

**Boston University Linguistics Program  
College of Arts and Sciences**

**CAS LX 311/GRS LX 611 Morphology: Introduction to the Structures and Shapes  
of Words—Fall 2017**

**Time:** TR 9.30-10.45am

**Location:** CAS 218

**Professor:** Neil Myler

**Email:** myler@bu.edu

**Office:** 621 Commonwealth Ave  
Room B08

**Office hours:** T 2-3.30pm; W 4.30-6pm  
or by appointment

**Course website:** Blackboard Learn

**Course Description:**

What is a word? Do the things we put spaces around when we write correspond to anything in our mental grammars? How does morphology relate to phonology, and to other areas of grammar, such as syntax and semantics? To what extent do the principles governing the structures and forms of words need to be boxed off from other areas of grammar, and to what extent are they symptomatic of deeper principles which hold of the language faculty as a whole? This course aims to answer these and other questions by examining morphological phenomena from across the world's languages, including English and languages which are (at least superficially) very different from it.

**Prerequisites for the course:**

CAS LX 250 Introduction to Linguistics (or equivalent), or permission of the instructor.

**Students completing the course will learn:**

- To identify the meaningful subparts of words and perform morphological analysis on unfamiliar languages
- To understand the major morphological phenomena found in the world's languages
- To analyze morphological and phonological patterns in particular languages, and their interactions
- To represent morphosyntactic structure diagrammatically, and comprehend the relationship between such structure and meaning
- To show an understanding of major theoretical issues surrounding how the components of the human language faculty fit together (i.e., *the architecture of the grammar*), and the role played by the study of morphology in addressing those issues

**Required Reading (Available at Barnes and Noble in Kenmore Square):**

The main textbook for this course, which we will read almost in its entirety, is the following:

- Harley, Heidi. 2006. *English Words: A Linguistic Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

In addition, there will occasionally be readings from other sources- all of these will be posted in pdf form to Blackboard.

Note that the textbook is just the foundation of this course, not the totality of it, and that *you cannot pass this course by reading the textbook alone*. Regular attendance in class is therefore essential- see below on class procedures.

**Course Requirements and grading**

Undergraduates:

- Class participation (10%)
- 9 Assignments (40%)
- Midterm examination (20%)
- Final examination (30%)

Graduate Students:

- Class participation (10%)
- 9 Assignments (30%)
- Midterm examination (20%)
- Final examination (20%)
- Final project (20%)

Class participation will be assessed on the basis of your attendance record and your level of participation in class discussions/in-class exercises.

The Assignments will be a mixture of linguistic problem-solving (i.e., applying analytical techniques and skills learned in class to unfamiliar linguistic data) and short-answer critical thinking questions.

Both the Midterm and the Final examinations will be a mixture of multiple choice, problem-solving and short-answer questions. The Final will not be cumulative, in the sense that pre-Midterm material will not be tested directly on the Final. However, post-Midterm material builds heavily on the conceptual foundations laid down during the first half of the course.

Graduate students will additionally produce a final project based on original fieldwork, due on the last day of class:-

- You will find a speaker of a language you don't know anything about, and gather data on some aspect of the morphology of the language.
- Exception: if you happen to be a native speaker of a very understudied language which you use regularly, then you may work on that language using your own intuitions.
- Your speaker should be a native speaker of the language who uses it regularly.
- You can use only your own data, and you may not consult any existing reference materials on the language. If your consultant is a linguist or a language teacher, make sure they understand not to tell you what the "standard" analysis of the phenomena you are analyzing is.
- You will then analyze your data and write it up as a paper (10-20ish pages), providing full derivations from morphosyntactic structure to the surface phonology.
- You'll meet regularly with me to discuss your project. Set up a meeting with me soon to discuss how to identify a consultant and how to work with one.

**Course policies:**

Copyright. All materials used in this course are copyrighted. This is obvious in the case of the textbook readings, **but it also holds of my lecture slides, exercises, and other materials.** Reproducing class materials, or uploading them to websites, is a copyright infringement.

New assignments are posted to Blackboard by a week before the due date, and are due on Thursdays (there won't be an assignment every week, so read the schedule at the end of this syllabus to keep track of when assignments are due). Completed assignments are to be printed out and turned in at the beginning of the relevant Thursday class. Email submission is not permitted unless you are unable to attend class for some valid reason.

Late assignments are not accepted, except under relevant extenuating circumstances.

Please let me know of any unavoidable absences, whether for religious, personal, or health reasons, as soon as you become aware of them. If you know you will be observing one or more religious holidays this semester, please examine the syllabus to determine which class days you will need to miss, and let me know by email as soon as possible. I will work with you to help you catch up on missed work, in accordance with BU's policy on religious absences:

(<http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/absence-for-religious-reasons/>)

No make-up exams will be granted, unless compelling personal, religious, or medical reasons force you to miss an examination and you have my permission in advance. The decision to grant or refuse a make-up exam is mine. A make-up exam will always be accommodated in the event of a religious absence.

## CAS LX 311/GRS LX 611: Morphology

Procedures. Class time will be used to reinforce, practice, and extend material found in the readings. As well as new material, classes will often involve group exercises designed to reinforce the more difficult concepts.

Classroom etiquette. No cell phones, except when special permission is given to take photographs of the board. Laptops are to be used only for taking notes. Even so, you might be better off leaving your laptop at home and taking hand-written notes:

<http://www.vox.com/2014/6/4/5776804/note-taking-by-hand-versus-laptop>

Extra credit exercises will be granted only at my discretion and, if granted at all, will be made available to the whole class in the form of additional “bonus” sections of assignments or exams.

Academic Integrity. All students are responsible for understanding and complying with the BU Academic Conduct Code, available at:

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>

Graduate students should refer to the GRS Academic Conduct Code, which can be found here: <https://www.bu.edu/cas/files/2017/02/GRS-Academic-Conduct-Code-Final.pdf>

Collaboration. If you decide to form a study group to work together on assignments, your collaboration should not go beyond discussing ideas together. In other words, **you must write up your own assignment separately from the group, using only your own words** (except when quoting other work directly, in which case use citations as standard). The following are all **banned forms of collaboration**:

- Having one or more members of the group produce a “group draft”, or “group essay plan”, which individual members of the group then customize.
- Writing up on separate computers while conferring with each other in real time (whether in person or via skype, chat services, or any other medium).
- Using another student’s complete assignment as a reference when completing your own.

Furthermore, **when assignments are problem-set-based rather than essay-based, I encourage you to try to work alone**, at least at first, before coming together with fellow students. Otherwise, it will be hard for you to tell how much you’ve really understood.

### Grading standards:

93-100	A	78-79.99	C+
90-92.99	A-	73-77.99	C
88-89.99	B+	70-72.99	C-
83-87.99	B	60-69.99	D
80-82.99	B-	<60	F

**Course Overview (subject to change- any updates will be posted to Blackboard)**

Week Dates	Topic	Readings	Deadlines
<b>Week 1</b> Tuesday, Sept. 5	<b>Introduction</b> <i>Course overview &amp; logistics</i> <i>Why morphology?</i>		
Thursday, Sept. 7	<b>The notion “word”</b> <i>What is a word?</i> <i>Identifying the pieces of words</i>	<i>Harley Ch 1 &amp; 4</i>	
<b>Week 2</b> Tuesday, Sept. 12	<b>Derivational morphology</b> <i>The derivation vs. inflection</i> <i>distinction- valid or not?</i> <i>Roots and affixes</i>	<i>Harley Ch 5 &amp; 6</i>	
Thursday, Sept. 14	<i>Structure and meaning in words</i> <i>Introduction to realization rules</i> <i>and allomorphy</i>		Assignment 1 Due (wordhood and morphological analysis)
<b>Week 3</b> Tuesday, Sept. 19	<b>Inflectional morphology</b> <i>Major types of inflection</i> <i>More realization rules and</i> <i>allomorphy</i>		
Friday, Sept. 22	<i>Scope, introduction to the</i> <i>Mirror Principle</i>		Assignment 2 Due (derivational morphology; tree- drawing)
<b>Week 4</b> Tuesday, Sept. 26	<b>Introducing Phonology</b> <i>IPA refresher</i> <i>Phonological rules</i> <i>Underlying forms and surface</i> <i>forms</i>	<i>Harley Ch 2</i>	
Thursday, Sept. 28	<i>Rule ordering</i>		Assignment 3 Due (inflectional morphology; allomorphy; scope)

<p><b>Week 5</b> Tuesday, Oct. 3</p>	<p><b>Phonological Words and the Prosodic Hierarchy</b> <i>Possible and impossible phonological words</i> <i>Syllable structure</i> <i>Phonotactics in English and other Languages</i></p>	<p><i>Harley Ch 3</i></p>	
<p>Thursday, Oct. 5</p>	<p><i>The prosodic hierarchy</i></p>		<p>Assignment 4 (phonology problem sets; rules and rule ordering)</p>
<p><b>Week 6</b> Tuesday, Oct. 10</p>	<p><b>NO CLASS—BU on a Monday Schedule</b></p>		
<p>Thursday, Oct. 12</p>	<p><b>Phonologically Conditioned Allomorphy</b> <i>Phonologically-conditioned suppletive allomorphy (PCSA) vs. pure phonology</i> <i>Typological generalizations concerning PCSA and the order of spell-out</i></p>	<p><i>Reread Harley section 6.3</i></p>	<p>Assignment 5 (phonological words and phonotactics); Practice Midterm Released</p>
<p><b>Week 7</b> Tuesday, Oct. 17</p>	<p><b>The division of labor between allomorphy and phonological rules</b> <i>“Readjustment” rules and semi-irregular forms</i> <i>Practice distinguishing true allomorphy from the action of regular phonology</i></p>		
<p>Thursday, Oct. 19</p>	<p><i>More Division of Labor</i> <i>Practice (In-Class Assignment)</i></p>		<p>No Assignment Due</p>
<p><b>Week 8</b> Tuesday, Oct. 24</p>	<p><b>Midterm review</b> <i>Come prepared with questions based on the practice midterm</i></p>		
<p>Thursday, Oct. 26</p>	<p><b>In-Class Midterm</b></p>		<p>No assignment due- Break for Midterm</p>

<b>Week 9</b> Tuesday, Oct. 31	<b>Discussion of Midterm</b>		
Thursday, Nov. 2	<b>Prosodic Morphology</b> <i>Reduplication</i> <i>Infixation</i> <i>Root and pattern morphology</i>		No assignment due
<b>Week 10</b> Tuesday, Nov. 7	<b>Lexical semantics</b> <i>Content meanings vs. grammatical meanings</i> <i>Entailments</i> <i>Introduction to argument structure</i>	<i>Harley Ch 7</i>	
Thursday, Nov. 9	<b>Morphology and Argument Structure</b> <i>Argument structure-changing morphology</i> <i>The sensitivity of morphology to syntactic argument structure</i> <i>Morphology and the syntactic structure of verb phrases</i>		Assignment 6 Due (Prosodic Morphology)
<b>Week 11</b> Tuesday, Nov. 14	<i>The Mirror Principle redux: In-depth discussion of Muysken 1981</i>	<i>Muysken 1981 (up to page 309)</i>	
Thursday, Nov. 16	<b>The Acquisition of Morphology</b> <i>Learning biases</i> <i>Overgeneralization and undergeneralization</i>	<i>Harley Ch 8;</i>	Assignment 7 Due (Lexical semantics and argument structure)
<b>Week 12</b> Tuesday, Nov. 21	<i>The Wug test: Discussion of Berko (1958)</i>	<i>Berko 1958</i>	
Thursday, Nov. 23	<b>NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Break</b>		No Assignment Due

<b>Week 13</b> Tuesday, Nov. 28	<b>Morphology and Typology</b> <i>Traditional morphological taxonomies</i>	<i>Greenberg 1963;</i> <i>Hall 1992 Ch 2</i>	
Thursday, Nov. 30	<i>The suffixing preference</i> <i>Formal and functional explanations</i>		Assignment 8 Due (Argument structure)
<b>Week 14</b> Tuesday, Dec. 5	<b>Morphology and Psycholinguistics</b> <i>The past tense debate</i> <i>Psycholinguistics continued</i>	<i>Pinker 1999 Ch 4;</i> <i>Embick and Marantz 2005</i>	Practice Final Released
Thursday, Dec. 7	<b>Buffer</b>		Assignment 9 Due (Acquisition)
<b>Week 15</b> Tuesday, Dec. 12	<i>Final Review Session</i>		Work through practice final in advance.
<b>TBA</b>	Final Exam		

**Course Bibliography**

Berko, Jean. 1958. The child's learning of English morphology. *Word* 14:150-177.

Embick, David and Alec Marantz. 2005. Cognitive neuroscience and the English past tense: Comments on the paper by Ullman et al. *Brain and Language* 93:243-247.

Greenberg, Joseph. 1963. Some universals of grammar with particular reference to the order of meaningful elements. Reprinted in Roberts, Ian (ed.) 2006. *Comparative Grammar Vol. 1*. London, Routledge.

Hall, Christopher. 1992. *Morphology and Mind*. London: Routledge.

Harley, Heidi. 2006. *English Words: A Linguistic Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Muysken, Pieter. 1981. Quechua word structure. In F. Heny (ed.) *Filters and Binding*. pp. 279-329. London: Longmans.

Pinker, Steven. 1999. *Words and Rules: The Ingredients of Language*. New York: Harper.