

Syllabus - LING S110E - Introduction to Linguistics

Course Information

Term	Summer 2024, Session A (May 27 - June 28)
Class times	Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 9am - 11.15am
Office hours	Wednesdays 3pm - 4pm, Fridays 3pm - 4pm
Instructor	Samuel Andersson (Sammy, they/them)
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Course Description

Linguistics is the **scientific study of human language**. Linguists study the structure of particular languages with the goal of developing a general theory of how language works. You will learn to scientifically examine concrete properties of language (sounds and signs, words, phrases, ...) to gain an understanding of its abstract properties (such as how language is represented in the mind).

Through an introduction to some of the subfields of linguistics in the first two weeks (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics), you will learn various techniques of linguistic analysis through problem-solving experience. In the final three weeks of the course you will apply these tools to several psychological, social, and cultural aspects of language: how does language interact with sex and gender? Do any animals have language? How do the writing systems of the world's languages vary? What did languages spoken thousands of years ago sound like, and how do we know? The knowledge that you acquire through this course will give you a new perspective on language, and perhaps a new sense of respect for our species being able to manipulate it so easily.

Course Outcomes

- You will have exposure to a wide array of linguistic **diversity** as well as systematic **patterns** and **universal properties of language** which constrain this diversity.
- You will be able to form **hypotheses** about the nature of human language and use **linguistic data** to test these hypotheses.
- You will be trained to use **linguistic resources**, extract information from them and cite them following field-specific conventions.
- You will be challenged to examine your **attitudes** towards language and how it is used in society and culture.
- You will be prepared for **more advanced coursework** in linguistics.

Expectations

Prerequisites This is an introductory course with **no prerequisites**. You do not need to know any language other than English.

<i>Attendance</i>	Each class runs for a total of two hours and fifteen minutes, with three 40-minute class periods divided by a five-minute break after the first period and a ten-minute break after the second period. Attending all periods of all classes on Zoom is mandatory (including on holidays). We will frequently discuss material in class that isn't covered in readings.
<i>Readings</i>	Because our in-class time is limited compared to a semester-long course, it is especially important that you do the assigned readings. You should read them before the date listed on the syllabus schedule below, so that you can discuss them in class on that day.
<i>Quizzes</i>	There will be weekly quizzes (due on Fridays) administered through Canvas. These quizzes are there for you to check that you've understood the material covered each week. Quizzes will be available one week before they are due.
<i>Language project</i>	In this class you will produce a written report analysing some aspect (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics) of a language other than English. This can be based either on you reading and synthesising published linguistic work, or on you conducting original linguistic research with a speaker or signer of the language you are working on. There will be two milestones for the language project to guide you along the way before the final submission.

Grading Breakdown

Participation	10%
Quizzes	40%
Language project (milestone 1)	5%
Language project (milestone 2)	15%
Language project (final submission)	30%

Academic Integrity

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. You must cite all sources consulted in any way, whether quoted directly or not. The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of what counts as cheating/plagiarism:

- Copying work from another student, with or without that student's knowledge, or collaborating on work with another student without acknowledging this.
- Allowing another student to copy from your work.

- Using other people's words, ideas, or arguments without citation.

Violations of the academic integrity policy will result in a failing grade on the relevant quiz or assignment, and violations will be reported to the University. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, or what the consequences are, go to: <https://catalog.yale.edu/undergraduate-regulations/regulations/academic-dishonesty/>

Course Policies

Course grade

The lowest quiz score **will be dropped**, and not count towards your final grade. However, a good faith attempt for every quiz must be submitted.

Late work

Since we will cover a wide range of topics in very little time, late work is not generally accepted. Work submitted after a deadline but before the next class (e.g. a Friday quiz submitted on Saturday) will lose 10%. Work submitted after a deadline and after the next class (e.g. a Friday quiz submitted on Tuesday) 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, you must **email me ahead of time** to make suitable arrangements. If you miss a class, you alone are responsible for catching up by consulting a classmate. No make-up quizzes will be offered, except in extreme circumstances.

Citing sources

In your written work for the language project, you must **cite all sources** whose words you quote or whose ideas you paraphrase, including web-based materials and assigned readings. Please use parenthetical author-year citation in the text (e.g. Andersson 2024), and 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 quizzes and your language project with other students. However, you must **submit your own work** and **list any students you have collaborated with**.

Commitment to Diversity

It is our intent that students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives be able to engage with this course, that students' learning needs are addressed both in the class and outside of it, and that the diversity that students bring to this class is viewed by everyone as a resource, strength, and benefit. Our goal is to create an atmosphere of mutual respect among everyone. We 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 us know of ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student

groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let us know so that we can make arrangements for you.

Readings

There is no textbook for this course. PDFs of readings will be uploaded to Canvas.

Course Website

The course website is: <https://canvas.yale.edu/>. Log in with your NetID. This site will contain an up-to-date syllabus, quizzes, information about the language project, assigned readings, and PDFs of slides from class.

Schedule

The schedule below is subject to change, but we will adhere to it as closely as possible. There are readings due **every class**. The readings for May 27 may be completed before or after class, but all other readings should be completed **before the date specified**. LP stands for Language Project. Readings are to be determined, and will be added to the syllabus at a later stage.

Week 1

Date	Day	Topic	Assignment
May 27	M	What is linguistics?	
May 29	W	Speech sounds (Phonetics)	
May 31	F	Sound patterns (Phonology)	Quiz 1

Week 2

Date	Day	Topic	Assignment
June 3	M	Word structure (Morphology)	
June 5	W	Sentence structure (Syntax)	
June 7	F	Meaning (Semantics and Pragmatics)	Quiz 2, LP milestone 1

Week 3

Date	Day	Topic	Assignment
June 10	M	Writing systems	
June 12	W	What did languages sound like in the past?	
June 14	F	Languages of the world / Indigenous languages	Quiz 3

Week 4

Date	Day	Topic	Assignment
June 17	M	Accents and dialects	
June 19	W	Language, sex, and gender	LP milestone 2
June 21	F	Language and race	Quiz 4

Week 5

Date	Day	Topic	Assignment
June 24	M	Language on the internet	
June 26	W	Sign languages	
June 28	F	Animal communication	Quiz 5, LP final submission