

LX250: Introduction to Linguistics

Spring 2019

Tuesday & Thursday 2:00-3:15 Room: CAS 224

Instructor: Snejana Iovtcheva

Office Hours: W 12:00-1:00

Office: 621 Commonwealth Ave. Rm. 112

Thurs 3:30-4:30 (and by appointment)

Contact: snejana@bu.edu

TFs: Will Clapp

Spencer Hanlin

Madeline Reffel

Contact: wscclapp@bu.edu

shanlin8@bu.edu

mreffel@bu.edu

Office Hours: M 12:15-2:15

Tue 12:20-2:00

Thurs 12:30-1:50

(All teaching fellow's office hours are in 621 Commonwealth Avenue, Room 113)

Course website: Blackboard Learn

There are 7 discussion section that all meet on Friday. You **must** be enrolled in ONE section:

S1 Hanlin 9:05 - 9:55 WED212

S5 Reffel 1:25 – 2:15 WED 208

S2 Clapp 10:10 - 11:00 CGS323

S6 Reffel 2:30 – 3:20 WED 208

S3 Hanlin 11:15 - 12:05 SAR 300

S7 Clapp 1:25 – 2:15 WED 406

S4 Clapp 12:20 – 1:35 KCB 201

NOTE: This document is a contract. If you remain enrolled in this course, I will assume that you have carefully read the document and are committed to performing in accordance with it. I will assume that you will ask for clarification on points that are not clear to you. In return, I commit myself to adhering to the policies outlined here. If changes are made, I will inform you in a timely manner and explain the reasons for the changes.

Course Information:

This course is a broad introduction to the field of linguistics and provides answers to basic questions about the nature of human language. Throughout the course, we will be examining a number of ways in which human language is a complex but law-governed mental system.

In the first two thirds of the class, we will study some core aspects of this system in detail. This part is devoted to principles governing word formation, the sound system, phrases and sentence formation. In the second part of the class, we will use what we have learned to address a variety of other questions — including how language is acquired, how dialects arise, how languages change over time, what are cultural and artistic uses of languages, as well as comparison of oral and written languages.

Throughout the course, we will emphasize the development of critical thinking and argumentation skills, as well as empirical methods for the support of abstract or formal models of language.

Materials and Resources:

➤ **Textbook:**

O'Grady, William, John Archibald, Mark Aronoff and Janie Rees-Miller. 2017.

***Contemporary Linguistics: an Introduction.* New York: Bedford/St. Seventh Edition. ISBN: 978- 1319039776.**

- Handouts/slides, homework, practice exercises, and occasional additional readings will be posted on the course Blackboard site.
- For students desiring additional help with course material beyond instructor and TF office hours, peer tutors are available through the BU Educational Resource Center: <http://www.bu.edu/erc/peer-tutoring/>
- **Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities:** If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at (617) 353-3658 as soon as possible to coordinate any reasonable accommodation requests. ODS is located at 19 Deerfield Street on the second floor.
- Other Resources: There is a wealth of information and wonderful links to linguistics resources on our program website: <http://ling.bu.edu>. Check it out!

HUB Learning Outcomes:

- **Scientific Inquiry 1:** Students will identify and apply the major concepts used in the natural sciences to explain and quantify the workings of the physical world. This will include an introduction to the way that scientists explain complex systems such as living organisms, the Earth, or the Universe.
- **Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy:** Students will demonstrate, through comparative analysis, an understanding of global diversity as expressed in at least two different languages, cultures, religions, political systems, or societies. Note: A course in this area might, for example, explore the political systems of two countries, while another might explore multiple religious traditions within a single country, and another might explore the literature of a single country and, in assignments, invite comparative analysis of works of other national literary traditions, including those of students' countries of origin.
- **Critical Thinking:**
 - Outcome 1: Students will be able to identify key elements of critical thinking, such as habits of distinguishing deductive from inductive modes of inference, recognizing common logical fallacies and cognitive biases, translating ordinary language into formal argument, distinguishing empirical claims about matters of fact from normative or evaluative judgments, and recognizing the ways in which emotional responses can affect reasoning processes.
 - Outcome 2: Drawing on skills developed in class, students will be able to evaluate the validity of arguments, including their own.

Learning Goals – Students will:

- gain understanding of the **nature of human language**: how it is structured, acquired, and used;
- gain insights into **various aspects of languages** they already know and learn something about languages they have never encountered;
- come to **appreciate the rich heritage** and wide diversity of human language;
- become familiar with the **major subfields of linguistics** and become conversant in the technical vocabulary of talking about language;
- learn how to **analyze linguistic data** in order to discover regularities and draw conclusions about the structure of a wide variety of the world's languages;
- learn how to use linguistic evidence and arguments to **evaluate popular claims** related to language use in the modern world, and to provide informed contributions to contemporary debates about language.

Course Requirements:

- **Attendance in class and in the discussion sections is required, and will affect your grade** (5% of grade). *Class time* will present material that adds to, rather than repeats, what is in the reading. We will spend time actively developing the skills you will need to succeed on homework assignments and in exams. *Discussion sections* provide you additionally with a chance to review and practice in smaller groups material presented in lecture. They are a valuable resource for you, and they are NOT optional.
- Excused absences:
 - a. *Religious observance.* If you are unable to attend class because of religious observance, please notify to Prof. Iovtcheva via email, with a cc to your TF. If a religious conflict prevents you from submitting an assignment on the due date, you are invited to submit the assignment in advance.
 - b. *In case of illness* or other serious issues that may prevent your attending a class, please contact Prof. Iovtcheva and/or your TF by email in advance (or as promptly after the class as possible, depending on circumstances). In such cases, you should make every effort to catch up with what you missed, by obtaining any relevant course materials, coming to office hours to ask any questions you may have.
- Unexcused absences:
Unless you provide the email notification specified in (a) or (b) above, your absence will be considered unexcused. More than 2 unexcused absences during the semester will have an impact on your final grade, and more than 5 unexcused absences will put you in jeopardy of failing the course.
- **Regular problem sets: 40% of grade. (10 Problem sets)**
 - Homework must be turned in by the *beginning* of class on the day that it is due. Please include date and assignment number at the top of each assignment, with your section number in the upper corner of the paper. Staple together multiple pages of a single assignment. Homework must be typed/printed, or written legibly.
 - Lowest score will be dropped. Late homework will not be accepted. If you are unable to attend class, homework may be delivered to your Teaching Fellow *before class* on the date it is due. You can leave this

for your TF in room 113 of 621 Commonwealth Avenue. Alternatively, you may arrange to have another student turn in the assignment for you in class. You are advised not to miss any homework assignments unnecessarily (you can take advantage of the fact that the lowest score will be dropped in an emergency or extraordinary circumstance).

- Homework assignments due on Tuesdays will generally be available from 3:00 pm on the previous Friday (and will also be distributed in Friday sections). Practice exercises due on Fridays will normally be available from that site by first thing on Monday morning.
- *Please save a copy of anything you turn in, just in case it should go astray!*
- **Collaboration on problems in not allowed!** You may have general discussion and you may brainstorm with your fellow students on homework assignments but **you must each write up your homework individually**. Any discussion should help you to think, not to write. Please see the instructor if you have any questions. Writing up your work separately does not mean using separate computers. It means putting your thoughts into words on your own. This means that at the time you produce the written work you hand in, you should not be in the physical or virtual presence of any collaborators and should have nothing other than a computer, your homework sheet, and your textbook plus any class notes.

➤ **Quizzes and Final Exams:**

- There will be 3 in-class quizzes (30%) and one final cumulative exam (25%). If you did well on the weekly problem sets and the 3 quizzes, you should do well on the final examination.
- Make-up exams are given at the discretion of the instructor only in exceptional circumstances (e.g., medical emergency, religious obligation). In the case of a known conflict such as a religious holiday, please provide the instructor with written notice of the conflict well in advance.
- Cumulative final exam will be held **Wednesday May 8. 3-5 pm**

Grading:

40%	Homework assignments [lowest score dropped]
30%	3 in-class quizzes (2/26, 3/26, 4/23)
25%	Final examination (5/8)
5%	Attendance & participation

- **Grade components** will be weighted according to the above percentages to calculate a final grade out of 100, which will correspond to a grade for the course as follows:

$\geq 93.00 = A$	$78.00-79.99 = C+$
$90.00-92.99 = A-$	$73.00-77.99 = C$
$88.00-89.99 = B+$	$70.00-72.99 = C-$
$83.00-87.99 = B$	$60.00-69.99 = D$
$80.00-82.99 = B-$	$< 60.00 = F$

Logistics:

➤ **Readings:** The first priority should be careful reading of the assigned chapters, and you should set aside at least 2 hours for this each week. If you do the reading carefully, you will be in a very good position to answer the homework questions; however, if you try to take a shortcut by skipping the reading and focusing on the homework questions only, this will be a very inefficient and wasteful use of your time, and will probably lead to frustration and unhappiness.

➤ **Communication:** Announcements regarding class cancellation, room change, and other timely news will be communicated via Blackboard to the email address you are registered with (so make sure you are able to receive email messages from Blackboard!). In addition, you are very welcome to come with any questions to the instructor's office hours.

➤ **A Note on Technology:** Students are encouraged to bring their personal computers or tablets to class, but are expected to use any technology respectfully—that is, *for the sole purpose of aiding in the learning of course material while not distracting fellow students*. Although it is tempting when you have a computer to multitask and, e.g., switch between Word, Facebook, and email, note that this is very likely to be detrimental not only to your own learning, but also to the learning of those around you (for more, see Sana et al., 2013, "Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers," *Computers & Education*, 62, 24–31; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.10.003>).

!!! The instructor reserves the right to ban the use of computers in class if they become a hindrance. You will never need your cell phone for note-taking, so please silence it and put it away during class.

➤ **Academic Integrity and Support:** You are responsible for understanding and complying with the BU Academic Conduct Code in this course (to review the Academic Conduct Code, please see <http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>). It is assumed, unless you indicate otherwise, that your work in this course is your own. **Work found to be the product of academic dishonesty can receive no credit, and such misconduct must be reported to the university.** If you are experiencing difficulties in keeping up with the academic demands of this course, please consider contacting your academic advisor (or CAS's Advising Center: 100 Bay State Rd., 4rd floor, CASadv@bu.edu, 617-353-2400).

Schedule:

Note: This schedule is tentative and subject to change.

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
1	Jan 22, 24 Friday	Preliminaries What is Language? What is Linguistic Knowledge? What is Linguistics? Some basics...	READ: CH 1, pp. 1-13 CH 4, pp. 121-128 HW1: Student survey
2	Jan 29, 31 Friday	Morphology (word structure) Morphology	READ: CH 4, pp. 129-141 CH 4, pp. 141-150 HW2: Morphology
3	Feb 5, 7 Friday	Phonetics (consonants) Phonetics (vowels)	READ: CH 2, pp. 17-38 CH 2, pp. 39-44 HW3: Phonetics
4	Feb 12, 14 Friday	Phonology (sound system) Phonology	READ: CH 3, pp. 69-91 CH 3 Appendix 107 -109 HW4: Phonology
5	Feb 19, 21 Friday	NO Class, BU MONDAY CLASSES Phonology Review	READ: CH 3, pp. 102 - 105
6	Feb 26, 28 Friday	Quiz #1 Syntax (sentence structure and categories)	READ: CH 5, pp. 167-172 HW5: Syntax
6	Mar 5, 7 Friday	Syntax (x-bar theory) Syntax (movement)	READ: CH 5, pp. 172-182 CH5, pp. 183-191 HW6: Syntax
7	Mar 12, 14	SPRING RECESS	
8	Mar 19, 21 Friday	Syntax Review Acquisition of syntax; Nature vs. Nurture	READ: CH 9, pp. 347-384

9	Mar 26, 28 Friday	Quiz #2 Semantics (grammar of meaning)	READ: CH 6, pp. 217-227, 235-242 HW7: Semantics
10	Apr 2, 4 Friday	Pragmatics Language Typology and Classification	READ: CH 6, pp. 245-251 CH 7, pp. 261-293 HW 8: Language Typology
11	Apr 9, 11 Friday	Dialectology Sociolinguistics	READ: CH 13, pp. 483-500 CH 13, pp. 501-524 HW9: Dialects & Sociolects
12	Apr 16, 18 Friday	<i>American Tongues, (video)</i> Review	
13	Apr 23, 25 Friday	Quiz #3 Historical linguistics; Language change	READ: CH 8, pp. 297-325 HW10: Language Change
14	Apr 30 , May 2 Friday	Language change; the spread of change Controversies, myths and crazy rumors about language; Conclusion and Review	READ: CH 8, pp 326-337
15	EXAM PERIOD	Cumulative Final Exam: Wednesday May 8th, 3-5 pm	

Make your travel plans accordingly! Requests to take the Final Exam at some time other than the scheduled time must meet the regular conditions for getting credit for a missed class: illness, serious family problems, etc.