

**Linguistic Perspectives on Language: Invented Languages**

**01:615:190, Section M1**

**Syllabus**

**Course Overview** .....

**Instructor:** Indira Das  
**Email:** *indira.das@rutgers.edu*  
**Office hours:** Friday 11:00am -12:00pm or by appointment  
**Instruction Days:** 1/17 - 3/6 (Asynchronous)

**About this course** .....

This is an online, asynchronous course exploring the design of and motivation for invented languages from a modern linguistic point of view. Invented languages are those that are the result of some conscious and deliberate design rather than ones occurring naturally. We will explore the different motivations for language invention, from the desire to create a “perfect language”, to fictional world-building, to fostering global harmony.

In characterizing the different types of invented languages, students will develop familiarity with the basic tools of linguistic theory, focusing on phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Languages analyzed in detail include Klingon, Esperanto, Lojban, Valyrian, Elvish, and various philosophical languages.

**Learning Goals**

By the end of this course, students should successfully be able to:

- Explore and evaluate motivations for inventing new languages
- Compare invented languages to natural human languages
- Characterize and analyze the types of existing invented languages
- Become familiar with the fundamental tools of modern linguistic theory

**Asynchronous structure**

- **Course Website** - The website for this course is on Canvas. All lectures, slides, assignments, and readings will be posted there.
- **Lectures** - All lectures will be in the form of pre-recorded videos posted on Canvas,
- **Office hours** - All office hours are held over Zoom. The scheduled weekly office hour is optional and open to all students. Students who cannot attend the scheduled office

hour have the option of setting up a meeting by appointment through email. **The Zoom link is posted on Canvas. For setting alternate appointments through email, please specify around 2 - 3 30 min time slots according to your availability when you write to me ([indira.das@rutgers.edu](mailto:indira.das@rutgers.edu)).**

## Technology Requirements .....

Because this course takes place entirely online, students are expected to have reliable access to a computer and internet service. If you do not have the appropriate technology for financial reasons, please email the Dean of Students at [deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu) for assistance. If you are facing other financial hardships, please visit the Office of Financial Aid: <https://financialaid.rutgers.edu/>.

## Course materials .....

All course materials are posted on Canvas in the “Course Materials” section of each module. The materials for each week include videos, slides, and required readings.

There are two required texts for this class:

- (1) Rosenfelder, Mark. 2010. *The Language Construction Kit*. Yonagu Books: Chicago. ISBN 978-0984470006.
- (2) Adams, Michael (ed.). 2011. *From Elvish to Klingon*. Oxford University Press: New York. ISBN 978-0192807090.

The two required texts are available in the bookstore. **However, all required readings will be posted on Canvas.** Each week, the relevant sections of these texts will be available for download in the “Course Materials” section of the module.

There are also two optional texts:

- (3) Okrent, Arika. 2009. *In the Land of Invented Languages*. Spiegel & Grau: New York.
- (4) Peterson, David J. 2015. *The Art of Language Invention*. Penguin Books.

## Grading .....

Final grade in the course is assigned according to the following scale:

A	B+	B	C+	C	D	F
>90	85 - 89	80 - 84	75 - 79	70 - 74	60 - 69	60

## Assessment .....

There are four types of assignments that will contribute to your final grade in the course. The **assignments and grade distributions** are as follows:

	% of Grade
Quizzes	35
Discussion Posts	25
Midterm Project	15
Final Project	25

Lecture materials, quizzes, and discussion assignments for the week are available on Tuesday. **Reading quizzes and an initial discussion post are due on Friday.** **Discussion responses are due the following Monday.**

Please email me to discuss late submissions if you cannot submit an assignment by the deadline.

- **Quizzes.** Every week there will be a quiz based on the assigned readings and lecture material. There are 7 quizzes in total - one for each unit of the course. The lowest quiz grade is dropped.
- **Discussion Responses** Course participation will take place through the Canvas discussion board. Each week, you will write a discussion post in response to the given prompt, and respond to at least two other students' posts. There are five discussion assignments in total.
- **Midterm Project** The purpose of the midterm project is to allow you to use the tools learned in this course in a creative way. The discussion prompts will allow you to work towards the midterm project a little bit every every week. The midterm will be due at the end of Unit 5 and will count towards 15% of your grade.
- **Final Project** The final project for this course is a recorded presentation which you will upload onto Canvas, and a written summary. The final project is a continuation of the midterm project and is worth 25% of your grade.

Rubrics for how the discussion posts, midterm, and final projects are graded are all on Canvas.

## Schedule

There are two units for the first week of class. The only assignments in Unit 1 are to read the syllabus and take the syllabus quiz. **Passing the syllabus quiz with a score of 10/10 is a required prerequisite for the other units.**

Week	Dates	Content
1	1/17 - 1/23	Unit 1: Course Introduction Unit 2: Motivations for Inventing Languages <b>1/20 Syllabus Quiz</b>
2	1/24 - 1/30	Unit 3: Klingon and Phonology
3	1/31 - 2/6	Unit 4: Esperanto and Morphology
4	2/7 - 2/13	Unit 5: Loglan/Lojban and Syntax <b>2/13 Midterm Project due</b>
5	2/14 - 2/20	Unit 6: Philosophical Languages and Semantics
6	2/21 - 2/27	Unit 7: Elvish Languages and Writing System
7	<b>3/6</b>	<b>Final Project due</b>

### Academic Integrity .....

Students are expected to maintain academic integrity and be familiar with Rutgers's Academic Integrity Policies, which are available at: <http://nbacademicintegrity.rutgers.edu/home/academic-integrity-policy/> . 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. 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. If you are ever in doubt, consult your instructor.

### Student Services .....

- **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, complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration>.

- **Counseling Services** 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 <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/> .
- **Student Support and Mental Wellness Services.**
  - Student Success Essentials: <https://success.rutgers.edu>
  - Student Support Services: <https://www.rutgers.edu/academics/student-support>
  - The Learning Centers: <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/>
  - The Writing Centers: <https://writingctr.rutgers.edu>
  - Rutgers Libraries: <https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/>
  - Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services: <https://veterans.rutgers.edu>
  - Student Health Services: <http://health.rutgers.edu/>
  - Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance: <http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu/>