

## Introduction to Linguistic Theory

01:615:201, Section 05

Spring 2024

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**Time:** Tuesday and Thursday 2:00–3:20 PM  
**Location:** Hardenbergh Hall - Room A7  
**Course website** <http://canvas.rutgers.edu> (make sure to allow Canvas to send notifications to email)

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**Instructor:** Justin Bland  
**Contact:** [justin.bland@rutgers.edu](mailto:justin.bland@rutgers.edu) or via Canvas message  
**Office hours:** Thursdays 12:30 – 1:30 PM in person and via Zoom (see Canvas for details)

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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 implied meaning and language use 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.

## Core Curriculum learning goals

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.



## Required texts and course materials

There is **no** required textbook in this course. All course readings will be provided as PDFs and/or links to online resources on Canvas. Readings will be posted in the relevant module for each unit. The sources for these readings are listed in the *Readings* section below.

This course has a website on Canvas (<https://canvas.rutgers.edu/>). Log on using your NETID and password, and then look for the course in your Dashboard or Courses. All course materials, including readings, assignments, and exams, will be posted on Canvas. If you encounter difficulty using Canvas, please contact Canvas Help (<https://canvas.rutgers.edu/canvas-help/>).

## Technology requirements

For this course, you are expected to be able to access Canvas and your Rutgers email. You should check these sources regularly for newly posted material and announcements.

## Office hours/Student support hours

I will hold office hours regularly in person and over Zoom (see the Canvas module 'Course Information' for details).

Office hours are time that I set aside to talk with students. Feel free to come to office hours if you have any questions about class material, course topics, linguistics, college, or anything else. You don't have to come for the entire hour – feel free to pop in and out at any time.

If you need to meet with me and cannot make it to office hours, extra meeting time can be set up by appointment. Please try to schedule appointments at least 4 days prior to the meeting date. Feel free to email me with questions and doubts, I will try to clarify them at the earliest, irrespective of us meeting or not.

## Grading Scale and Components

Your final grade is based on homework assignments, midterm and final exams, and attendance/participation. 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           |     | Letter grades |          |
|-----------------------------|-----|---------------|----------|
| Homework (lowest 2 dropped) | 50% | A             | ≥ 90%    |
| Midterm exam                | 20% | B+            | 85–89.9% |
| Final exam                  | 20% | B             | 80–84.9% |
| Participation               | 10% | C+            | 75–79.9% |
|                             |     | C             | 70–74.9% |
|                             |     | D             | 60–69.9% |
|                             |     | F             | ≤ 59.9%  |

- *Attendance* You are expected to attend every lecture 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) going through previous materials before the next class and completing any 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.

**Participation grade** is related to your attendance. Any *unreported* absence will reflect in a decrease in your participation grade. The rubric for participation grade is below:

| Absences (unreported) | Penalty (out of 10 points) |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 14+                   | 50% deduction              |
| 8+                    | 30%                        |
| 4+                    | 10%                        |

- *Homeworks and exams* Homeworks and exams must be submitted to Canvas by the due date and time. **Late submissions are not accepted** without a previously agreed-upon extension, but your two lowest-scoring homeworks 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.

- **Experiment participation (extra credit)**

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 readings (this should be be very manageable)! The required readings will be posted as PDF files on Canvas. You do not need to buy a textbook for this course.

Assigned course readings will be posted on Canvas, and may come from the following sources:

- Anderson, C. (2018). *Essentials of Linguistics*. <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/essentialsoflinguistics/>
- Carnie, A. (2007). *Syntax: A generative introduction* (2nd ed.). Blackwell.
- Department of Linguistics, The Ohio State University. (2011). *Language files: Materials for an introduction to language and linguistics* (11th ed.). The Ohio State University Press.

- Griffiths, P., & Cummins, C. (2017). *An Introduction to English Semantics and Pragmatics*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Hayes, B., Curtiss, S., Szabolcsi, A., Stowell, T., Stabler, E., Sportiche, D., Koopman, H., Keating, P., Munro, P., Hyams, N., & Steriade, D. (2000). *Linguistics: An introduction to Linguistic Theory* (V. Fromkin, Ed.). Blackwell.
- O’Grady, W., Dobrovolsky, M., and Aronoff, M. (Eds.). (1997). *Contemporary linguistics: An introduction* (3rd ed.). St. Martin’s Press.

## Schedule

The schedule is given in the table below. This schedule is tentative and subject to change, but will serve as a rough guide for the course.

Readings should be completed before class on the day we begin to discuss a subject. Homework will be due on Sundays by 11:59 PM. **Homework should be turned in electronically on Canvas in a single file in PDF format.** If you come across any issues, please let me know before the deadline. Please be mindful that late work will not be accepted, but your two lowest homework grades will be dropped.

| Week   | Dates           | Tuesday                                     | Thursday     | Homework (due Sunday) |
|--------|-----------------|---|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1      | Jan. 16, 18     | Intro 1                                     | Intro 2      | Questionnaire         |
| 2      | Jan. 23, 25     | Intro 3                                     | Morphology 1 | –                     |
| 3      | Jan. 30, Feb. 1 | Morphology 2                                | Morphology 3 | HW1                   |
| 4      | Feb. 6, 8       | Morphology 4                                | Syntax 1     | –                     |
| 5      | Feb. 13, 15     | Syntax 2                                    | Syntax 3     | HW2                   |
| 6      | Feb. 20, 22     | Syntax 4                                    | Review       | HW3                   |
| 7      | Feb. 27, 29     | Semantics 1                                 | Semantics 2  | Midterm (take-home)   |
| 8      | Mar. 5, 7       | Semantics 3                                 | Semantics 4  | HW4                   |
| 9      | Mar. 12, 14     | <i>Spring Break</i>                         |              |                       |
| 10     | Mar. 19, 21     | Pragmatics 1                                | Pragmatics 2 | –                     |
| 11     | Mar. 26, 28     | Phonetics 1                                 | Phonetics 2  | HW5                   |
| 12     | Apr. 2, 4       | Phonetics 3                                 | Phonetics 4  | HW6                   |
| 13     | Apr. 9, 11      | Phonology 1                                 | Phonology 2  | HW7                   |
| 14     | Apr. 16, 18     | Phonology 3                                 | Phonology 4  | –                     |
| 15     | Apr. 23, 25     | Review                                      | Review       | HW8                   |
| Finals |                 | <b>Final Exam (take-home, due date TBA)</b> |              |                       |

## General policies

The following policies are provided at <https://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.

- Rutgers Code of Student Conduct
- Policy on Religiously Observant Students
- Students with Disabilities
- Attendance Policy
- Academic Integrity
- Concerns
- Email and Contact Information Policy

## 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 please be polite with your requests.

I will do my best to respond to any email or Canvas message promptly, but it may take up to **24 hours** on weekdays, or **until the following Monday** during a weekend or holiday.

## 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: <https://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 website (<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/getting-registered>).

## Academic integrity

Rutgers University takes academic dishonesty very seriously. By enrolling in this course, you assume responsibility for familiarizing yourself with the Academic Integrity Policy and the possible penalties (including suspension and expulsion) for violating the policy: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>. As per the policy, all suspected violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to):

- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Aiding others in committing a violation or allowing others to use your work
- Failure to cite sources correctly
- Fabrication
- Using another person's ideas or words without attribution, including re-using a previous assignment
- Unauthorized collaboration
- Sabotaging another student's work

Students may study together for this class, but may not collaborate on answering questions in homework assignments or exams; homework assignments and exams must be done independently. Collaboration is a violation of the Academic Integrity policy.

## Student Support and Mental Wellness Resources

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Student Success Essentials  | <a href="https://success.rutgers.edu">https://success.rutgers.edu</a>   |
| Student Support Services  | <a href="https://www.rutgers.edu/academics/student-support">https://www.rutgers.edu/academics/student-support</a>   |
| The Learning Centers  | <a href="https://rlc.rutgers.edu/">https://rlc.rutgers.edu/</a>   |
| Rutgers Libraries   | <a href="https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/">https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/</a>   |
| Bias Incident Reporting   | <a href="https://studentaffairs.rutgers.edu/bias-incident-reporting">https://studentaffairs.rutgers.edu/bias-incident-reporting</a>                               |
| Dean of Students – Student Support Office   | <a href="https://success.rutgers.edu/resource/dean-students-student-support-office">https://success.rutgers.edu/resource/dean-students-student-support-office</a> |
| Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Service   | <a href="https://veterans.rutgers.edu">https://veterans.rutgers.edu</a>   |
| Student Health Services   | <a href="http://health.rutgers.edu/">http://health.rutgers.edu/</a>   |
| Counseling, Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance Program & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)   | <a href="http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/">http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/</a>                 |
| UWill: Free immediate access to teletherapy; you can choose a therapist based on your preferences including issue, gender, language, ethnicity. | <a href="http://health.rutgers.edu/uwill/">http://health.rutgers.edu/uwill/</a>   |
| Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance  | <a href="http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu/">www.vpva.rutgers.edu/</a>  |
| Office of Disability Services   | <a href="https://ods.rutgers.edu/">https://ods.rutgers.edu/</a>   |
| Basic Needs Assistance (food, housing, and other essentials)  | <a href="https://ruoffcampus.rutgers.edu/basic-needs">https://ruoffcampus.rutgers.edu/basic-needs</a>   |
| Rutgers Student Food Pantry   | <a href="https://ruoffcampus.rutgers.edu/food-pantry">https://ruoffcampus.rutgers.edu/food-pantry</a>   |