Course Overview

This course is an introduction to linguistics. It presupposes little or no formal linguistic knowledge. If you already have a strong background in theoretical linguistics, please see me as this is not the best class for you. We cover the rudiments of phonetics, phonology, syntax, morphology, sociolinguistics and language acquisition. We study linguistics both as an end in itself and as it informs classroom teaching. Student presentations are a significant component of this course.

Learner Objectives:
Students will be able to:
1. Analyze the components of human language
2. Compare how different languages encode grammar and sound
3. Analyze some of the difficulties students encounter when learning second languages
4. Understand the relationships between language and society

Required Texts:

Recommend Readings:
In addition to readings at the end of each chapter, the following may be useful:

Course Format:
Class often begins with questions for you to respond to (based on the reading) or questions which have been assigned the previous week. They are designed to provide a focus for the reading. The class includes lecture, small group work, presentations, and working through selected problems.
Requirements:
Basic civility, including cell phone silencing. Refrain from texting during class
Evidence of having done the reading and assignments
Knowledge of NYU’s position statement on plagiarism and students with disabilities
Attendance at all classes

Assessment

- Attendance and participation 10 percent
- Midterm examination 30 percent
- Final examination 30 percent
- Presentation(s) 25 percent
- Presentation (sociolinguistics) 5 percent

Syllabus (subject to modification). Problems to be completed will be announced in class.

1/26 Introduction to the class. What do you already know about language and linguistics?
Small group activities: What is language? Its characteristics? Introduction to Phonetics
Fromkin, Chapter 5. Pinker, Chapter 6.
2/2 Phonetics. Fromkin, Chapter 5. **SIGN UP FOR CLASS PRESENTATIONS**
2/9 Phonetics (continued). Working groups in class on presentations.
2/16 No Class. Presidents’ Day Holiday
2/23 Intro to Phonology. Fromkin, Chapter 6, up to page 284 only.
3/2 Phonology
3/9 Phonetics Presentations
3/16 NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK
3/23 Syntax. Fromkin, Chapter 3. (focus on up to page 117 but read entire chapter).
Pinker, Chapter 4.
3/30 Syntax. (continued.) Mid term examination questions. Take home examination.
4/6 Syntax Presentations. Midterms due.
4/13 Introduction to morphology. Fromkin, Ch. 2 (to page 49.). Pinker, Chapter 5.
4/20 Morphology. Choose topics for in-class sociolinguistics summary. Work groups for
sociolinguistics presentations. Fromkin, Ch. 7. Pinker Chapter 12.
4/27 Sociolinguistics Presentations.
language specific to humans?**
5/11 Presentation: What knowledge should all teachers have of linguistics? Why?
Final examination questions distributed. Course summary.
5/18 Final examinations due.

Presentations:

- Students who share the same first language will do two presentations—maximum
  twenty five minutes each —on the phonetics and syntax of their first language.
Concentrate on those areas in which the L1 is most unlike English and vice versa. Explain the kinds of errors students from this language have learning English and vice versa. It is your responsibility to time yourself as you prepare for these presentations as the times will be adhered to very strictly.

Please note that the presentation topic may change depending on the composition of the class. If there is a change, you will be notified no later than the second class meeting.

Other students will do one of these two topics for ONE fifty minute presentation:

- Is language strictly a property of the human species or do other species possess language? Arguments pro and con.
- What should all teachers know about linguistics and why? (the why is the most important part of this discussion).

The other presentation is based on material in the chapter on sociolinguistics. More information on this later but this requires no out of class research.

When you do your presentation, please submit a one page summary of your major points to me and the class. Include bibliography, in APA format.

Other Important Details

Academic Integrity

All students are responsible for understanding and complying with the NYU Steinhardt Statement on Academic Integrity. Here is the link to that address: http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.

Students with Disabilities

Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is expected in this course. Material is presented in class that is unavailable in assigned readings, so it is highly recommended that you attend every class. There are no texts or notes than can substitute for the discussion and interaction that will take place in class. Please be on time for class. You are responsible for turning in assignments when they are due and for knowing information announced in class, even if you were not there that day. It is your responsibility to obtain handouts, assignments, and information you missed when absent.