

LING S110: Introduction to Linguistics

Course Info

Term:	Summer 2022	Instructor:	Sarah Babinski
Location:	TBD	Email:	sarah.babinski@yale.edu
Time:	MWF 9:00–11:15am	Office:	Dow Hall 210B
Website:	https://canvas.yale.edu/	Office Hours:	TBD

Course Description

We all use language every day, and you may have studied the expressive and stylistic properties of language in other courses. But how can we approach language from a scientific point of view? This course will introduce you to the field of linguistics, a branch of cognitive science whose goal is to understand the human language faculty by uncovering structure at the level of sounds/signs, words, and sentences; examining how this structure maps onto meaning and is processed in the mind and brain; and studying how language varies and changes over time.

Language is intimately connected to our cognitive, psychological, and social experience, and an understanding of linguistic structure can help illuminate aspects of these domains as well. In this course, you will learn about the various subfields of the discipline— phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics— and get a feel for the various techniques of linguistic analysis through problem-solving experience. The tools and the knowledge that you acquire through this course should give you a new perspective on language and a new sense of respect for the species that can manipulate it so easily.

Objectives

- You will be exposed to a wide array of linguistic **diversity** as well as systematic **patterns** and crosslinguistic **universals** that constrain this diversity.
- You will be able to form **hypotheses** about the human language faculty and use (and even collect your own!) linguistic **data** to test these hypotheses.
- You will be trained to identify and locate linguistic **resources**, extract relevant information from them, and cite them following field-specific conventions.
- You will be challenged to examine your **attitudes** about what language is and how it is used in society and culture.
- You will be prepared for more advanced coursework in linguistics.

Big-picture questions and recurring themes

- What constitutes linguistic data and how can we apply the scientific method to language?
- To what extent is language innate as opposed to learned?
- What does a native speaker of a language actually know?
- What does it mean for something to be “grammatical” or “ungrammatical”?
- What are the structural units of language?
- How do languages vary, and do they share “universal” properties?
- How does language change over time? How is this related to how it is acquired and used?
- Is there such a thing as “good grammar”? (Spoiler alert: No. So where does this notion come from?)

Course Expectations & Policies

Expectations

Prerequisites	This is an introductory course with no prerequisites. You do not need to have proficiency in any language other than English to be able to take the class.
Attendance	Attendance to lectures is mandatory . Each class runs for a total of 2 hours and 15 minutes (with a few small breaks built in). I will frequently discuss material in class that isn't covered in the readings.
Readings	Because our in-class time is limited compared to a semester-long course, it is especially important that you read the assigned readings. You should read them before the date listed on the syllabus, so that you can discuss them that day in class.
Problem sets	You will complete 5 problem sets outside of class, each consisting of a few linguistic puzzles to solve and answer questions about. I prefer problem sets to be typed when possible, and they should be submitted through Canvas.
Language description	On the first day of class, you will be assigned a language grammar to work on for a series of 5 assignments throughout the duration of the course. You may be asked to give brief informal reports in class about your findings. These must all be typed and submitted through Canvas.
Quizzes	There will be frequent but short in-class quizzes. These will be for you to check your understanding of the material as we go through the course; your grade for these will be based on doing them, not on your answers.
Final exam	The final exam will be administered in the last class period on August 5 , and you will have the class period (2h15m) to complete it. It will be cumulative, covering the entire course.

Grading Breakdown

Problem sets	30%
Language description	30%
Quizzes	10%
Final exam	25%
Participation	5%

Academic Integrity

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Cite all sources consulted to any extent whether or not quoted directly. The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of what counts as cheating/plagiarism:

- Copying homework from another student, with or without the student's knowledge, or collaborating on the homework with another student. You may discuss homework assignments, but you may not look at another student's written work before submitting your own.
- Copying answers from the exam from another student, with or without the student's knowledge.
- Allowing another student to copy from your work, or showing another student your written work before it is turned in.
- Using other people's ideas/words/arguments without citation.

Violations to the academic integrity policy will result in failure of the relevant assignment or exam and be reported to the University. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, or what the consequences are, go to <http://catalog.yale.edu/undergraduate-regulations/policies/definitions-plagiarism-cheating/>

Policies

- Course grade The assignment for which you receive the lowest score (problem set or language description) **will not count** toward your grade in the course. However, a good faith attempt for every assignment must be handed in.
- Late work Problem sets and language description assignments are due **by the beginning of class** on the date specified on the syllabus. Any assignment turned in after this will lose 20% per extra day. Assignments that are more than five days late will not be graded.
- Absences As stated above, attendance is mandatory. Any absence will be reported to the Yale Summer Session office. If you must miss a class, please **email us ahead of time** to make arrangements for turning in the assignment that is due. If you miss a class, you alone are responsible for catching up by consulting a classmate. No make-up quizzes or exams will be offered, except in extreme circumstances.
- Citing sources In all of your work, you must **cite all sources** whose words you quote or ideas you paraphrase, including web-based materials and assigned readings. Please use parenthetical author-year citations in the text (don't put citations in footnotes or endnotes). Your references section should follow the format of the **Unified Style Sheet for Linguistics**.
- Collaboration You are encouraged to discuss the problem sets with other students; however, you are expected to **write up your answers yourself** and **list the students you collaborated with** on the top of each assignment.

Commitment to Diversity

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives engage with this course, that students' learning needs are addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class is viewed by everyone as a resource, strength and benefit. My goal is to create an atmosphere of mutual respect among everyone. I intend to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that I can make arrangements for you.

Textbook

The **required** textbook for this course is: Department of Linguistics, The Ohio State University. 2016. *Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics*, 12th Edition. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press.

The e-book is available at: <https://ohiostatepress.org/books/titles/9780814252703.html>. If you choose to purchase the textbook from another source, please make sure you get the **12th edition**. We will place the first few readings on the course website in case you are waiting for the textbook to arrive. Additional readings will be placed on the course Canvas website.

Course Website

The course website is: <http://canvas.yale.edu/login>. Log in with your net ID. This site will contain all sorts of relevant information, including an up-to-date syllabus, assignments, PDFs of the slides, copies of handouts, links to videos and assigned readings.

Schedule

The schedule below is subject to change, but I will adhere to it as closely as possible. There are readings due **every class** except for the last day, when the final exam is administered. The readings listed for Monday, July 4th, may be completed before or after our first class meeting, but all other readings should be completed **before the date specified**. Below, LF refers to the textbook, *Language Files*.

Each problem set (PSet) and language description assignment (LD) will be assigned at least one class period before it is due.

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
7/4	M	Introduction; Languages of the World	LF1	
7/6	W	Language in Society; Dialects	LF10 (skip §10.2)	LD #1
7/8	F	Words; Morphology	LF4	Pset #1
7/11	M	Phonetics	LF2	LD #2
7/13	W	Phonology I	LF3	Pset #2
7/15	F	Phonology II; Writing Systems	LF15	
7/18	M	Syntax	LF5	LD #3
7/20	W	Semantics	LF6	Pset #3
7/22	F	Pragmatics	LF7	
7/25	M	Language and Culture	LF11, §10.2	LD #4
7/27	W	Language Change	LF13	Pset #4
7/29	F	Language Contact	LF12	
8/1	M	Language Acquisition	LF8	LD #5
8/3	W	Psycholinguistics; Animal Communication	LF 9, 14	Pset #5
8/5	F	Final exam	Study for exam	