

Introduction to Linguistic Theory

01:615:201:05

Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:50 pm–5:10 pm ET
Location: Hardenbergh Hall B2 (College Avenue Campus): **location & classroom features**
Website: **Canvas** (notifications will be sent to your Rutgers email)

Instructor: Shuyan Wang
Email: shuyan.wang514@rutgers.edu
Office hours: Mondays 9:30–11:30 am, in-person at 1 Spring St, New Brunswick, room 412.

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, 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). 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. You can also find additional resources by visiting Rutgers Student Tech Guide (<https://it.rutgers.edu/technology-guide/students/#new-brunswick>).

Office hours/student support hours

Office hours, or student support hours, are designed for students to communicate with the instructor regarding their questions about the course contents. You are also very welcome to discuss with me about your graduate school and career plans, communication strategies, help with study habits and organization, etc. However, you should **not** seek answers to homework questions.

Option 1: In-person office hours will take place **every Monday 9:30am–11:30pm**, at 1 Spring St, Room 412 (maps.rutgers.edu). The building is located on College Avenue Campus. You do **not** need to email or schedule in advance — simply show up with questions!

Option 2: You may also schedule an individual meeting with me by email (shuyan.wang514@rutgers.edu).

Evaluation and required work

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.** Warning grades may be assigned by the end of February, due to poor attendance, poor performance, or both.

Grading breakdown		Letter grades
7 out of 9 assignments (lowest 2 dropped)	50%	A $\geq 90\%$
Midterm exam	20%	B+ 85–89.9%
Final exam	20%	B 80–84.9%
Attendance & Participation	10%	C+ 75–79.9%
		C 70–74.9%
		D 60–69.9%
		F $\leq 59.9\%$

Attendance

According to Rutgers **Course Attendance Policy**, you are expected to **attend all regularly scheduled course meetings**. Attendance and participation grades will be calculated based on your submissions of in-class practice handouts, which will be graded by completeness only. The in-class practice handouts are due **at the end of each class meeting**. If you have to miss a class (and have reported your absence in the portal, see next paragraph), you still need to submit the practice handout **before the next class meeting** to earn the attendance credit.

Permissible exceptions include illness requiring medical attention, participation in recognized curricular or extracurricular activities, religious holidays, among others specified in the Policy. If you miss a class, you are responsible for (1) viewing the slides before the next class, completing the in-class practice handouts, and completing the

assignments in a timely manner, and (2) using the University absence reporting website (sims.rutgers.edu/ssra) to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

A specific note on Covid: we will follow Rutgers Covid Protocol ([Spring 2023 Health and Safety Protocols - Universitywide COVID-19 Information \(rutgers.edu\)](https://www.rutgers.edu/sims/2023-spring-health-and-safety-protocols)) and the CDC isolation guidelines. Please take care of yourself, and by doing so, take care of your classmates.

Homework

Homework assignments must be submitted to Canvas by the due date and time, in one PDF file. All homework assignments will be due on Thursdays. Late submissions, by the end of Friday, will lead to a 50% decrease in your assignment grade. Late submissions after the end of Friday will **not be accepted**. Your two lowest-scoring homework assignments will be dropped. **Please do not collaborate on any homework** (see more in the Academic Integrity section).

Exams

Exams will take place in person. Missed exams will result in a score of **zero** for the exam. To reschedule any exams, please contact Rutgers Dean of Students (<https://studentsupport.rutgers.edu>) directly.

Practice book

The practice book I compiled for this course is a collection of linguistic problem sets, accompanied by a solution file. You are highly recommended to work on the practice book as we move forward in the course, but this is not required. You are welcome to discuss with me about the problem sets in the practice book.

Extra credit (up to 3pts in total)

Option 1: Response to a linguistics paper. You have the opportunity to raise your final grade by **up to 2 points** through a response piece on a linguistics paper **we select together**. The deadline to reach out to me about this extra credit opportunity is **April 4**. The deadline to submit a response is **April 25**.

Option 2: 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 be very manageable)! **You do not need to buy a textbook for this course.** Assigned course readings will be posted on Canvas, and they come from the following sources:

- Carnie, A. (2007). *Syntax: A generative introduction (2nd ed.)*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Department of Linguistics. (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. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1g09x36>
- 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 Publishing.
- O’Grady, W., Dobrovolsky, M., and Arnoﬀ, M. (Eds.), *Contemporary linguistics: An introduction (3rd ed.)*. St. Martin’s Press.

Schedule

The course 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:

- Homework assignments are due on the **Thursday** of their week in Table 1.
- Readings are due on the **Tuesday** of their week in Table 1, before our class meeting.
- Midterm: **Mar 9, 3:50–5:10 pm** . You will be tested on morphology, syntax, and semantics.
- Final: **May 5, 12:00–3:00pm**. You will be tested on pragmatics, phonetics, and phonology.

Week	Dates	Day 1	Day 2	Homework	Reading/Extra Credit
1	Jan 17, 19	Introduction	Language & languages		
2	Jan 24, 26	Morphology 1	Morphology 2		Language Files, Ch4
3	Jan 31, Feb 2	Morphology 3	Syntax 1	HW1	Carnie, Ch2
4	Feb 7, 9	Syntax 2	Syntax 3	HW2	Carnie, Ch3
5	Feb, 14, 16	Syntax 4	Semantics 1	HW3	Fromkin et al, Ch7
6	Feb 21, 23	Semantics 2	Semantics 3	HW4	Fromkin et al, Ch8
7	Feb 28, Mar 2	Semantics 4	Semantics 5	HW5	
8	Mar 7, 9	Midterm review	Midterm exam		
9	Mar 14, 16	SRPING BREAK			
10	Mar 21, 23	Pragmatics 1	Pragmatics 2		Griffith & Cummins, Ch8
11	Mar 28, 30	Pragmatics 3	Phonetics 1	HW6	Grady, Ch2
12	Apr 4 , 6	Phonetics 2	Phonetics 3		Last day to select a paper
13	Apr 11, 13	Sociolinguistics	Phonology 1	HW7	Grady, Ch3
14	Apr 18, 20	Phonology 2	Phonology 3	HW8	
15	Apr 25 , 27	Phonology 4	Final Review	HW9	Last day to submit a response
	May 5	Final exam			

Table 1: Tentative class schedule

General policies

The following policies are provided at 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-ugcurrent/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.

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.

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 or visit www.vpva.rutgers.edu.

Other resources

- 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 (including Tutoring and Writing Coaching): <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/>
- Scarlet Listeners: Call 732-247-5555 or visit scarletlisteners.com