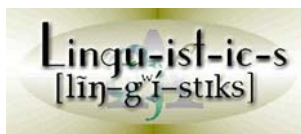
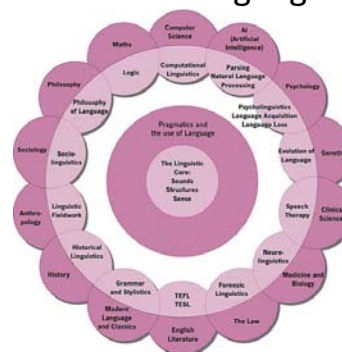


LNGT0101 Introduction to Linguistics



Lecture #1 – Part I
Sept 8th, 2014

Welcome to the fascinating world of human language!



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Who we are and why we're here

- Let's know who we are first.
- Now, let's talk about why we're here.
- In your small groups, list at least five topics that interest you about language.

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Course information and administrivia

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Logistics

- Class meets twice a week, on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 12:15pm to 1:30, at Sunderland Language Center room #130.

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Class website

- Class website is here:
<http://sites.middlebury.edu/Ingt101fall2014/>
- This is where all information pertinent to this class is posted, including the syllabus, assigned readings, links to articles and video-clips, etc. Homework assignments and exams will be posted there as well for you to download. So, check there often.

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Instructor

- Usama Soltan
Office: Farrell House, #206
- Email: usoltan@middlebury.edu
- Office phone extension: x5869
- Office Hours: Tuesday from 1:30 to 3pm, and Thursday from 10:30 to 12noon, and by appointment (e-mail or call to make an appointment).

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Course objectives: Content-wise

- Introducing linguists' major findings over the last 60 years or so regarding the study of human language in the areas of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, cross-linguistic variation, first language acquisition, sociolinguistics, language change, historical linguistics, pidgins and creoles, language endangerment, language and the brain, as well as human language vs. animal communication systems.

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Course objectives: Learning skills targeted

- Problem-solving skills: Find patterns in a set of data from familiar and unfamiliar languages; draw generalizations from a set of data; make a hypothesis to explain a linguistic pattern and revise it in light of further data.
- Formalize linguistic facts into concise rules and diagrams.
- Argue for or against a view using objective and empirical evidence.
- Critically think and question popular beliefs about language and determine whether they have any scientific validity.
- Lead discussions about some of these popular 'language myths' as well as other language-related issues.
- Read and write a paper about a linguistic topic of your choice.

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Textbooks

- **Required:** *An Introduction to Language (10th edition)*, by Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman, Nina Hyams. Boston: Thomson/Heinle, 2011. A copy is available on physical reserve at the Davis Family Library.
- **Recommended:** *Language Myths*, edited by Laurie Bauer and Peter Trudgill. Penguin Books. An interesting collection of essays discussing some of the common (mis)beliefs about language.

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Other course materials

- In addition to the required textbooks, further readings may be assigned from some supplementary materials. These will be mainly articles or chapters from books or online sources.
- One useful source is *The Five-Minute Linguist: Bite-sized Essays on Language and Languages*, by E. M. Rickerson and Barry Hilton. London : Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2006. Available online through our library database via this link: <http://biblio.middlebury.edu/record=b3113227>.
- Content of most chapters of the book is also available in audio format at this link: <http://itunes.apple.com/us/itunes-u/the-five-minute-linguist/id452255394>

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Other course materials

- Other articles will be made available as the term unfolds via links on the syllabus table on the course website.
- Some references will be available on physical reserve. Currently, the following source is on physical reserve at the Davis Family Library. - David Crystal's "*The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*". It's a good general reference for some of the topics that we'll be covering in this class.

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Movies on linguistic topics

- We will also watch, either individually or as a group, three language-related movies, all of which are on reserve at the Davis Family Library for this class:
 1. *Part 1 of the Human Language Series Movie: Discovering the Human Language* (individually)
 2. *The Writing Code* (group screening)
 3. *The Linguists* (group screening)
 4. Perhaps others
- I will announce dates for group screenings in class and by e-mail.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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Attendance and participation (15%)

- Please make sure you come to every class. Missing class is only acceptable for one of the academically legitimate excuses. It's really hard, if not impossible, to do well on homework assignments or write a good paper without attending classes regularly.
- Also, please make sure you read the textbook as well as any materials on reserve or on the course website that are assigned in class every week *BEFORE* coming to class. It will help you (and help me too) a lot if you come to class prepared.

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Attendance and participation (15%)

- As part of your participation, you will be called upon to lead discussion in class (normally in groups of 3 or 4), particularly of one of the short chapters in *Language Myths* or of short articles relevant to the course topics that I will make available online.

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Homework assignments (50%)

- There will be **FIVE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS** to test your understanding of the material covered in class as well as enhance the general learning skills targeted in this course, applying the same reasoning and analytical tools of linguistic analysis that we'll be discussing in class.
- Each homework counts for 10% of your overall grade. So, take them seriously!

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Homework assignments (50%)

- While I do not mind you discussing assignment questions with your colleagues, bear in mind that the work you turn in has to be yours, and yours alone. Copying someone else's work will be treated as cheating, will receive no credit, and will be subject to the consequences of violating academic integrity, as described in the College's [Academic Honesty Statement](#), a link to which is provided near the end of this document.

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A midterm exam (15%)

- Finally, students are required to take an **OPEN-BOOK TAKE-HOME midterm exam**.
- The midterm exam is currently scheduled to be assigned on October 22 and is due on Oct 29.
- There is no final exam for this class.

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A paper (20%)

- In addition, each student is required to write a **2000-word** paper on a linguistic topic of your choice, subject to the approval of the instructor.
- A 250-word paper proposal specifying the topic, aspects of linguistic interest, why you want to research it, and a list of at least 3 relevant references, is due on **Nov 5th**.
- The paper is due by e-mail on Thursday **Dec 11th at 1pm**.

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Delay policy for required work

- Policy on delay in turning in assignments:
 - 5% off if turned in after the deadline on the day it is due (that means prior to midnight).
 - 10% off if turned in on the next day after the deadline.
 - 20% off if turned in later than that.
 - Not accepted after I post the solutions (I know that's self-evident, but just in case).

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Course requirements percentages

Course requirement	%
Attendance and participation (including in-class presentations and discussions)	15%
5 homework assignments	50%
Midterm Exam	15%
Paper	20%

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Class rules

- Cell phones have to be turned off before you come in to the class.
- You cannot use your laptop/iPad/etc., during the class, unless permission is given.
- Given the timing of this class, please make sure that you've had lunch or a good snack **before** coming to class. Eating is not allowed during class time. Beverages are fine, though.
- Coming to class late is disruptive, so please do show up to class on time.

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Honor Code

- Please remember that the Honor Code is in effect in this class. Please make sure to write the Honor Code Pledge "*I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment,*" on all homework assignments, the midterm exam, as well as the final paper.
- Submitting work that is not your own or receiving unauthorized help is a violation of the code.
- If you have any questions about the Honor Code, please ask me, or check the following link on the college's website:
<http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/administration/newfaculty/handbook/honorcode>

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Students with Special Needs

- Students requesting accommodation must first complete the certification process with the Student Accessibility Services Office (formerly the Americans with Disabilities Act Office). The ADA committee will provide certification to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.
- Full information is available here:
<http://www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/doc/ada>

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Grading

- I will follow the following system in assigning your letter grades:
93%+ is A
from 90%+ to 93% is A-
from 87%+ to 90% is B+
from 83%+ to 87% is B
from 80%+ to 83% is B-
from 75%+ to 80% is C+
from 70%+ to 75% is C
from 65%+ to 70% is C-
from 50%+ to 65% is D
50% and under is F.

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Enjoy the journey!

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