

Boston University College of Arts and Sciences

CAS LX 370/GRS LX 670 Romance Linguistics

Time: MWF 10.10-11

Professor: Neil Myler

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Room B08

Location: MCS B25

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Office hours: W 11.30am-1pm; R 4-5.30pm
or by appointment

Course website: Blackboard Learn

Course objectives:

The Romance family is one of the most widely-spoken and politically important language families on earth, with historical written records going back over two millennia to the common linguistic ancestor, Latin. Given the vast number of living speakers and the richness of the historical record, this language family has formed an important test-bed for the development of theories in historical linguistics, comparative linguistics, and linguistic theory (particularly in the area known as “micro-comparative syntax”). The goal of this course is to introduce students to the history and linguistic characteristics of the Romance family, and to give them some understanding of how data from Romance has contributed to our understanding of human language in general. The first half of the course covers the history of the family, including sound change and grammatical change, from Latin to the present day. The second half of the course covers various issues in the linguistics of modern Romance languages, including auxiliary systems, null subjects, object pronouns, word-order, morphology-phonology interactions, effects of language contact, and Romance-based creole languages. In addition, there is a module introducing students to the grammatical systems of certain less-studied Romance languages.

Prerequisites for the course:

CAS LX 250 Introduction to Linguistics (or equivalent), PLUS prior study of some Romance language or Latin at the 4th semester level or higher (e.g., CAS LF 212 or CAS LI 212 or CAS LS 212 or CAS LP 212 or equivalent), or permission of the instructor.

Students completing the course will learn:

- To demonstrate knowledge of the current state of the Romance language family and the relationships among Romance languages, including less-studied varieties
- To comprehend the major linguistic changes which gave rise to the Romance languages as they are today
- To analyze various aspects of the syntactic structure of modern Romance languages, and how their similarities and differences are accounted for in modern syntactic theory
- To appreciate the importance of micro-comparative evidence in evaluating theories of grammar

- To show an understanding of debates surrounding the postulation of abstract phonological structure to explain certain sound patterns in some Romance languages

Required Reading:

There is no main textbook for this course. Instead, we will be reading a variety of papers and chapters from various books on the topics we will be covering. All readings will be posted to Blackboard Learn well in advance of the class to which they correspond. Since class discussion will often revolve around the readings or presuppose them as a starting point, be sure to complete the readings before class. Keeping up with the reading is essential to passing this course--it is your responsibility to gauge how much time you will need to complete each week's reading, and to budget your time accordingly.

Course Requirements and grading:

Undergraduates (taking as CAS LX 370):

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

Graduate students (taking as GRS LX 670):

- Class participation (10%)
- Assignments (40%)
- Midterm examination (10%)
- Final examination (20%)
- Final essay (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 essay assignments of various lengths.

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.

Graduate students also carry out a final project. This may take one of two forms. The first option is to do a term paper involving original research comparing at least two Romance languages (the research may be in any subfield of linguistics, although if your aim is to produce something that may ultimately become publishable, you should know that I will be best placed to advise you on morphological and syntactic projects). The second is to write a final essay, in response to one of a set of prescribed titles. For the

essay option, a selection of possible titles to choose from, covering every module in the course, will be provided by the instructor by Week 8. Students will write a detailed term paper proposal or essay plan and discuss it with the instructor by the end of Week 10. The final project should be **at least 2000 words in length (excluding the bibliography/bibliographical footnotes)**, and is due on **the last day of class (printed, and with the final word count noted at the beginning or end of the paper)**.

Course policies:

Copyright. All materials used in this course are copyrighted. This is obvious in the case of the 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 the Friday morning before they are due, and are due on the following Friday. Completed assignments are to be printed out and turned in at the beginning of Friday 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.

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 photograph 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 undergraduate students are responsible for understanding and complying with the BU Academic Conduct Code, available at:

<https://www.bu.edu/cas/current-students/undergraduate/academic-conduct-code-2/>
Graduate students should instead consult the GRS Academic and Professional Conduct Code: <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).

If you choose to collaborate on any homework in this way, **you should include an acknowledgement of everyone you collaborated with in a prominent place on your assignment.**

Note that 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.

Finally, **when assignments are problem-set-based rather than essay-based, I encourage you to try to work alone**, at least at first. 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	Topic	Readings	Deadlines
Dates			
Week 1 Friday, Jan 19	Introduction <i>Course overview</i>		
Week 2 Monday, Jan 22	Meet the family <i>Geographical distribution of the Romance languages</i>	<i>Harris 1988</i>	
Wednesday, Jan 24	<i>Family-internal subgrouping</i>		
Friday, Jan 27	<i>Major typological features</i>		Assignment 1 Due (Short-answer questions based on Harris 1988)
Week 3 Monday, Jan 29	The External History of the Romance Languages <i>Latin and the Indo-European language family;</i>	<i>Varvaro 2013</i> <i>Alkire & Rosen 2010 Ch 12</i>	
Wednesday, Jan 31	<i>The rise and fall of the Roman Empire;</i> <i>The emergence of the Romance vernaculars;</i>		
Friday, Feb 2	<i>The colonial period;</i> <i>Nation states and standardization</i>		Assignment 2 Due (Major typological features of Romance)
Week 4 Monday, Feb 5	Sound change from Latin to Romance <i>Vowels</i>	<i>Vincent 1988 pp.1-40</i>	
Wednesday, Feb 7	<i>Vowels cont.; consonants</i>		
Friday, Feb 9	<i>Consonants cont.</i>		Assignment 3 Due (External history of Romance)
Week 5 Monday, Feb 12	Morphosyntactic change from Latin to Romance <i>Word order;</i> <i>Configurationality;</i>	<i>Vincent 1988 pp.40-78</i>	
Wednesday, Feb 14	<i>Case; Loss of case system</i>		
Friday, Feb 16	<i>From synthetic to analytic (?)</i>		Assignment 4 Due (sound change)

Week 6 Monday, Feb 19	President's Day Holiday		
Tuesday, Feb 20	Morphological Change from Latin to Romance <i>Verb paradigms</i>	<i>Alkire & Rosen 2010 Ch 6 & 8</i>	
Wednesday, Feb 21	<i>Number and gender on nouns and adjectives</i>		
Friday, Feb 23	<i>Morphological change continued</i>		Assignment 5 Due (synthetic to analytic?)
Week 7 Monday, Feb 26	Romance languages in contact <i>Lexical borrowing in different Romance languages since Latin;</i>		Practice Midterm Released
Wednesday, Feb 28	<i>Romance-based pidgins and creoles;</i>	<i>DeGraff 2005;</i>	
Friday, March 2	<i>A case-study in contact: Andean Spanish</i>	<i>Coronel-Molina & Rodriguez-Mondoñedo 2012</i>	No Assignment Due (study for midterm)
Monday, March 5	SPRING BREAK		
Wednesday, March 7	SPRING BREAK		
Friday, March 9	SPRING BREAK		
Week 8 Monday, March 12	Summing-up: From Latin to Romance <i>Midterm Review session 1</i>		
Wednesday, March 14	<i>Midterm Review session 2</i>		
Friday, March 16	In-class midterm		No Assignment. Grad student essay titles released.
Week 9 Monday, March 19	Romance morphophonology and abstractness: case studies <i>(Re)introduction to generative phonology</i>		

Wednesday, March 21	<i>(Re)introduction to generative phonology continued</i>		
Friday, March 23	<i>French liaison and nasal vowels;</i>	<i>Selkirk & Vergnaud 1973;</i>	No Assignment (Post midterm break)
Week 10 Monday, March 26	<i>Metaphony in Italian dialects</i>	<i>Loporcaro 2011</i>	Graduate students to meet with instructor this week to discuss essay plan.
Wednesday, March 28	<i>More morphophonology practice</i>		
Friday, March 30	The Common Syntactic Core <i>Word classes and constituency in Romance; Basic structure of the clause and the nominal domain;</i>	<i>Watch video lecture before class</i>	Assignment 6 (Phonology)
Week 11 Monday, April 2	Head-movement and Romance word order	<i>Kayne 1996; Johnson 2004 (excerpt)</i>	
Wednesday, April 4	<i>Clitic placement and clitic climbing;</i>	<i>Myler 2008</i>	
Friday, April 6	<i>More syntax practice</i>		Assignment 7 (morphophonology and abstractness)
Week 12 Monday, April 9	Null Subjects <i>The rise (and fall?) of the null subject parameter;</i>	<i>Roberts & Holmberg 2010, pp.3-18;</i>	
Wednesday, April 11	<i>Subject clitics;</i>	<i>Poletto 2000 pp.3-15;</i>	
Friday, April 13	<i>Syntax Practice; HAVE/BE Alternations</i>	<i>McFadden 2007 (optional)</i>	Assignment 8 (Romance Syntax)
Week 13 Monday, April 16	Lesser-studied Romance languages <i>Rhaeto-Romance</i>	<i>Haiman & Benincà 1992 Introduction</i>	
Wednesday, April 18	<i>Romansh tree-drawing practice</i>		
Friday, April 20	<i>Occitan</i>	<i>Wheeler 1988;</i>	Assignment 9 (More Romance Syntax)

Week 14 Monday, April 23	Lesser-studied Romance languages <i>Sardinian</i>	<i>Jones 1988;</i>	Practice final released online
Wednesday, April 25	<i>Romanian</i>	<i>Mallinson 1988;</i>	
Friday, April 27	<i>More on Romance creoles</i>	<i>Reading TBA</i>	
Week 15 Monday, April 30	Buffer		
Wednesday, May 2	Final Review <i>Come prepared with questions based on the practice final</i>		Work through practice final in advance. Graduate students' essays are due.

Course Bibliography

Alkire, Ti and Carol Rosen. 2010. *Romance Languages: A Historical Introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

Coronel-Molina, S. and Rodríguez-Mondoñedo, M. 2012. Language contact in the Andes and Universal Grammar. *Lingua* 122:447-460.

DeGraff, Michel. 2005. Morphology and Word Order in “Creolization” and Beyond. In Cinque, Guglielmo and Richard S. Kayne (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Syntax*. pp.293-372. Oxford University Press.

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Jones, Michael. 1988. Sardinian. In Harris, Martin & Nigel Vincent (eds.) *The Romance Languages*. pp.314-350. London: Routledge.

Kayne, Richard S. 1996 Microparametric Syntax. Some Introductory Remarks. Reprinted in Kayne, Richard. S. 2000. *Parameters and Universals*. pp.3-39. Oxford University Press.

Loporcaro, Michele. 2011. Morphological complexity without abstractness: Italo-Romance Metaphony. *Poznań Studies in Contemporary Linguistics* 47.2: 177-202.

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Varvaro, Alberto. 2013. Latin and the making of the Romance languages. In Maiden, Martin, John Charles Smith, and Adam Ledgeway (eds.) *The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages Vol. 2: Contexts*. pp.6-56. Cambridge University Press.

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