Structure of Modern English—English 331/Section 02
Hunter College—Spring 2013
Tuesdays and Fridays 9:45 a.m.–11:00 a.m.
Room 610 Hunter West

Syllabus

Email: syelle.graves@hunter.cuny.edu
Office and mailbox: 1238 Hunter West
Research lab: 509 Thomas Hunter Hall
Office hours: By appointment by email only, almost every day of the week.

Required Text
ISBN: 1428263926

Both new and used copies of the required textbook have been ordered to Shakespeare & Co. Booksellers, at 939 Lexington Avenue (between 68th and 69th streets). Please bring my name and the course and section numbers to the store with you. Hard copies of the book are required by the second class. It is preferred that students do not order the required text, since shipping takes several days (and often costs extra).

Suggested Texts


ISBN: 0312601433


A small number of copies of the suggested books have also been ordered to Shakespeare & Co.; in addition, all (though sometimes older editions) are available in the Hunter library.

Course Description
This course is a survey course—or introductory course—in linguistics. The course catalog description is: “Investigation of the English language as a system with attention to its acquisition, structure and social and regional variations. Satisfies linguistics but not literature requirements.” While we will be primarily examining English in order to give you a sense of how English works (helpful whether you have an interest in education, linguistics, psychology, or many other fields), we will regularly use datasets from a variety of other languages as well, in order to better illustrate how human language works.
Course Goals

- To give you a basic knowledge of most subfields of linguistics (phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax), for which the first half of the course is designated, along with a basic knowledge of many applied areas of linguistics (acquisition, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, etc.), for which the second half of the course is designated
- To equip you with some of the tools and techniques used in linguistic analysis, and to acquaint you with the basic concepts necessary to further pursue linguistic studies, should you decide to do so
- To make you aware of the diversity of language systems, and of their fundamental similarities
- To lead you to examine your own linguistic beliefs and attitudes (see below)

Conceptual Goals:

Below is a list of very general concepts and principles of human language which will be examined throughout the semester:

- Every language is enormously complex.
- It is also systematic, meaning governed by rules, often in ways that are hidden (or counterintuitive).
- A language is systematic at many levels, from the organization of its sounds to the organization of discourses.
- Language varies systematically from person to person, area to area, and situation to situation. There is variation at every level of structure, of which speakers are not always consciously aware.
- Languages are diverse, yet there are a great many universal properties of language: properties all languages share as well as properties no language can have.
- Some properties of a language are arbitrary, in the sense that they cannot be predicted from another property or from general principles.
- Speakers of a language find it difficult to reflect on their own speech. We are not aware of all the rules that govern our speech.
- No language or dialect is more or less logical than any other.
- The attitudes that people hold about language can be quite different from the facts about them. These attitudes are often the product of nonlinguistic factors.
- Speech is the primary manifestation of language, while writing is only a secondary one.
- Although children learn their first (native) language, they cannot be said to be taught it. They intuit the rules of their language, guided by certain implicit assumptions of what language is.
- All languages change as time passes, whether speakers desire the changes or not. Often, they are not even aware of them.

People have all sorts of beliefs about language, only some of which have been supported by the research of linguists. This course also aims at correcting some of the misconceptions you may have about language. Some of these misconceptions are quite harmless, but others are not, and can lead to prejudice against various groups. Here is a random list of such misconceptions. Look over them carefully: some of them you may perceive as being misconceptions, and either will or won’t be able to explain why; other statements you may agree with. As the course
progresses, you may wish to refer to this list every now and then, and by the end of the course, you should be able to provide some explanation, at least for many of these, as to why they are misconceptions:

- “There are primitive languages with only a few hundred words.”
- “French is clearer and more subtle than English or German.”
- “Spanish is the easiest language to pronounce.”
- “People who say, “Nobody ain’t done nothin’” can’t think logically.”
- “Kids need to study for years in school to learn to speak their language properly.”
- “Some people can pick up a language in a couple of weeks.”
- “It’s easier to learn Chinese if your ancestry is Chinese.”
- “English is the hardest language to learn.”
- “Swearing degrades a language.”
- “Every language distinguishes singular nouns from plural nouns by adding an ending in the plural.”
- “The only way deaf people can communicate is by writing, reading lips, and spelling out words with their hands.”
- “Many animals have languages much like human languages.”
- “Correct spelling preserves a language.”
- “The more time parents spend teaching their children English, the better their children will speak.”
- “Eskimos have over one hundred words for snow.”
- “The more words you know in a language, the better you know the language.”
- “‘It’s me’ is ungrammatical, bad English, and ought to be avoided by educated speakers of English.”

-(Partly adapted from The Language Files, 11th edition)

Course Requirements and Grading Policy

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation (Professionalism)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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</tbody>
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Attendance

There are a total of 28 class meetings; each absence will result in a deduction of one point from this total, and the resulting percentage at the end of the semester will constitute the 10% attendance/participation grade. As per department policy, any student who misses more than six class sessions for any reason will fail the course. If you know you will be absent, or have a serious/debilitating illness or injury, please contact me as soon as possible. Be aware that, due to the technical content of this course’s material, it is indescribably detrimental to miss even one class.
Finally, after an absence, it is your responsibility to go to Bb, read the announcement to get the assignment, print out handouts and lectures that you missed, and also to get both missed notes and any given answers to homework assignments from other students. *I cannot emphasize this enough.* All of you should be prepared to share/fax/scan and email/photocopy your own notes when a student who was sick contacts you; to reach someone, go to the “Tools” tab on Bb, where you can email the whole class, or select the users you know. Finally, meeting with students to explain notes can do wonders for your own understanding of the material. I strongly urge you to meet and study together (though homework assignments should be completed on your own).

**Tardiness and Participation**
Attending a class includes timely arrival and participation as well as being physically present; therefore, a half point will be deducted from the total of 28 points for every incidence of arriving late, leaving early, or leaving the middle of the class frequently. **A full point will be deducted for refusing to participate, using cell phones or electronics in any form, sleeping, and acting inappropriately towards me or anyone else.**

If you do arrive late, **always come to me at the end of class** so I can count you as present; I generally don’t stop the class to add latecomers to the roster.

**Homework**
Homework from the textbook and handouts will be assigned each class. Sometimes, assignments will be posted on Bb for you to print out, complete, and bring to class. It is your responsibility to have this done by the time the class starts.

I will collect homework assignments at random, and these will count toward your homework grade. Therefore, please complete each assignment, fully, accurately, and neatly. For the first half of the semester, homework is assigned for every class in addition to the reading; this is entirely for *your* benefit, because the course content is at times quite technical, and very difficult to master without exercises to “activate” what you have read in your textbook. In the second half of the semester, which is less technical, there is less written homework, and this extra time should be used to work on readings and on the final paper.

When I don’t collect the homework, we will go over it in class together, and you will correct it yourselves. You are, therefore, expected to have answers to these exercises prepared and be ready to contribute responses to the class. When I do collect it, we will still go over it after I hand it back. Because of this, late assignments cannot be accepted once you (or the class) have been informed of the answers.

**Final Paper**
- Topic TBA
- 5–7 pages in length, not including Works Cited page
- Stapled
- Typed
- Double-spaced
- One inch margins all around
- Twelve-point size
• Times New Roman font
• Inserted page-numbers (upper right-hand corner)
• Bb submission
• MLA citation
• If you are more comfortable with APA citation, I will accept work cited as such, but you must request this from me in advance, it must be consistent, and it must be accurately cited. The *Writer’s Reference* suggested text has excellent guides to both MLA and APA; in addition, there are websites for help with MLA posted under “Useful Links” on Bb.
• Must also be submitted to me on Blackboard; electronic submission should be made at the time you print, as both copies must be identical. This submission is counted as part of your homework grade, and averaged in as a failure if not completed. Submissions are made through the “Submit Papers” tab on the course page, where you will upload the document file. Please give the document a name that includes part of your name and the assignment’s name when you save it. Also, you can only submit the assignment one time (if you run into trouble with this, just contact me to remove it so you can resubmit). **A printed copy is required.** Furthermore, the paper copy will not be graded until the electronic copy is received.

**Blackboard**
All course materials (paper handouts, extra reading assignments, syllabi, etc.) will be posted to the Blackboard site, which you can log on to via the CUNY portal. In addition, any changes to the syllabus, and any communications from me will be posted in the announcements section of the site, so keep an eye out for any sudden announcements or changes to the syllabus there, and check the site before each class meeting. I also have each announcement forwarded to your Hunter email accounts. It is also your responsibility to learn how to use and navigate Blackboard if you don’t know how—the student help desk can provide help with this if you need it (Hunter North 1001).

**Email**
In order to use Blackboard, you must use your Hunter email account. Since I use this as a primary means of communication with all of you, it is mandatory that you check your Hunter email every day. I strongly urge you to either import your Hunter email account into your primary email address, or forward your Hunter email to it. That way, you’ll never have to log on to your Hunter account, but you won’t miss critical correspondence and announcements. You are welcome, however, individually, to email me *from* whichever email address you prefer to use.

**Work Submissions and Format**
Late work will not be accepted without prior request, and I reserve the right to lower grades on late work that I do accept. Excessive or frivolous requests for extensions or late work will not be granted; if extenuating circumstances arise, please contact me as soon as possible.

All homework, essays, and papers must be handed in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. The policy for all assignments is as follows:
1. When two assignments are due on the same day, always hand them in on separate sheets of paper.
2. Multiple pages of one assignment must be stapled together.
3. Anything handwritten must be clear and legible without scratches or cross-out lines. Such markings count against your grade in the same way that typos in a typed document do.
4. Properly label your work with your name, the date, and the assignment’s name.
5. Whether hand-written or typed, submissions must be on full-sized paper (8.5” X 11”)

All formal writing assignments must adhere to the following (MLA) format:

1. Typed
2. Double-spaced
3. One inch margins all around
4. Twelve-point size
5. Times New Roman font
6. Inserted page-numbers (upper right-hand corner)

Finally, please note that I do not print out assignments or papers, except with prior arrangement due to extenuating circumstances, and I do not grade electronically, or accept submissions by email.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as word-for-word copying without acknowledgment of the language or ideas of another writer, and without either placing it in quotation marks or setting it aside as a blocked quotation. Having another person write or dictate any part of one’s composition is forbidden. In addition, a writer must never use information, no matter how brief, without acknowledging its source. In order to prevent plagiarism in this course, SafeAssign via Blackboard will be used.

“Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The college is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.”

Other Course Policies

1. Come to class on time and prepared to participate. Participation includes having assignments completed, bringing needed materials, contributing to discussions in a respectful, positive manner, and working on what is assigned during the class period.
2. Keep the syllabus and course schedule and any changes made to them on hand. Know when assignments are due, and know when readings should be completed.
3. Bring both your book and all assignments, past and present, to every class. Buying different editions of the book or searching for it online are not acceptable.
4. Keep all of your work and handouts; do not throw anything away under any circumstances. Keep electronic copies of everything you type for the class.
5. Check the class Blackboard regularly.
6. Electronic devices of any kind, including devices for note-taking, book-reading, or time-telling, are not permitted for any reason, for any period of time, without my prior consent. I reserve the right to hold on to such devices for the duration of the class, if I see any.
7. Bags and purses are not permitted on desk surfaces, under any circumstances.
8. I reserve the right to rearrange student seating, and I ask that you comply with any such requests if I make them.
9. *Stay in touch with me!* The importance of communicating with your professors is immeasurable. I do understand the many difficulties students often face, but if problems arise with your work, I cannot help you unless you email or come to my office before the assignment is due.

**Academic Accommodation**

“In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical and/or Learning) consult the Office of ACCESSability located in Room 1124 East to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance please call (212-772-4857) /TTY (212-650-3230).”

Any student who needs special accommodations must come to me and tell me what those needs are, so I can verify this with the ACCESSability office; there is no need to tell me what the disability is. Anyone who suspects a need for such accommodations is encouraged to go to the office for assistance.
Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change as the semester progresses)

- Readings and/or written homework will be assigned every class, emailed, and posted on Bb; you are responsible for filling assignments in to the calendar below. A version of this calendar will also be posted on Bb, and updated each week.
- Assignments and readings will be due on the date where they are listed.
- Take notes as you do your readings and try to work out the technical aspects as best you can on your own; come to class with specific questions on any concepts you struggled with.
- All reading assignments will be in Introduction to Language unless specified otherwise. All other readings will be posted on Bb, and must be printed, read, and brought to class (i.e., not read exclusively online). Be sure to annotate the printed copy as you read.
- Most written homework assignments are also in Introduction to Language. I will occasionally use handouts for homework which will be either handed out to you or posted on Bb; in the case of the latter, they must be printed out in advance and brought to class.
- The only written assignment that must be typed is the final paper.
- All homework, essays, and papers must be handed in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. The policy for all assignments is as follows (this is also on the syllabus):

6. When two assignments are due on the same day, always hand them in on separate sheets of paper.
7. Multiple pages of one assignment must be stapled together.
8. Anything handwritten must be clear and legible without scratches or cross-out lines. Such markings count against your grade in the same way that typos in a typed document do.
9. Properly label your work with your name, the date, and the assignment’s name.
10. Whether hand-written or typed, submissions must be on full-sized paper (8.5” X 11”)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1. January 29: Course Intro READ: NONE DO: NONE</td>
<td>2. February 1: Human Language READ: Chapter 1 DO:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>3. February 5: Intro to Grammar I READ: DO:</td>
<td>4. February 8: Intro to Grammar II READ: DO:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>5. THURSDAY FEB 14: Morphology I READ: DO:</td>
<td>6. February 15: Morphology II READ: DO:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Friday</td>
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</table>
| IV   | 7. February 19: Syntax I  
READ:  
DO: | 8. February 22: Syntax II  
READ:  
DO: |
| V    | 9. February 26: Syntax III  
READ:  
DO: | 10. March 1: Semantics/Syntax IV  
READ:  
DO: |
| VI   | 11. March 5: Syntax IV/Semantics  
READ:  
DO: | 12. March 8: Phonetics I  
READ:  
DO: |
| VII  | 13. March 12: Phonetics II  
READ:  
DO: | 14. March 15: Phonology I  
READ:  
DO: |
| VIII | 15. March 19: Phonology II  
READ:  
READ:  
DO: |
| IX   | March 26: NO CLASS  
March 29: NO CLASS |  |
| X    | April 2: NO CLASS | 17. April 5: MIDTERM  
READ: NONE  
DO: STUDY |
| XI   | 18. April 9: Psycholing I: Brain  
READ:  
DO: | 19. April 12: Psycholing II: FLA *W*  
READ:  
DO: |
| *W*  |  |
| XII  | 20. April 16: Psycholing III: FILM  
READ:  
READ:  
DO: |
| XIII | 22. April 23: Socioling I  
READ:  
DO: | 23. April 26: Socioling II  
READ:  
DO: |
| XIV  | 24. April 30: Final Paper Lesson  
READ:  
DO: | 25. May 3: Socioling III: FILM  
READ:  
DO: |
| XV   | 26. May 7: Language Change  
READ:  
DO: | 27. May 10: Writing Systems  
READ:  
DO: |
| XVI  | 28. May 14: Final Exam Review  
READ:  
DO: |  |

**FINAL EXAM**  
MONDAY MAY 20: 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.