

# How Language Works

(Formerly *Linguistic Science*)

ENGL 3371 (Spring 2020)

Texas Tech University

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**Class Meetings:** M/W/F 2:00pm–2:50pm  
*Section 001* English & Philosophy Building, Room 103

**Office Hours:** M/W/F, 12:00pm–12:50pm, and by appointment  
Be sure to reserve a slot: <http://www.aaronbraver.com/officehours>

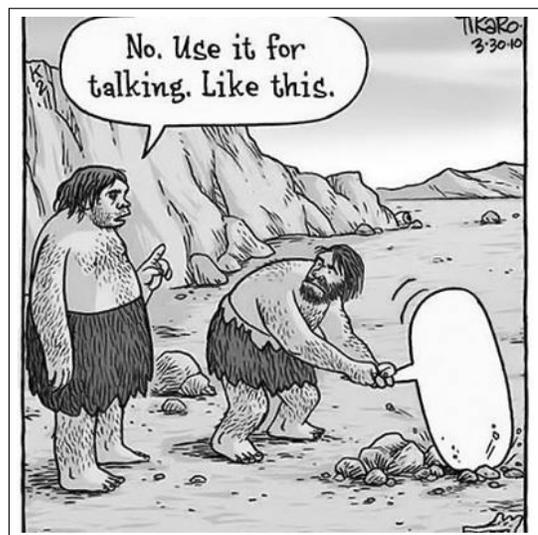
**Course website:** On Blackboard (<http://ttu.blackboard.com>)

## About this course

Human languages are complicated and diverse—but also highly systematic. This course provides a basic introduction to these systematic, structural properties of human language, as illuminated by modern linguistic theory. We will examine the methods employed by linguists, as well as some of the key results from this work. We will also consider some of the social, philosophical, and cognitive aspects of human language.

### By the end of this course, you should be able to...

- Explain the properties that make human language unique
- Find patterns and regularities in linguistic data
- Infer from these patterns what kind of knowledge all language-speakers must share
- Understand the basics of linguistic theory and how this theory explains the fundamental properties of human language



This course is *not* about ‘proper’ grammar or how to learn hundreds of languages (in fact, we’ll see that *linguistics* is not about these things at all).

# Materials

## Required Course Textbook

*Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics, 12th Edition.* Ohio State University Press. ISBN: 0814252702.

- Please be sure to get the *12th* edition (it has a big '12' on it). Other editions will *not* be usable for this course.

## Handouts

Handouts for each unit will be posted on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to bring the appropriate handouts with you to every class meeting, either in digital or dead tree format.

# Assignments and Grading

## Homework

There will be approximately one homework assignment per unit.

Work must be typed and submitted as a PDF via the course Blackboard site (too many linguistic fonts go wrong in Word documents). Work submitted in another format will receive a zero.

Collaboration is permitted on homework assignments under the following conditions:

Each person must write up and hand in their own assignment.

Any answers, explanations, or reasoning in the assignment must be written in *your own words*.

If you and another person hand in nearly identical assignments (as judged by me), I reserve the right to require you to work alone from then on.

You must clearly indicate at the top of the assignment who you collaborated with.

A guiding principle: You must always do your own work—this means that you must state things in your own words and show that you understand any ideas that you got from another source.

## In-class exercises

We will occasionally have in-class exercises and problem sets. These cannot be made up if you are absent.

## Final exam

We will have a take-home final exam, due on Friday 5/8 at 11:59pm.

## Grade breakdown

Category	Percent	Numerical score	Letter grade
Homework	50%	95–100%	A+
In-class assignments	10%	90–94.99%	A
Participation	10%	85–89.99%	B+
Take-home final	30%	80–84.99%	B
		75–79.99%	C+
		70–74.99%	C
		65–69.99%	D+
		60–64.99%	D
		>60%	F

## Policies and expectations

### Attendance, punctuality, and participation

You are expected to come to (every) class and to participate fully in class discussions and exercises. Please make an effort to arrive on time. (Repeat tardiness may be counted as an absence.)

If you know you will be absent, *email me ahead of time*. If the absence is documented and justifiable, it may be excused (at the discretion of the instructor).

Participation counts for 10% of your grade in this course. A student who attends class regularly and does not disrupt other students, but does not otherwise contribute, will earn at best a C for this category.

Ways to earn a <i>better</i> participation grade	Ways to earn a <i>worse</i> participation grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attempt to answer questions (even if you're not sure!)</li><li>• Ask questions about the material being discussed or course readings</li><li>• Share comments about relevant outside information</li><li>• Come to office hours</li><li>• Email me with questions and comments about course content</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have unexcused absences</li><li>• Frequently arrive to class late</li><li>• Fail to pay attention during class</li><li>• Use electronic devices for non-course activities</li><li>• Engage in disruptive or distracting behavior</li><li>• Disrespect others</li></ul>

After 5 unexcused absences, you will automatically receive an F for the course.

### **Religious holy days**

Texas law requires institutions of higher education to excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day. The student shall also be excused for time necessary to travel.

An institution may not penalize the student for the absence and allows for the student to take an exam or complete an assignment from which the student is excused. The student should make up any missed work.

TTU policy indicates that a student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known to the instructor prior to the absence.

See OP 34.19 at <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/OP34.19.pdf> for more information.

### **Late work**

Assignments must be submitted on time—this is at the start of class, unless otherwise specified. *Assignments turned in after the deadline will receive zero points.* There is no partial credit for late work.

This course has a one-time no-questions-asked pass on this policy applicable only to homework assignments (and not to in-class assignments or exams). To use it, you must email the instructor *before* the original deadline, and turn in the assignment no later than one class meeting after the original deadline.

### **Extraordinary circumstances**

Life is complicated—illnesses and injuries happen. If these or other life events are interfering with your ability to meet course requirements, please *let me know as soon as possible*.

### **Email**

Some course-related announcements will be made over email. These messages will be sent to your TTU address, which you should check at least daily. Failure to check your TTU email will not excuse you from any requirements assigned via email.

Please include the course number in the subject line of any emails you send me (as well as an actual subject). If you are sending from an account other than your TTU address, please include your full name in the message body.

### **Civility in the classroom and electronic devices**

Students are expected to maintain a polite, civil environment that is conducive to learning for everyone. This includes refraining from non-approved uses of electronic devices, or use of such devices that becomes distracting for other students.

Breaches of decorum may result in expulsion from the classroom or consequences for your final grade.

## **Accommodations for students with disabilities**

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements, should contact the instructor as soon possible to make the necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact the Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or call (806) 742-2405.

## **Academic integrity**

Cheating and plagiarism will be treated very seriously. As a general policy, all such cases will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct with a recommendation for the fullest sanctions, including failure for the course. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with TTU's statement on academic integrity, which is available at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentconduct/academicinteg.php>, and related policies in the Student Handbook Part I, Section B, Subsection 1 (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/handbook/conduct.php>) and Part II, Section B (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/handbook/community.php>).

You are encouraged to form study groups outside of class to help you understand the course material and discuss readings, however you may not collaborate on homework assignments.

If you have any questions, please consult the instructor, a dean, or the University's academic integrity policy.

## **TTU resources for a safe, inclusive campus**

Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations are not tolerated by the University. Report any incidents to the Office for Student Rights & Resolution, (806)-742-SAFE (7233) or file a report online at <http://titleix.ttu.edu/students>.

I identify as an ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) community, and I am available to listen and support you in an affirming manner. I can assist in connecting you with resources on campus to address problems you may face pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could interfere with your success at Texas Tech. Please note that additional resources are available through the Office of LGBTQIA within the Center for Campus Life, Student Union Building Room 201, <http://www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu>, (806) 742-5433.

Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are:

- TTU Student Counseling Center, (806) 742-3674, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/> (provides confidential support on campus)
- TTU 24-hour Crisis Helpline, (806) 742-5555 (assists students who are experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor)
- Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center, (806) 763-7273, <http://voiceofhopelubbock.org> (24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence)
- The Risk, Intervention, Safety and Education (RISE) Office, (806) 742-2110, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/rise/> (provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness)
- Texas Tech Police Department, (806) 742-3931, <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ttpd/> (to report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus)

## Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Please pay attention for announcements in class and via email.

### Introduction

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>	<u>Reading/Assignments</u>
W 01/15	Introduction Syllabus	
F 01/17	What is linguistics?	·LF 1.0–1.3
M 01/20	MLK Day—No classes	
W 01/22	Design features of language	·LF 1.4
F 01/24	Modality	·LF 1.5
M 01/27	Animal communication	·LF 14.0–14.3
W 01/29	Special topic TBD	

### Phonetics

F	01/31	What is phonetics? The vocal tract	·HW1 (Intro) due ·LF 2.0–2.2
M	02/03	Consonants of English	
W	02/05	Vowels of English	·LF 2.3
F	02/07	Sounds not in English Suprasegmental features	·LF 2.4–2.5
M	02/10	Acoustic phonetics Transcription	·LF 2.6
W	02/12	Transcription cont'd	
F	02/14	Special topic TBD	

### Phonology

M	02/17	What is phonology? Phonotactic constraints	·HW2 (Phonetics) due ·LF 3.0–3.1
W	02/19	Phonemes and allophones	·LF 3.2
F	02/21	Phonological rules and processes	·LF 3.3
M	02/24	Syllables Tackling phonological puzzles	·LF 3.5
W	02/26	Special topic TBD	

### Morphology

F	02/28	What is morphology? How do words work?	·HW3 (Phonology) due ·LF 4.0–4.1
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M	03/02	Morphemes Morphological processes	·LF 4.2
W	03/04	Morphological systems	·LF 4.3
F	03/06	Hierarchical structure of words	·LF 4.4–4.5
M	03/09	Special topic TBD	
<b>Syntax</b>			
W	03/11	What is syntax? Syntactic properties	·HW4 (Morphology) due ·LF 5.0–5.2
F	03/13	Constituency Syntactic categories	·LF 5.3–5.4
M	03/16	Spring break	
W	03/18	Spring break	
F	03/20	Spring break	
M	03/23	Building phrases	·LF 5.5
W	03/25	Ambiguity	
F	03/27	Online activity—no class meeting	
M	03/30	Online activity—no class meeting	
W	04/01	Special topic TBD	
<b>Semantics</b>			
F	04/03	What is semantics?	·HW5 (Syntax) due ·LF 6.0–6.1

M	04/06	Lexical semantics	·LF 6.2
W	04/08	The truth Compositional semantics	·LF 6.3–6.4
F	04/10	Assertion and presupposition	
M	04/13	No classes	
W	04/15	Special topic TBD	
<b>Language and culture</b>			
F	04/17	What is language and culture? Linguistic anthropology	· <b>HW6 (Semantics) due</b> ·LF 11.0–11.1
M	04/20	Language and thought	·LF 11.2
W	04/22	Language and power Politeness	·LF 11.3–11.4
F	04/24	Special topic TBD	
<b>Other areas of linguistics</b>			
M	04/27	Writing systems	·LF 15.015.3
W	04/29	Historical linguistics	·LF 13.0–13.2
F	05/01	The strange human brain	· <b>Homework 7 (Language and Culture) due</b>
M	05/04	Final exam review	
F	05/08		· <b>Final exam due at 11:59pm</b>