

## Introduction to Linguistic Theory 01:615:201, Sections 01-04

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**Time:** Mondays and Thursdays 9:00–10:20 am  
**Lecture** Hill 114 (Busch campus)  
**Recitations** see below  
**Course website** [canvas.rutgers.edu](https://canvas.rutgers.edu) (notifications will be sent to your Rutgers email)

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**Course head:** Prof. Adam McCollum  
**Email:** [adam.mccollum@rutgers.edu](mailto:adam.mccollum@rutgers.edu)  
**Office hours:** Wednesday 1:00-2:00 (virtual); Thursday 1:00-2:00 (in-person; 18 Seminary Place, Office 303 way up on the third floor)

Sect.	TA	Email (@rutgers.edu)	Meeting location (College Ave)	Office hours (virtual)
01	Natasha Chemey	<a href="mailto:n.chemey@rutgers.edu">n.chemey</a>	Murray 301	Wed 10:00-11:00
02	Indira Das	<a href="mailto:indira.das@rutgers.edu">indira.das</a>	Murray 212	Thurs 11:00-12:00
03	Tatevik Yolyan	<a href="mailto:tatevik.yolyan@rutgers.edu">tatevik.yolyan</a>	Hardenbergh B6	Tues 2:00-3:00
04	Ziling Zhu	<a href="mailto:ziling.zhu@rutgers.edu">ziling.zhu</a>	SC&I 212	Mon 12:00-1:00

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### About this course

This course is an introduction to the study of linguistics and contemporary linguistic theory. Linguistics is a broad term that encompasses basically anything having to do with the scientific study of human language. Linguists use mathematical systems (often called ‘formal systems’) to develop precise theories that help us understand the incredibly rich cognitive processes that allow us to use language to communicate with each other, conduct an internal monologue, and so much more.

In this course, we’ll focus on several key areas of modern linguistic theory: morphology (the study of words and word formation), syntax (the study of how sentences and phrases are built and structured), semantics (the study of how words and phrases are associated with meaning), pragmatics (the study of meaning in context), and phonetics and phonology (the study of “speech sounds”, broadly – scare quotes because we can also study the phonetics and phonology of signed languages!).

### Course learning goals

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand significant subfields within linguistics.
- Understand, create, and manipulate representations and analyses in morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, phonetics, and phonology.

Department learning goals met by this course:

- Students will reason about language; identify how incorrect or irrational assumptions and prejudices distort understanding of language; demonstrate knowledge about language in the world including a sophisticated understanding of linguistic and cultural variation, and evaluate popular views on the nature of human languages and their speakers.
- Majors and Minors will also demonstrate technical mastery over the tools of linguistic analysis in syntax, phonology and semantics and apply linguistic theory in these areas. They will investigate linguistic data and analyze it; demonstrate strong problem-solving skills; extend their understanding of theoretical linguistics into other domains of linguistic research; apply the techniques of linguistics that they have learned in the

core courses to new topics; and access current research in the field. Some students will investigate language in a broader context, where it can be systematically and rationally explored using their sophisticated understanding how language works.

**This course has been approved as a Core Curriculum Course and satisfies these 2 Core Curriculum learning goals:**

- Understand the nature of human languages and their speakers. [AHq]
- Apply effective and efficient mathematical or other formal processes to reason and to solve problems. [QR]
- Visit <http://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/academics/requirements/core> for information on the Core Curriculum.



### Course website

This course has a website on Canvas ([canvas.rutgers.edu](https://canvas.rutgers.edu)) Log on using your NETID and password, and then look for the course in your Dashboard or Courses. If you encounter difficulty using Canvas, please contact their Helpdesk.

### Zoom

Most office hours will take place on Zoom ([rutgers.zoom.us](https://rutgers.zoom.us)). Links to the meeting rooms will be posted on Canvas. Also check your Rutgers emails for notifications.

Zoom-room etiquette: You must join virtual meetings with your full real name. You are welcome, though not required, to keep your video on. To protect your privacy, you may select a virtual background (see instructions [here](#)).

### Evaluation and required work

Your final grade is based on homework assignments, midterm and final exams, and attendance/participation (both in lecture and recitation). The percentage-wise breakdown is on the left, and the corresponding letter grades are on the right. **There is no P/NC policy this semester.**

#### Grading breakdown

6 out of 8 homework assignments (lowest 2 dropped)	50%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	20%
Participation	10%

#### Letter grades

A	≥ 90.0%
B+	85.0-89.9%
B	80.0-84.9%
C	75.0-79.9%
C	70.0-74.9%
D	60.0-69.9%
F	≤59.9%

- **Attendance:** You are expected to attend every lecture and recitation session unless you're feeling unwell. **If you have a fever, cough, sore throat or for other reasons don't feel well, please stay home and take care of yourself (and in so doing, take care of your classmates).** If you miss a class, you are responsible for (1) viewing the recording(s) before the next class and completing the assignments in a timely manner, and (2) using the University absence reporting website ([sims.rutgers.edu/ssra](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra)) to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

- *Homework and exams:* Homework assignments and exams must be submitted to Canvas by the due date and time. **Homework assignments will be due Friday afternoons** (so you can spend your evening doing something else!). Late submissions are **not accepted**, but your two lowest-scoring homework assignments will be dropped. Missed exams will result in a score of **zero** for the exam, unless accompanied by proof of illness or due to a religious observance.
- *Extra credit: Experiment participation*  
You have the opportunity to raise your final grade by **up to 2 points** through experimental participation.
  - Some faculty and graduate students in the Department of Linguistics do experimental research on language. This research depends on the participation of undergraduate participants.
  - You have the option of participating in Linguistics experiments during the semester. Each experiment usually takes between 20 and 45 minutes.
  - You will get 1 point credit for every half hour of experimental participation. It does not matter what subfield of Linguistics this experiment is in, but it must be in Linguistics.
  - Experiments are offered through the Linguistics department experiment management system (sona): <http://rutgerslinguistics.sona-systems.com>. Towards the beginning of the semester, your name and email will be added to the experiment system. You will be issued an anonymous id to participate in experiments through this system. Once Linguistics experiments are posted, you can sign up online. Note that this system is different from the psychology pool, and you should not use a psychology ID to log in to the system.
  - Any student enrolled in a Linguistics undergraduate course is eligible to participate in Linguistics experiments, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, language status, or impairments, disorders, or disabilities (as long as his/her instructor provides the opportunity). You cannot be denied participation for any of these reasons.
  - You have the right to not participate in experiments to earn extra credit. You may speak with me about possible research alternatives, such as reading a pre-approved scholarly article in linguistics and writing a 2-page paper summarizing it.
  - If you are taking multiple Linguistics courses that allow for experimental participation to count towards extra credit, you are responsible for making sure you have assigned the credit correctly through the experiment system online. This is not your instructor's, the experimenter's or the experiment system administrator's job!
  - If you sign up for, but fail to show up for, two or more experiments, you may be barred from further participation and restricted to research alternatives as described above, so please note the time and location of your experiments, and take your schedule and transportation time into account. Many experiments have restrictions on how late you may cancel online.

## Readings

You must keep up with the reading (this should be very manageable)! The required readings are posted as pdf files on Canvas. **You do not need to buy a textbook for this course.**

## Some general ground rules for all of us:

We should all strive to abide by the Golden Rule, "treat others like you wanted to be treated."

*The classroom is a place for learning, exploration, and discovery. It is not primarily a place to feed the ego, make a name for yourself, or construct an identity. You are more than the grades on your transcript. Your identity is not on the line in this class. That means you have the freedom to forget yourself and engage the material. You have the freedom to try hard, to struggle, even to make mistakes, and to be frustrated as we all learn more about the study of language.*

Some issues in this course could seem controversial to you, or perhaps difficult to reconcile with your experience and ideas. You should feel free to question any claims made in class or in the readings, or to make claims of your own, but if you do, please be civil and be prepared to support your opinion.

## Communications policy

All communications must be courteous and respectful. I'm happy to take time to help you with anything related to the course, but only if you are polite with your requests for that time and acknowledge it with a simple thank-you. (There are lots of "how to write an email" things out there; here's a good one:

<http://phdcomics.com/comics.php?f=1795>

Even if you communicate with me and the TAs properly, please don't expect to receive a reply to any email outside normal working hours (Mon-Fri, approximately 8-4) or within 24 hours of sending your email.

I will not send you quizzes at 7 pm and expect you to turn them in by midnight, so please do not expect the same of me or the TAs. We will do our best to reply to emails and Canvas postings promptly, but know that just as you have more going on in your life than this particular course, so do we.

## Schedule

The schedule is given in Table 1. This schedule is tentative and subject to change, but hopefully it helps you get your bearings. Notice in particular:

- In most weeks, the Monday class is a lecture led by Professor McCollum, and the Thursday class is a recitation led by the TA of your section.
- Week 2: The lecture is moved to Wednesday (Sept 8)
- Week 14: No lecture on Monday (Nov 29).

Week	Dates	Day 1 (Lecture)	Day 2 (Recitation)	Homework (due on Friday)
1	Sept 2		Introduction	Questionnaire
2	Sept 8, 9	What is a language? (Wed)	languages	
3	Sept 13, 16	What is Language?	Language	
4	Sept 20, 23	Morphology 1	Morphology 2	HW1
5	Sept 27, 30	Syntax 1	Syntax 2	HW2
6	Oct 4, 7	Syntax 3	Syntax 4	HW3
7	Oct 11, 14	Semantics 1	Semantics 2	HW4
8	Oct 18, 21	Semantics 3	<b>Midterm review</b>	
9	Oct 25, 28	<b>Midterm exam</b>	Semantics 4	
10	Nov 1, 4	Pragmatics 1	Pragmatics 2	HW5
11	Nov 8, 11	Phonetics 1	Phonetics 2	HW6
12	Nov 15, 18	Phonology 1	Phonology 2	HW7
13	Nov 22	Phonology 3		
14	Dec 2		Phonology 4	HW8
15	Dec 6, 9	TBD	TBD	
16	Dec 13	<b>Final review</b>		
	Dec 20	<b>Final exam (8:00-11:00 am)</b>		

Table 1: Tentative class schedule (Check Canvas for updates)

## General policies

The following policies are provided at [ling.rutgers.edu](http://ling.rutgers.edu) > Academics > Undergraduate > Learning Goals and Policies (a direct link is [here](#)). It is the responsibility of all students to read and abide by the policies.

## Religious holidays

University attendance and religious holiday policies are at [http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nb-ug\\_current/pg1433.html](http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nb-ug_current/pg1433.html)

## Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain the highest level of academic integrity. You should be familiar with the university [policy on academic integrity](#). Violations will be reported and enforced according to this policy.

Use of external website resources such as Chegg.com or others to obtain solutions to homework assignments, quizzes, or exams is cheating and a violation of the University Academic Integrity policy. Cheating in the course may result in grade penalties, disciplinary sanctions or educational sanctions. Posting homework assignments, or exams, to external sites without the instructor's permission may be a violation of copyright and may constitute the facilitation of dishonesty, which may result in the same penalties as plain cheating.

## Disability Services

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <http://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: [ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form](http://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form).

## Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners. Call (848) 932-7884 or visit [rhscaps.rutgers.edu](http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu).

## Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

## Scarlet Listeners

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space. Call 732-247-5555 or visit [scarletlisteners.com](http://scarletlisteners.com).