

How Language Works

ENGL 3371 (Fall 2018)
Texas Tech University

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Class Meetings: M 6:00pm–8:50pm
Via Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/279353440>)

Office Hours: Via Skype: by appointment
On Campus: M/W 2:00pm–2:50pm. Please reserve a slot via
<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).

Course structure

Video lectures and handouts to learn new material

Each week, one or more video lectures will be posted to Blackboard, along with accompanying handouts. Before each week's class meeting, it is your responsibility to view the video lectures and follow along with the handouts. Some weeks there will also be small assignments to complete as you watch the videos.

Weekly Zoom meeting to discuss and work through problems together

Each Monday at 6:00pm we will meet via Zoom. You must be signed into Zoom by that time so that we can begin without delay. (See the course Blackboard page for information about setting up a Zoom account and necessary peripherals.)

In order to participate in our weekly Zoom meetings, and to earn full participation points, you will need:

- A computer with stable, high speed internet. You may not connect to class via a phone.
- A webcam.
- Headphones with microphone.
- A quiet place with no distractions.

Each week, you will join our Zoom meeting by visiting <https://zoom.us/j/279353440> (you may want to bookmark this page). If not already downloaded, you will receive a prompt to download and install the Zoom app. Enter your full name when prompted, then click "join", followed by "join audio by computer".

Note that Zoom tells me whether or not the Zoom window is focused on your computer, so please do not engage in other activities during our meetings.

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 download the handouts for use while watching the video lectures, and have them available during our weekly meetings.

Requirements, assignments and grading

Participation, which is required for successful learning

You are accountable for everything we discuss in our weekly Zoom meetings. Participation counts for 10% of your grade in this course; a student who attends meetings regularly, but does not otherwise contribute, will earn at best a C for this category.

Homework to provide hands-on practice with classroom concepts

There will be 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 with other students in the course is permitted on (only) 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.

Small assignments to provide focus during video lectures

Some weeks' video lectures will be accompanied by a small assignment, which you should complete while you watch the lectures. Small assignments, like homework assignments, should be submitted to Blackboard as a PDF file before the start of class on the due date.

Final exam to assess your knowledge in a non-collaborative environment

We will have a final exam, which will be due on Monday 12/10 at 11:59pm.

Grade breakdown

Category	Percent
Homework	50%
Small assignments	20%
Final exam	20%
Participation	10%

Numerical score	Letter grade
95–100%	A+
90–94.99%	A
85–89.99%	B+
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).

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 small assignments or the final exam). 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

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.

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

M 8/27 Technology setup
Syllabus
What is linguistics

M	9/3	No class - Labor Day	
M	9/10	Design features of language Modality Animal communication	·LF 1.0–1.5 ·LF 17.0–17.2, 17.4–17.6 ·LF 14.0–14.3
Phonetics			
M	9/17	What is phonetics? The vocal tract Consonants of English Vowels of English	·HW 1 (Introduction) due ·LF 2.0–2.3
M	9/24	Sounds not in English Suprasegmental features Acoustic phonetics Transcription	·LF 2.4–2.6
Phonology			
M	10/1	What is phonology? Phonotactic constraints Phonemes and allophones Phonological rules and processes	·HW 2 (Phonetics) due ·LF 3.0–3.3
M	10/8	Syllables Tackling phonological puzzles	·LF 3.5
Morphology			
M	10/15	What is morphology? How do words work? Morphemes Morphological processes	·HW 3 (Phonology) due ·LF 4.0–4.2
M	10/22	Morphological systems Hierarchical structure of words	·LF 4.3–4.5

Syntax

M 10/29 What is syntax?
Syntactic properties
Constituency
Syntactic categories
·HW 4 (Morphology) due
·LF 5.0–5.4

M 11/5 Building phrases
Ambiguity
·LF 5.5

M 11/12 Special topic (TBD)
·HW 5 (Syntax) due

Semantics

M 11/19 What is semantics?
Lexical semantics
The truth
Compositional semantics
Assertion and presupposition
Scope relations
·LF 6.0–6.4

Language and culture

M 11/26 What is language and culture?
Linguistic anthropology
Language and thought
Language and power
Politeness
·LF 11.0–11.4

M 12/3 Final exam review
·HW 6 (Semantics) due

M 12/10
·Final exam due by 11:59pm
