reading: CLA 56-65

Lecture: Distributions and the concept of the phoneme

July 19

Drills: CLA 54 #9, #10, #11, CLA 93-94 #1, #2, #5

Supplemental problem: Greenlandic Eskimo Vowels

July 24

Reading: CLA 65-92

Lecture: Rules, features, and syllables

July 26

Drills: CLA 93-96 #3, #4, #6, #7, #8, #9, #12

Supplemental problem: Polish vowel alternations

July 31

Reading: CLA 65-92

Lecture: Rules, features, and syllables cont’d

Aug. 2

Lecture: Course review

Drills: CLA 96-99 #13, #14, #16, #17

August 11, 3:30-6:30, location TBA, Final exam. Cumulative, but there will be a natural focus on phonetics and phonology. You will be given a complete class grammar and phonological features sheet as a ‘cheat sheet’.