

## LINGUISTICS 100 – COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

### Course Syllabus

Department of Linguistics - Simon Fraser University – Fall Semester 2009

INSTRUCTOR: **DR. MAITE TABOADA**

**Class:** Tuesdays 10:30-11:20 AQ 3182 – Thursdays 9:30-11:20 B 9201

**Office hours:** Tuesdays 2-4 – Wednesdays 10-12

**Office:** RCB 8206

**Phone:** 778-782-5585

**Course Web Page:** <http://www.sfu.ca/~mtaboada/ling100/ling100.html>  
(Check frequently for new material and announcements)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the study of language and human communication. Topics to be covered include:

- The biological basis of human language
- Relations of language to cognition, culture and thought
- Structure of language
- The neurological basis of language and language disorders
- Language acquisition
- Languages of the world
- Historical changes in languages
- Human language vs. animal communication
- Evolution of human language
- Language in society
- Spoken vs. written language
- Computational models of language

This course is designated as Breadth-Social Sciences. This course may be applied towards the Certificate in Liberal Arts or the Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language, but not both.

### PREREQUISITES

None

### REQUIRED TEXTS

- Bauer, Laurie, Janet Holmes and Paul Warren (2006). *Language Matters*. Houndmills, UK & New York: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 1-4039-3628-5.
- Custom Courseware package assembled by Cliff Burgess (2008). (Please make very sure that you purchase the most recent edition of the Custom Courseware, by Cliff Burgess.)

### COURSE EXPECTATIONS

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 and assignments.

1. 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.

2. Students will be responsible for all materials covered in the assigned readings and lectures.
3. Students will be respectful of other students and the instructor. In particular, students will not talk while the instructor or another student is talking. Please turn off cell phones, alarms, laptop speakers, or anything else that will cause a disruption in the class.
4. Students should familiarize themselves with the Linguistics Department's Standards on Class Management and Student Responsibilities at:  
<http://www.sfu.ca/linguistics/undergraduate/standards.html>
5. 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.  
Tutors, editors, or any other types of outside help are not allowed. Exceptions are the assistance provided by the TA, peers in the class, and through the Student Learning Commons (see below, under Resources).

For more information on academic honesty and student conduct, please visit the following websites:

<http://students.sfu.ca/calendar/GeneralRegulations.html>

<http://www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/index.htm>

If a student is found guilty of plagiarism or other form of academic dishonesty on a class paper, an assignment, or an exam, an academic dishonesty report will be written for that student. This report is filed in the department. The student receives a grade of zero for the paper, assignment, or exam. If more than one academic dishonesty report has been filed for a student, the case can be presented to the University Board on Student Discipline.

6. A missed exam means a grade of 0 unless: 1) you are ill on the day of the exam, 2) you have told me so before the exam (via e-mail or phone message), and 3) you give me a medical note as soon as possible after you return to class. A sample form is available at <http://students.sfu.ca/forms/GenIHCPform.pdf>. In that case, the weight of that exam will be distributed across the other course components. Following departmental policy, no make-up exams are given for missed midterms.
7. 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.
8. Please note that students requiring accommodations as a result of a disability must contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (778-782-3112 or [csdo@sfu.ca](mailto:csdo@sfu.ca)).
9. All student requests for accommodation for religious practices must be made in writing by the end of the first week of classes or no later than one week after a student adds a course.

#### **E-MAIL POLICY**

I strongly discourage the use of e-mail for communication about class matters, and in particular about course content. Instead, I suggest you come see me during office hours or call me if you cannot be on campus during my office hours. I will have extended office hours during the week (4 hours).

If you are sick and need to miss an exam, please do send me an e-mail message, but do not expect a reply.

**COURSE GRADE**

The final grade will be calculated according to the percentages below. The final grade will take into account class attendance and participation (especially for students who are close to the next letter grade).

There will be two midterm exams and a final exam. More detail on each of these will be provided throughout the semester. The first midterm includes material from weeks 1-4; the second from weeks 5-9. The final exam is cumulative.

COMPONENT	WEIGHT
Midterm I – October 8	30%
Midterm II – November 12	30%
Final exam – December 15, 8:30-11:30 am, place TBA	40%

Percentage scores on exams will be based on objective criteria. Final letter course grades will be computed from percentage scores on all the course components. 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. There is no university-wide standard scale. An instructor adopts a grade scale appropriate to the level and content of the course.

96-100%	A+	Extraordinary performance	66-70%	C+	Satisfactory performance
91-95%	A	Excellent performance	61-65%	C	
86-90%	A-		56-60%	C-	Marginal performance
81-85%	B+	50-55%	D		
76-80%	B	Good performance	< 50%	F	Unsatisfactory performance
71-75%	B-				(fail)

**GRADE APPEALS**

If a student wishes to contest the marking of an exam, assignment or paper, the instructor can agree to remark his/her entire exam at the instructor's convenience and not in front of the student. A grade reconsideration may raise the grade, lower the grade, or leave the grade unchanged, as stated in Policy T20.01, clause IV.2.

Grade appeals must be made in writing. An exam written in pencil cannot be re-assessed.

The only reason a grade change will be made is if there is an arithmetic error or if it has been determined that the exam, assignment or paper deserves a lower grade or a higher grade after it has been remarked.

The following *are not* reasons for reconsideration of a grade:

- The student is on probation.
- The student wants to get into Business or any other program.
- The student worked hard and thinks this should be a factor.
- The student does not like the grade scale.

- The student's score is x% below the next grade and would like the instructor to ignore the difference.

### RESOURCES

A number of resources are available to the students in the class.

The SFU Learning Commons is available to all SFU students, and provides assistance with learning, academic writing and reading strategies (<http://learningcommons.sfu.ca/>).

The course web page also lists a number of website and resources, and a list of frequently asked questions about this course. Please check it frequently, and make sure you avail yourself of all the tools that you may need.

### TOPICS AND SCHEDULE OF READINGS

The following list is subject to change; you should always consult the web version of the syllabus and schedule.

"Ch." refers to chapters in the textbook *Language matters*. All other material is from the courseware, identified by author and date of publication. You are expected to read the material for that week *before* the Tuesday class, i.e., read all the material for the entire week in advance.

Week	Date	Topic	Read (before class)
1	Sept. 8 Sept. 10	Introduction, Origin of language	Ch. 1, Ch. 2 Holden 2004
2	Sept. 15 Sept. 17	Language change and language families	Ch. 3, Ch. 4 Burridge 2004, Fitch 2007, Pennisi 2004a, Fogassi and Ferrari 2007, Pollick 2007, Pennisi 2004b, Balter 2004
3	Sept. 22 Sept. 24	Animal communication; written language	Ch. 5, Ch. 6 Arnold and Zuberbühler 2006, Marcus 2006, Hövelmann 1989, "The Economist" 2007
4	Sept. 29 Oct. 1	Lexicon and grammar	Ch. 7, Ch. 8 Altmann 1997, Pinker 2007,
5	Oct. 6  Oct. 8	Languages of the world  <b>Midterm exam I</b>	Ch. 9 Bickerton 1983, Smith 2007, Senghas et al. 2004
6	Oct. 13 Oct. 15	Grammar and structure	Ch. 10, Ch. 11 Pinker 1994
7	Oct. 20 Oct. 22	Language loss; language in society	Ch. 12, Ch. 13 Hale 1992, Das 1968
8	Oct. 27 Oct. 29	Language and gender; accents and dialects	Ch. 14, Ch. 15, Ch. 16, Ch. 17 Mehl et al. 1007, Munro 2003

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9	Nov. 3 Nov. 5	Language acquisition	Ch. 18 Clark 1979
10	Nov. 10 Nov. 12	Bilingualism <b>Midterm exam II</b>	Ch. 19, Ch. 20 Mitchell and Myles 2004
11	Nov. 17 Nov. 19	Language and the brain	Ch. 21, Ch. 22 Gordon 2004, De Martino et al. 2006
12	Nov. 24 Nov. 26	Language and the brain	Ch. 23, Conclusion Ashcraft 1993
13	Dec. 1 Dec. 3	Conclusion	Hockett 1958
	Dec. 15 (Tue.)	<b>Final exam</b> , 8:30-11:30 am, Place TBA	

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