

Linguistics

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Syllabus

1. Introduction: Origins and Nature of Human Language

- Presentation of the course
- The origins and nature of language
- Human vs. animal communication
- The properties of human language

2. What is Grammar? Brain and Language

- Saussurian dichotomies
- The universality of language
- The “creation” of grammar
- Language and the brain

3. Phonetics 1

- What are phonetics and phonology
- Phones and phonation
- Sounds classification
- Consonants

4. Phonetics 2

- Vowels
- Glides
- Phonetic alphabets
- Phonetic transcription

5. Phonology 1

- Phonemes
- Minimal pairs
- Phonological inventories
- Phonological oppositions

6. Phonology 2

- Allophones
- Phonetic vs. phonological transcription
- Prosodic features

7. Phonology 3*

- Phonological rules
- Syllable structure
- Distinctive features

8. Writing Systems*

- The origins of writing
- Pictograms, ideograms, logograms, syllabic and alphabetic writing
- Modern writing systems

9. Morphology 1

- Word-formation processes
- Inflection
- Derivation
- Composition
- Other processes: coinage, borrowing, conversion, backformation, etc.

10. Morphology 2

- Morphemes
- Types of morphemes
- Morphs and allomorphs
- Allomorphy and suppletion

11. Morphology 3*

- Focus: compositional morphology

12. Mock Exam

13. Syntax 1

- Definition, goals and instruments of syntax
- Phrase and sentence
- Ambiguity

14. Syntax 2

- Immediate constituents analysis
- The structure of phrase
- Types of phrases
- Constituency tests
- Syntactic trees

15. Syntax 3

- Syntactic functions
- Syntactic functions and morphology
- Verb valency

16. Syntax 4*

- Thematic roles
- Topic-Comment structure of the sentence

17. Semantics

- Introduction to semantics
- Conceptual vs. Associative meaning
- Compositional semantics

18. Lexical Semantics

- Prototypical semantics
- Lexical relations

19. Historical linguistics 1

- Diachrony
- Comparative reconstruction
- Genealogy of languages
- Etymology

20. Historical linguistics 2*

- Phonological changes
- Morphological changes
- Syntactic changes
- Lexical changes

21. Sociolinguistics 1

- Language and society
- Objectives of sociolinguistics
- Multilingualism

22. Sociolinguistics 2

- Languages and dialects
- Registers
- Social variation

23. Ethnography of communication*

- Functions of language
- The SPEAKING model

24. Linguistic typology*

- The world's languages: Language families and groups
- Morphological typology
- Syntactic typology
- Linguistic universals

25. Contact linguistics*

- Introduction to contact linguistics
- Lingua francas, pidgins, creoles
- Focus: morphological contact

26. Wrap-up*

- Summary and discussion

27. Mock Exam

Reading List:

- George Yule, *The Study of Language*, Cambridge University Press (any edition).
- Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman, Nina Hyams, *An Introduction to Language*, 8th ed., Thomson (only Part 2 “Grammatical Aspects of Language”, pp. 69-310).
- Bernard Comrie, “Languages of the World”, in M. Aronoff & J. Rees-Miller (eds.), *The Handbook of Linguistics*, Blackwell, 2003, pp. 19-42.
- Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, Penguin Books (only Chapter 1: “An Instinct to Acquire an Art”, pp. 15-24).
- *E. Oskar, “The History of Contact Linguistics as a Discipline”, in *Kontaktlinguistik* (series HKS 12.1), Berlin / New York, De Gruyter, 1996, pp. 1-12.
- *D. Wilkins, “Morphology”, in *Kontaktlinguistik* (series HKS 12.1), Berlin / New York, De Gruyter, 1996, pp. 109-117.
- *Antonietta Bisetto, Sergio Scalise, “The Classification of Compounds”, *Lingue e linguaggio*, 4(2), 2005, pp. 319-332.

**Students need NOT buy the works indicated in the Reading List!
All the learning materials will be made available via Moodle.**

Lessons and readings marked with * are optional for students who need to acquire 6 credits.

Final exam

The final exam will consist of a written test based on the assigned readings and the topics addressed during the classes. Two mock exams will be administered through the course in order to familiarise students with the exam format and contents.