

LING 201: INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTIC THEORY

Fall 2020

Instructor:	Kaden Holladay	Times:	TuTh 1:00 – 2:15PM, EST
Email:	kholladay@linguist.umass.edu	Place:	Virtual, via Zoom

1 Logistics

Meeting times: We will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00PM to 2:15PM. Our meetings will be held via Zoom; the link to the meetings may be found on Moodle. Please have Zoom downloaded and be familiar with using the program before our first class.

Course page: Our course’s webpage is a Moodle. Head to <http://moodle.umass.edu>, log in with your UMass NetID, and select “LINGUIST201” in the left hand column. Moodle is your go-to resource for all course materials and information. Your homework assignments will be uploaded to Moodle, and the exams will be administered via Moodle.

Office hours: My office hours will be held Thursdays from 2:30PM to 4:30PM. A Zoom link to office hours will be found on the Moodle. Office hours are a good place to get help with course material you may be struggling with. If you have a scheduling conflict (for example, you have another class during my office hours), you can [email me](#) to set up a one-on-one meeting at another time.

Important Dates:

Add/drop ends	Sept 7, 2020
Midterm exam 1	Oct 6, 2020 (in class)
Midterm exam 2	Nov 3, 2020 (in class)
Final exam	Dec 4, 2020 (11:30am – 1:30pm)

2 Course content and delivery

This course is an introduction to the science of human language. It satisfies the university’s R2 “analytic reasoning” requirement; analytic reasoning is taught through the examination of linguistic data. We will see first how the grammars of languages can be treated as formal and logical systems. We’ll then learn some of the principles responsible for the behavior of these grammatical systems, and learn how to apply them to new linguistic data.

Linguistic science breaks up the stream of sounds (or signs, in signed languages) into discrete building blocks, and then formulates laws that determine how those building blocks combine to form meaningful units. In addition to learning some of those laws, we will learn the methods linguists have developed for discovering them. By the end of the course, you will be able to do basic linguistic analysis – modeling the processes that make a continuous stream of sound or sign carry the structures that humans interpret as meaning. You will also be able to express the laws you deduce from linguistic materials using the formalisms developed by linguists.

This course does not have a textbook. In lieu of readings, you’ll watch a series of pre-recorded lectures. These are delivered by Kyle Johnson, a professor of linguistics at UMass, and are the primary vehicle for course content. This is thus a “flipped classroom”, where most material is delivered asynchronously. However, important discussion and review will be presented during the synchronous meetings, so it’s important that you attend.

Homework will usually be assigned on Tuesdays, and will usually be due the following Tuesday before class. Collaboration is encouraged, but copied or co-authored assignments will not be accepted – that is, you must write up and hand in your assignments separately.

Course Outline (subject to change): We will begin by studying sound with the topics of **phonetics and phonology**. You can think of phonetics as the study of language sounds, and phonology as the study of our mental representations of those sounds. Subsequently, we'll move on to **morphology**, which studies the makeup of words. Then comes **syntax**, the study of sentence structure (we'll look also at how syntax relates to meaning). To finish, we'll have a quick look at language **typology** (which investigate the ways in which the world's languages vary – and the ways they *don't* vary) and **acquisition** (which addresses questions of language learnability from a child's perspective).

- █ 08/25: Introduction
- █ 08/27: Articulatory phonetics

- █ 09/01: The International Phonetic Alphabet • **Assignment 1 given out**
- █ 09/03: Acoustic phonetics

- █ 09/08: Phonotactic constraints • **Assignment 1 due; Assignment 2 given out**
- █ 09/10: Syllabification

- █ 09/15: Allophones and phonemes • **Assignment 2 due; Assignment 3 given out**
- █ 09/17: Features

- █ 09/22: Allophonic rules • **Assignment 3 due; Assignment 4 given out**
- █ 09/24: Allophony practice

- █ 09/29: Coda constraints • **Assignment 4 due; Assignment 5 given out**
- █ 10/01: Review for Midterm 1

- █ 10/06: Midterm 1
- █ 10/08: Affixes and compounds

- █ 10/13: Headedness and inflection • **Assignment 5 due; Assignment 6 given out**
- █ 10/15: Introduction to Syntax

- █ 10/20: Phrase structure rules • **Assignment 6 due; Assignment 7 given out**
- █ 10/22: Ambiguity

- █ 10/27: Parsing and constituency • **Assignment 7 due**
- █ 10/29: Movement • **Assignment 8 given out**

- █ 11/03: Midterm 2
- █ 11/05: Typology

- █ 11/10: Learnability • **Assignment 8 due; Assignment 9 given out**
- █ 11/12: Acquisition of phonology

- █ 11/17: Acquisition of syntax • **Assignment 9 due**
- █ 11/19: Final exam review

3 Grades, policies, expectations

Things that get graded: Homework (35%), Midterm 1 (15%), Midterm 2 (15%), Final (35%).

Attendance: Regular attendance is essential and expected. If you must miss class, please email me beforehand with an explanation of your absence.

Academic honesty: UMass has an Academic Honesty Policy which was established to ensure that the learning environment at the university is honest and fair. The policy is designed to provide faculty and students with options for handling incidents. The Academic Honesty Board handles all cases of academic dishonesty on campus. Formal definitions of academic dishonesty, examples of various forms of dishonesty, and the procedures which faculty must follow to penalize dishonesty are contained in the Academic Honesty Policy. There are two main pathways for resolving cases where dishonesty is suspected: the informal resolution and the formal charge. Both these paths require that the faculty member first inform the student of the concern and offer a meeting. For more information, go to <http://www.umass.edu/honesty/>.

Equal opportunity policy: The University of Massachusetts Amherst and I are committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.