

BOSTON UNIVERSITY LINGUISTICS
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

CAS LX 532 Romance Linguistics- Fall 2015

Time: Tuesday & Thursday 11-12.30

Location: TBA

Professor: Neil Myler

Email: myler@bu.edu

Office: 621 Commonwealth Ave
Room B08

Office hours: TBA

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:

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

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.

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 on Thursday mornings, and are due on the following Thursday. Completed assignments are to be printed out and turned in at the beginning of 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.

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. 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:

<http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/forms-policies-procedures/academic-discipline-procedures/>

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. Otherwise, it will be hard for you to tell how much you’ve really understood.

Grading standards:

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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	60-60.99	D
80-82.99	B-	< 60	F

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

Week Dates	Topic	Readings	Deadlines
Week 1	Introduction <i>Class logistics</i> <i>Course overview</i> Meet the family <i>Geographical distribution of the Romance languages</i> <i>Family-internal subgrouping</i> <i>Major typological features</i>	<i>Harris 1988</i>	
Week 2	The External History of the Romance Languages <i>Latin and the Indo-European language family;</i> <i>The rise and fall of the Roman Empire;</i> <i>The emergence of the Romance vernaculars;</i> <i>The colonial period;</i> <i>Nation states and standardization</i>	<i>Varvaro 2013</i> <i>Akire & Rosen 2010</i> <i>Ch 12</i>	Assignment 1 Due (Short-answer questions based on Harris 1988)
Week 3	Sound change from Latin to Romance <i>Vowels</i> <i>Consonants</i>	<i>Vincent 1988 pp.1-40</i>	Assignment 2 Due (short-answer questions based on previous week's reading)
Week 4	Morphosyntactic change from Latin to Romance <i>Word order;</i> <i>Configurationality;</i> <i>Loss of case system;</i> <i>From synthetic to analytic (?)</i>	<i>Vincent 1988</i> <i>pp.40-78</i>	Assignment 3 Due (exercises on sound change)
Week 5	Morphological Change from Latin to Romance <i>Verb paradigms</i> <i>Number and gender on nouns and adjectives</i>	<i>Akire & Rosen 2010</i> <i>Ch 6 & 8</i>	Assignment 4 Due (morphosyntactic change)

Week 6	Romance languages in contact <i>Lexical borrowing in different Romance languages since Latin;</i> <i>Romance-based pidgins and creoles;</i> <i>A case-study in contact: Andean Spanish</i>	<i>DeGraff 2005;</i> <i>Coronel-Molina & Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2012</i>	Assignment 5 Due (morphological change) Practice Midterm released
Week 7	Summing-up: From Latin to Romance <i>Overview of major changes</i> <i>Mid-term review session</i>		No Assignment Due (study for midterm)
Week 8	Midterm exam and discussion of midterm		No Assignment Due
Week 9	The Common Syntactic Core <i>Word classes and constituency in Romance;</i> <i>Basic structure of the clause and the nominal domain;</i> <i>Head-movement and Romance word order</i>	<i>Kayne 1996;</i> <i>Benincà & Poletto 2005</i>	No Assignment Due
Week 10	Object Clitics <i>Clitic placement and clitic climbing;</i> <i>Clitic doubling;</i> <i>Clitic clusters and the PCC</i>	<i>Myler 2008</i>	Assignment 6 (Tree Drawing)
Week 11	Null Subjects <i>The rise (and fall?) of the null subject parameter;</i> <i>Subject clitics;</i> Auxiliary systems <i>HAVE/BE Alternations</i> <i>Argument-structure-based systems;</i> <i>Person-based systems</i>	<i>Roberts & Holmberg 2010, pp.3-18;</i> <i>Poletto 2000 pp.3-15;</i> <i>McFadden 2007</i>	Assignment 7 (Tree drawing; approaches to cliticization)
Week 12	Romance morphophonology and abstractness: case studies <i>French liaison and nasal vowels;</i> <i>Metaphony in Italian dialects</i>	<i>Selkirk & Vergnaud 1973;</i> <i>Loporcaro 2011</i>	Assignment 8 (Subject clitics; auxiliary systems)

Week 13	Lesser-studied Romance languages <i>Occitan</i> <i>Sardinian</i> <i>Romanian</i> <i>Rhaeto-Romance</i>	<i>Wheeler 1988;</i> <i>Jones 1988;</i> <i>Mallinson 1988;</i> <i>Haiman & Benincà 1992 Introduction</i>	Assignment 9 (Essay prompt on morphophonology and abstractness) Practice final released
Week 14	Final Review		No Assignment Due (work through practice final in advance)
TBA	FINAL EXAM		

Course Bibliography

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

Benincà, Paola and Cecilia Poletto. 2005. On some descriptive generalizations in Romance. In Cinque, Guglielmo and Richard S. Kayne (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Syntax*. pp.221-258. 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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Poletto, Cecilia. 2000. *The Higher Functional Field: Evidence from Northern Italian Dialects*. Oxford University Press.

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Selkirk, Elizabeth O. & Jean-Roger Vergnaud. 1973. How abstract is French phonology? *Foundations of Language* 10.2: 249-254.

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.

Vincent, Nigel. 1988. Latin. In Harris, Martin & Nigel Vincent (eds.) *The Romance Languages*. pp.26-78. London: Routledge.

Wheeler, Max. 1988. Occitan. In Harris, Martin & Nigel Vincent (eds.) *The Romance Languages*. pp.246-278. London: Routledge.