

# LINGUISTICS 407

## *Historical Linguistics*

SUMMER SEMESTER, 2011

### *Syllabus*

**Instructor:** Dr. Zita McRobbie  
**Office:** RCB 9204  
**Telephone:** 778 782 5782 (office)  
778 782 4585 (messages)  
**Office Hours:** Thursday 12:30-1:20  
Wednesday 12:30-1:20 or, by appointment  
**Required Text:** Fortson IV, B.W. 2010. *Indo-European Language and Culture*. Wiley-Blackwell.

**Recommended Readings:** Anttila, R. 1989. *Historical and comparative linguistics*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.  
Lehmann, W.P. 1992. *Historical Linguistics*. London and New York: Routledge.  
Joseph, B.D. & R. D. Janda. 2003. *The handbook of historical linguistics*. Blackwell Publishing.

### **Grading:**

Assignments (4):	20%
Mid-Term Exam (June 22)	35%
Final Exam (Aug 15)	45%

**Final letter grades will be calculated from total percentage scores on assignments and exams as follows:**

100-96	A+	85-81	B+	70-66	C+	55-50	D
95-91	A	80-76	B	65-61	C	49-0	F
90-86	A-	75-71	B-	60-56	C-		

## ***Course Schedule***

Please be advised that the schedule may change if we need to spend more or less time on certain topics.

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>WORK</b>
Week 1	May 11	Introduction: Principles and methods of historical linguistics.	
Week 2	May 18	<i>continued</i>	
Week 3	May 25	The background of historical linguistic studies	
Week 4	<b>June 1</b>	Genealogical and typological classifications. Language families.	<b>Assignment #1 is due</b>
Week 5	June 8	The comparative method.	
Week 6	June 15	<i>continued</i>	<b>Assignment #2 is due</b>
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>June 22</b>	The method of internal reconstruction.	<b><i>Mid-Term Exam</i></b>
Week 8	June 29	Glottochronology.	
Week 9	July 6	Macro families: Nostratic and multilateral comparisons.	<b>Assignment #3 is due</b>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>July 13</b>	Sound change. Proto-Indo-European phonology.	
Week 11	July 20	Morphological Change. Proto-Indo-European morphology.	
Week 12	July 27	Syntactic Change. Proto-Indo-European syntax.	<b>Assignment #4 is due</b>
Week 13	Aug 3	Review	

***Readings relevant to the topics listed in the Course Schedule will be given in class.***

### **CLASS STRUCTURING:**

Each class will consist of lecture/discussion periods in which the new material will be introduced. Analysis of the theoretical material will be supplemented with practice exercises in which techniques employed by historical linguists will be learnt. The practice exercises aimed at reconstructing linguistic forms on the basis of (i) the comparative method, and (ii) the method of internal reconstruction.

Announcements and lecture notes will be regularly posted during the semester on the instructor's web site (<http://www.sfu.ca/~mcrobbie>).

Note: For pedagogical reasons some lecture notes will be posted *after* discussion in class.

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

- ◆ Students are expected to attend *all* classes. Attendance and participation will be considered when calculating the final grade.
- ◆ Students are expected to arrive on time so that classes may begin promptly and that they will not disrupt the class.
- ◆ Students are responsible for the materials covered in class. Some of the lectures will contain material not covered in the text book. Lecture notes will provide only a skeletal treatment of the topics to be discussed. Students are expected to take notes.
- ◆ There will be *four* home assignments. There will be a ten percent deduction for each late assignment. Assignments submitted *two days* after the due date will not be accepted.

*Group work.* Students are encouraged to work on home assignments in groups up to five persons. If you work in a group, you can turn in just one copy of the assignment, with everybody's name on it. Such group work is allowed, provided the following are adhered to: (i) the members of the group must register with the instructor before the due date of each assignment; this must be done in writing, informing the instructor of the group members; (ii) each group member is responsible for the entire content of the written assignment, and therefore the grade given to the group will be recorded for each member.

- ◆ For a missed class, obtain the lecture notes, handouts, and/or assignments from the course website (when available) or, from a classmate.
- ◆ There will be *two* exams. Both exams will be closed-book, with a variety of questions: definitions of concepts, problems, short essay-type answers.

### Exam policy:

- Make-up exams will not be given. Should you miss the Mid-Term Exam because of illness or extenuating circumstances, the weight will be added to the final exam.
  - If you have to miss an exam because of illness, you are expected to contact me prior to the exam. When you return to class, I will need a note from your doctor specifying the date of your absence and the reason. Note: I may call the doctor to confirm the note.
  - Under no circumstances will students be allowed to write exams on dates other than the scheduled exam date. If you have travel or career plans during the semester, you are responsible for ensuring that they do not conflict with the examination schedule.
  - Prior to each exam, the formats will be explained and a review sheet will be provided.
- ◆ Limit your e-mail messages to simple inquiries requiring *no more* than a one-sentence reply ([mcrobbie@sfu.ca](mailto:mcrobbie@sfu.ca)). Questions requiring longer replies should be asked in class or during office hours. Please, always sign your name: anonymous messages will not be answered. In the Subject line indicate the course number. I will not respond to messages late in the evening or, on weekends. Further, I would appreciate questions that are expressed in an appropriately polite manner.

- ◆ Grade appeals must be in writing.
- ◆ In-class behavior:
  - Do not bring food to class.
  - Do not use cell-phones in class.
  - A student who fails to behave respectfully in class may be asked to leave.
- ◆ 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 web sites:  
[http://www.reg.sfu.ca/calendar/General\\_Regs.html#897900](http://www.reg.sfu.ca/calendar/General_Regs.html#897900)  
<http://www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/index.htm>
- ◆ Please review the *Department Standards* and *Exam Procedures* at  
<http://www.sfu.ca/linguistics/undergraduate/standards.html>  
[http://www.sfu.ca/linguistics/undergraduate/Exam\\_Procedures.html](http://www.sfu.ca/linguistics/undergraduate/Exam_Procedures.html)