

# LING 2301: Introduction to the Study of Human Language

## Spring 2008 – Section 001

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30 – 1:50 PM, Trimble Hall 216

<http://ling.uta.edu/~david/2301/home.htm>

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**Prerequisites:** A desire (or need) to learn about the nature of human language.

**Required Text:** Clark, Virginia P., Paul A. Eschholz, Alfred F. Rosa, and Beth Lee Simon. 2008. *Language: Introductory Readings*, 7th edition. Bedford / St. Martin's. ISBN: 0-312-45018-4

**Course Description:** LING 2301 provides an overview of an inarguably fundamental human capacity: language. Students will consider a variety of language-related topics in the context of the social sciences, from anthropology to history to psychology. Course readings provide students with exposure to many of the basic concepts and terms used in the study of language and linguistics. Lectures complement the readings by further elucidating key concepts and exemplifying these notions in the context of contemporary society.

**Course Objectives:** The goal of LING 2301 is to change students' relationship with language by challenging and enriching thinking about language and raising consciousness of the role that language plays in the minds and communities of humans. As the semester progresses, students should be increasingly prepared to enter into well-informed discussions about the primary themes of the course:

1. All languages are systematic, manifesting the complementary properties of rule-governance and creativity;
2. Language acquisition and use are rooted in a both cognitive (internal) and social (external) factors;
3. Languages reflect both our collective humanity and our socio-historical diversity; as such, all languages are worthy of study and respect.

These course themes are supported by reference to specific topics as covered in the readings, lectures, and class discussions.

**Student Learning Objectives:** Upon successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- identify and explain many of the basic questions investigated by linguists, in order to situate the discipline of linguistics in the broader intellectual landscape;
- describe and illustrate the features shared by all languages, in order to distinguish those aspects of human language attributable to genetics/biology from those that are socially conditioned;
- analyze communicative signs (icons, words, sentences), in order to differentiate form, meaning, and function within a sign and to justify the use of a particular form in a specific context;
- compare the characteristics of normative and non-normative/developing language behaviors in order to recommend appropriate measures when interacting with language-limited individuals (especially children and aphasic adults);

- analyze the structure of interpersonal interactions, in order to assess the ways in which language both reflects and creates social relationships;
- identify major historical events that have shaped modern (American) English, in order to explain contemporary patterns of language use and sociolinguistic attitudes;
- debate the relative merits of monolingualism vs. multilingualism, in order to make more informed decisions about relevant social, educational, and legal policies; and
- identify and evaluate a contemporary linguistic issue in order to design a brochure or webpage that informs the general population about the role played by language in contemporary society.

### Course Requirements:

1. CLASS PREPARATION QUIZZES ..... 10 %
  - During the semester, there will be a series of at least six (but no more than ten) brief in-class quizzes. The date and content of each quiz will be announced at least one class in advance.
  - Quizzes will be given during the first five minutes at the beginning of lecture.
  - The format of each quiz may vary: multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, etc.
  - The material covered on any given quiz may either (a) come from the course readings -or- (b) be based on work that the students will perform outside of class.
  - Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will there be any make-up quizzes; instead, each student will be allowed to drop his/her lowest quiz grade.
2. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS ..... 35 %
  - There will be four homework assignments. The specific content of each assignment will be announced in class; due dates are noted in the schedule.
  - Homework assignments will be collected at the beginning of lecture on which they are due.
  - Assignments will be graded on a 10-point scale: 9-10 pts=A, 8-9 pts=B, 7-8 pts=C, etc.
  - Late assignments will be collected until the beginning of the next class period; these assignments will suffer a 1-point penalty. After the beginning of this “next class period,” assignments will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero.
3. BLOGGING ..... 10%
  - Students will be required to read, consider, and comment upon a series of course-related topics posted at the professor’s university blog: <http://blog.uta.edu/~david>.
  - Of the eight topics to be posted, students must post comments to at least five.
  - Comments should be relevant, respectful, and substantive; for any topic, a student’s initial comment must be at least 150 words; subsequent comments on the same topic have no minimum.
  - The opportunity to comment on a given topic will be limited to approximately one week. Once a topic has been closed, students may no longer contribute to the discussion.
4. IN-CLASS EXAMINATIONS..... 30%
  - There will be two in-class exams, on March 4 and April 24. Each is worth 15% of the total grade.
  - The exam format will be announced one week prior to the test.
5. FINAL PROJECT: LANGUAGE PUBLIC SERVICE PRODUCT..... 15 %
  - Each student in the course will be required to create a “Public Service Product” (PSP) that addresses a language-related issue. The format of the PSP can vary, and should suit each student’s particular skills, talents, or interests: a web page, a brochure, a short (30 second) video, etc.
  - Projects are due by 12:00 noon on the day of the course’s scheduled final exam, Thursday, May 8.

**Attendance:** While attending lectures is not a requirement for this course, students are strongly discouraged from missing class. Students assume responsibility for completing all work and for acquiring class materials they might not have received because of an absence.

**If you miss a deadline, especially an examination ...**

... you will be allowed to take a make-up only if you can provide written documentation of an extreme and reasonably unforeseeable circumstance (e.g. sudden serious illness, major family crisis). Should you find yourself in such a predicament, you must contact the professor by phone, fax, or e-mail before 8:00 PM of the exam date to request a make-up. Students who miss an exam but do not notify the professor as specified herein will receive a grade of zero (Ø).

**There is no "extra-credit" or "make-up" work in this course.**

**Classroom Policies**

The following policies have been instituted to ensure an optimal learning experience for all students.

- Please arrive on time. If you arrive after class has begun, please enter as unobtrusively as possible.
- Please plan to stay for the entire class meeting. If you need to leave early, please sit near the door and exit as unobtrusively as possible.
- Please prepare for each class meeting by completing all writing / reading assignments beforehand.
- Please come to class prepared to engage your mind as fully as possible. To this end, I respectfully insist that you:
  - leave your cell phone off at all times;
  - use a laptop computer only for taking course notes – no surfing the net, IM-ing, etc.;
  - limit conversation to class-related topics; and
  - do your best not to fall asleep.
- Please feel free to engage in classroom discussions. In doing so, keep your comments relevant and respectful to me, the GTA, your colleagues, and the learning process.

**Summary of Links – See Course Schedule**

Each link number refers to the month and date (MMDD) on which it will be discussed.

- L-0207-1.....[http://www.aphasia.org/naa\\_materials/aphasia\\_quiz.html](http://www.aphasia.org/naa_materials/aphasia_quiz.html)
- L-0207-2.....<http://www.aphasia.org/docs/Melba%20Ashburn%20Account.doc> (A first-person account)
- L-0207-3.....<http://www.lsadc.org/info/ling-faqs-stroke.cfm>
- L-0411 .....<http://www.englishfirst.org/ebonics/ebonsfjb.htm>
- L-0408-1.....<http://www.worldandi.com/newhome/public/2003/december/cipub2.asp>
- L-0408-2.....<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/JWCRAWFORD/engplus.htm>
- L-0422 .....<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2001/winter/navajo-code-talkers.html>

### Important Academic and Administrative Policies

**Final Review Week:** A period of 5 class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions has been designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final exams. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the course syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final exam during Final Review Week.

Note: Per this policy, I will refrain from assigning homework or quizzes during the final week of class. I will not, however, use the week to review the semester; rather, I will continue to present new material. As a student in this course, you are responsible for setting aside time to prepare for all examinations, including the final.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation (Public Law 93112, The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended). With the passage of new federal legislation entitled the "Americans with Disabilities Act" (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

All members of the UT Arlington faculty are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodation" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility rests with informing the instructor at the beginning of the semester of a disability that might require accommodation and in providing documentation through designated administrative channels; for more information, contact the Office of Students with Disabilities (University Hall 102: 817-272-3364 or <http://www.uta.edu/disability/>). Per Department of Linguistics and TESOL policy, "unofficial" or "informal" requests for accommodations (i.e., those not recorded by the Office of Students with Disabilities) cannot be honored.

If you have a disability that might influence your work in this course, you must inform me before **Tuesday, January 22, 2008**.

**Academic Dishonesty:** At UT Arlington, academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. Students involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

According to the UT System *Regents' Rules and Regulations*, "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts" (Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2, Subdivision 3.22).

While the Department of Linguistics and TESOL hopes to foster a sense of community in which students can enhance their educational experience by conferring with each other about the lectures, readings, and assignments, all work submitted must be the product of each student's own effort. Students are expected to know and honor the standards of academic integrity followed by American universities; ignorance of these standards is not an excuse for committing an act of academic dishonesty (including plagiarism). If you have questions, please speak with your instructor or your academic advisor.

**Student Support Services Available:** The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. If you require assistance academically, personally, or socially, you should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 or <http://www.uta.edu/uac/studentsuccess-home> for information and referrals.

**Enrollment and Withdrawal from this Course:** Students are responsible for making all decisions regarding their enrollment status this course. Should a student decide to drop this class, s/he must either (1) withdraw him-/herself via MyMav or (2) complete an "add/drop" form and file it in the Linguistics and TESOL department office. Neither the instructor, nor the teaching assistant, nor the administrative staff of the Department of Linguistics and TESOL will independently undertake any enrollment actions (add, drop, change sections, etc.)

If you cease participation in this course with the intent of not being assigned a regular grade at the end of the semester (i.e., a grade of A, B, C, D, or F), then you **must** officially drop the course. Your failure to drop the class is not a reasonable excuse for receiving a grade other than A, B, C, D or F.

**Auditors:** All students attending LING classes must be officially enrolled in those courses. Exception: Students who have already fulfilled the majority of his/her degree requirements and would like to sit in on a comparable course to prepare for their comprehensive / diagnostic examination may do so (with the permission of the professor). Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the department chair.

**Gifts:** The Department of Linguistics and TESOL has a "no gift" policy: instructors may not accept gifts of any kind from students, including meals, food, or flowers. All linguistics instructors have been instructed to refuse gifts. Students can avoid placing instructors in an awkward position by not offering them any gifts. Students wishing to honor their professors may make a contribution to the LING-TESOL Scholarship Fund; visit the department office (Hammond 403) for a "Gift Giving Guide."

## Projected Course Schedule

The following table presents the anticipated schedule for course topics, reading assignments, and exams. (Quizzes and homework assignments do not appear below; these will be announced in class.) Please complete the reading for each lecture *prior* to arriving in class. I reserve the right to alter the course schedule at any time; that said, I will do my best to announce any changes in advance.

The numbers under “Reading” refer to chapters in the text.

“L-#” items are electronic Links that you must access on-line. Consider these an integral part of the course.

Wk		Tuesday	Thursday
1	January	15: What is linguistics anyhow? Read Essay 1 on your own, as background	17: Properties of Language Essay 2 (pp. 21-24, 30-33); Essay 51
2		22: Linguistic Signs – Morphemes Essays 9 and 10	24: Applied Morphology Essays 11 and 12
3		29: Meaning in Language – Semantics Essays 15 and 16	31: The Structure of Sentences – Syntax Essay 13 <very long>
4	February	5: Applied Syntax Finish/Re-Read/Review essay 13	7: Language Typology Essay 14 (pp. 235-247); Essay 32
5		12: Brain and Language Essay 40	14: Language Breakdown – Aphasia <a href="#">L-0207-1</a> , <a href="#">L-0207-2</a> and <a href="#">L-0207-3</a>
6		19: First Language Acquisition Essays 42 and 43	21: Building Vocabulary Essay 44
7		26: The Tragic Case of Genie Essay 45	28: Language Acquisition – Nature or Nurture? TBA
8	March	<b>4: Exam #1</b>	6: Language in Social Contexts – Pragmatics Essay 17
9		11: Gender Identity and Discourse Essay 37	12: Speech Communities – American Tongues Essays 25 and 26
		Spring Break	Spring Break
10		25: American Englishes – Dialects Essay 22	27: Languages in Contact Essays 30 and 26
11	April	1: African-American English Essays 27 and 28; <a href="#">L-0401</a>	3: The Linguistic Marketplace Essay 33; “Spanglish” article (to be distributed)
12		8: Language Policy and “English Only” <a href="#">L-0408-1</a> and <a href="#">L-0408-2</a>	10: Language Change Essays 19 and 20
13		15: A Brief History of English Essay 21	17: English as a Global Language Essay 47
14		22: Language Ecology Essay 29, <a href="#">L-0422</a>	<b>24: Exam #2</b>
15		29: PSP Workday	31: Course Wrap-Up Re-read Essay 1... What do you think about it?
*	May	6: No Class – Final Exam Week Continue working on your PSPs.	8: Final Exam Period (no exam!) Final Project / PSP Due at noon

Census Date: Wednesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>; Last day to Drop: Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>