

Linguistics 1: Introduction to Linguistics

Spring semester 2013

Course information:

- TR 2:40–3:55, Science Center L26
- course Moodle website accessible via <http://moodle.swarthmore.edu>

Instructor: Aaron Dinkin

- e-mail: adinkin1@swarthmore.edu
- office hours: TR 10:30–1:30; F 10:30–12:00 and 1:00–4:30
- office location: Phonetics Lab, Pearson 114

Course description:

The goals of this course are to reach a basic understanding of what it is speakers know when they know a language, and the techniques used by linguists to systematically investigate this knowledge. We will spend some time examining each of the major subfields of linguistics, each focusing on a particular aspect of the study of language, including sound systems, the structure of words and phrases, the meanings of sentences, and how language changes over time and varies from situation to situation.

Assignments:

This course is a writing class, which means that the homework assignments will often (not always) require you to compose your answers in essay-like coherent prose. The motivation behind this is to teach you to write papers with strong arguments and convincing evidence supporting your claims; this is a skill that can be applied to all other academic disciplines. Homework will usually be assigned on Thursdays and due the following Thursday. You are welcome to collaborate with classmates, but all assignments must be written up individually.

Textbook

The textbook for the class is *Language Files* (11th edition, 2011) by Vedrana Mihalicek & Christin Wilson (eds.), published by The Ohio State University Press. This may be used as a reference on some topics and additional reading; however, most course material will be in the lecture notes.

Course Requirements:

- Attendance and participation: 10%
- Midterm exams: 30%
- Final exam: 30%
- Homework assignments: 30%

Approximate calendar of topics and textbook chapters

Introduction		<i>Language Files 1</i>
January 22	What is language?	
January 24	What is linguistics?	
Phonetics		<i>Language Files 2</i>
January 29	Articulation and consonants	
January 31	Vowels	
February 5	Beyond English phonetics	
Phonology		<i>Language Files 3</i>
February 7	Phonemes and allophones	
February 12	Phonological rules and features	
February 14	Finding phonological rules	
February 19	Syllables and phonotactics	
February 21	Midterm exam 1	
Morphology		<i>Language Files 4</i>
February 26	Morphemes and allomorphs	
February 28	Inflection and derivation	
Syntax		<i>Language Files 5</i>
March 5	Constituency and categories	
March 7	Phrase structure <i>This is when Spring Break is</i>	
March 19	Phrase structure, continued	
March 21	Movement	
March 26	Guest lecture: TBA	
Semantics		<i>Language Files 6</i>
March 28	Meanings of words	
April 2	Compositional semantics	
April 4	Pragmatics	<i>Language Files 7</i>
April 9	Midterm exam 2	
Historical linguistics		<i>Language Files 13</i>
April 11	Language change and families	
April 16	Comparative reconstruction	
April 18	Comparative reconstruction, continued	
April 23	Morphological change	
Sociolinguistics		<i>Language Files 10</i>
April 25	Variation and dialects	
April 30	Sociolinguistic concepts and case studies	
May 2	Conclusion	