

# CAS LX 250: Introduction to Linguistics

Spring 2016

TR 11–12:30, LSE B01

<b>Instructor:</b>	Charles Chang	<b>Office Hours:</b>	Mon 4–5 pm (in person), Mon 5–6 pm (Blackboard), Wed 3–5 pm (in person), or by appointment
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	MW 10–11 or by appt.	M 2–4 or by appt.	TR 1–2 or by appt.

(All teaching fellows' office hours will be in 718 Comm Ave, Room 401B.)

**Course Website:** <on Blackboard Learn>

**Course Description:** What is LINGUISTICS? This course provides a broad introduction to the field of linguistic science and its intersections with the study of the human mind, society, and history. We will begin by situating the study of language within general cognition and learning (language acquisition), and then examine the structure of language at progressively higher levels: the vocal apparatus and the pronunciation of speech sounds (phonetics); the organization of speech sounds into abstract systems (phonology); the construction of words from smaller parts (morphology); the arrangement of words into sentences (syntax); and the determination of meaning (semantics). Next, we will discuss the use of language in daily life: the principles governing comprehension and the flow of conversation (pragmatics and discourse) and the relationship between social factors and the form of language (sociolinguistics). We will then touch upon change: systematic patterns in the way languages develop over time and the information that linguistic facts provide about human history (historical linguistics). Finally, we will return to the mind to examine the relationship between language, thought, and the workings of the brain (psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics, and neurolinguistics). Throughout the semester, we will highlight the interdisciplinary nature of linguistic inquiry, especially as it relates to the fields of anthropology, sociology, psychology, and cognitive science.

## Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will become conversant in the technical vocabulary of talking about language.
2. Students will learn how to analyze linguistic data in order to draw conclusions about the structure of a wide variety of the world's languages.
3. Students will be able to use linguistic evidence and arguments to evaluate popular claims related to language use in the modern world.

**Requirements:** background reading, in-class exercises, homework assignments, midterm examination, final examination.

**Grading:** 45% homework assignments [best 9 scores of 10]  
15% midterm examination  
35% final examination  
5% participation  
[2% extracurricular report]

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:

<i>Course Grade Scale</i>	$\geq 93.00$	=	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

**Required Textbook:** O’Grady, William, John Archibald, Mark Aronoff, and Janie Rees-Miller. (2010). *Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s. [ISBN-10: 0312555288, ISBN-13: 978-0-312-55528-3]

**Other Readings:** 2–3 articles and/or book chapters on topics related to language contact, psycholinguistics, and cognitive linguistics (TBA)

### Expectations for Students:

*Background Reading:* Classes will refer to concepts described in the reading, so it will be most helpful to you to complete the assigned reading *before* coming to class. Class is meant to supplement the reading, and assignments or exams may draw upon data or examples in the reading not explicitly discussed in class. Any required readings beyond the required textbook will be provided via the library’s electronic course reserves or the course website. Please see the Copyright Notice below regarding reading and other course materials.

*Homework Assignments:* It is a good idea to read over a homework assignment early, because the homework assignments are related to the material that will be emphasized in class and on exams. In writing up, keep in mind that these are exercises in applying knowledge and using the rhetoric of the field appropriately. Also, because possible responses to assigned questions may be discussed in class on the day that the homework is due, **homework must be submitted—typed, BOTH in electronic copy (via Blackboard) AND in hard copy (in class)—by the beginning of class (i.e., by 11:00, not 11:30), and late homework cannot be accepted.** Your lowest homework grade will be dropped.

*Examinations:* There will be two sit-down exams. The midterm exam will be given in the seventh week of classes during the regularly scheduled time for this course. The final exam is scheduled

for **Thursday, May 5, 12:30–2:30 PM**, and it will be comprehensive. 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.

*Participation:* Active and constructive participation in class (**including Friday sections, which are required**) is expected, and will be factored into course grades. Given that you cannot participate in class if you are absent, chronic absence from class will affect your final grade. If you find yourself suffering from illness, please (a) go to the doctor, and then (b) alert the instructor.

*Extracurricular Report:* This is an optional report about some aspect of language and linguistics you have experienced outside of class, which may include participation in a research study, experiences in your own life, or things you see in the media, news, movies, etc. Be on the lookout for research studies actively recruiting participants as well as interesting linguistic phenomena<sup>1</sup> that you can comment on in a short report. Once you have chosen your topic, prepare a report of about 600–750 words ( $\approx$  2–3 pages, typed in double-spaced, 12-point font) and turn it in to your TF (in hard copy) by **Thursday, April 21**. Be sure to tie it into class themes: why is the study/experience/news story/etc. interesting, given what we have discussed this semester? Reports will be evaluated on: (1) originality; (2) appropriateness; (3) relevance and contextualization within the framework of the course; (4) accurate use of terms and concepts discussed in class; and (5) clarity of presentation.

**Copyright Notice:** All class materials are copyrighted and may not be redistributed to third parties (not registered for the course) or reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor.

**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/>). Graduate students, take note of the GRS Academic Conduct Code: <http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/grs-forms-policies-procedures/academic-discipline-procedures/>. 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 Office of Academic Advising: 100 Bay State Rd., Room 401, [casadv@bu.edu](mailto:casadv@bu.edu), 617-353-2400).

**Collaboration Policy:** Although you are welcome to brainstorm about the homework with your classmates in a study group, **your written work should be entirely your own**. That is to say, regardless of whether or not you participate in a study group, you are expected to **write up your responses separately (and to explicitly acknowledge any and all collaboration and/or sources consulted)**, in accordance with the Academic Conduct Code. This policy should be unambiguous, but just to prevent any misunderstanding, writing up your responses separately does not include:

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<sup>1</sup>Examples include new or unusual pronunciations; creative use of word-formation processes; complex or ambiguous syntactic structures; use of metaphor; language used to define social context or relations between participants; instances of language change; social stereotypes or attitudes reflected in language form; a language-related news item or controversy presented on radio, television, the Internet, or in print media.

1. writing up your responses during a study group meeting
2. writing up your responses after a study group meeting while talking back and forth remotely to one or more of your collaborators (over the phone, via text, via IM, etc.)
3. writing up your responses while consulting a collaborator's write-up "for reference"
4. effectively drafting a joint write-up during a study group meeting and then later individually "fleshing out" that joint write-up

Writing up your work separately does not mean using separate computers. It means putting your thoughts into words on your own—that is, without simultaneous discussion with your collaborators, without later discussion with your collaborators, without consultation of minutes taken during a study group meeting that are so detailed they basically constitute a joint write-up. In short, 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. Note that if you elect to collaborate on homework and do not feel confident that you can distinguish between jotting down a few notes and creating a joint write-up, you are advised to refrain from taking any written notes during a study group meeting and just pay close attention to your group's discussion. Any collaboration should help you to think, not to write. Please see the instructor if you have any questions.

**Arrangements for Students with Disabilities:** If you require course material in an alternative format or need special accommodations due to a disability, please contact the instructor and the Office of Disability Services (<http://www.bu.edu/disability/>) as soon as possible.

**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, including a weekly online "office" hour (in a chat room on Blackboard), and you may also make an appointment outside of these times if you cannot make it to 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>). Consequently, 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.

**Schedule (with due dates; CL = the textbook)**

DATES	TOPIC & READING	WORK DUE
01/19–01/22	Introduction and phonetics Reading: <i>CL</i> , Chapters 1–2	
01/26–01/29	Phonology Reading: <i>CL</i> , Chapter 3	Homework 1 due 01/26
02/02–02/05	Morphology Reading: <i>CL</i> , Chapter 4	Homework 2 due 02/02
02/09–02/12	Syntax Reading: <i>CL</i> , Chapter 5 (§1–§2)	Homework 3 due 02/09
02/18–02/19	Syntax Reading: <i>CL</i> , Chapter 5 (§3–§5)	Homework 4 due 02/18
02/23–02/26	Semantics and pragmatics Reading: <i>CL</i> , Chapter 6	Homework 5 due 02/25
03/01–03/04	Midterm review Reading: —	MIDTERM EXAM on 03/03
03/08–03/11	SPRING RECESS	
03/15–03/18	Dialectology Reading: <i>CL</i> , Chapter 14 (§1–§4)	
03/22–03/25	Sociolinguistics Reading: <i>CL</i> , Chapter 14 (§6)	Homework 6 due 03/22
03/29–04/01	Historical linguistics Reading: <i>CL</i> , Chapter 7	Homework 7 due 03/29
04/05–04/08	Language typology and universals Reading: <i>CL</i> , Chapter 8	Homework 8 due 04/05
04/12–04/15	Language contact and multilingualism Reading: <i>CL</i> , Chapter 14 (§5)	Homework 9 due 04/12
04/19–04/22	Psycholinguistics and disorders Reading: <i>CL</i> , Chapters 12–13	Optional report due 04/21
04/26–04/29	Language and mind Reading: TBA	Homework 10 due 04/26
04/30–05/02	STUDY PERIOD	
05/03–05/07	EXAM PERIOD	FINAL EXAM on 05/05