
The Structure of Modern English – COURSE SYLLABUS

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Office:	Hunter West 1436
Office Hours:	Monday 12:45-1:45, or by appointment
Class Times:	Monday and Thursday 11:10 – 12:25
Location:	Thomas Hunter 414

WHAT THIS COURSE IS ABOUT:

Welcome to ENGL 331! This course is an overview of what language is and what knowledge of a language consists of. Focusing on Modern English, we will analyze the organization of sounds, words, and sentences by applying theories from the core areas of linguistics: phonetics/phonology, morphology, semantics and syntax. We will also explore some topics in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, such as how humans learn language, how and why dialects vary, and how ideology affects the way we think about language.

Do not be concerned if these topics or terms are unfamiliar to you. This is an introductory course and no prior training in linguistics is assumed. We are embarking on this learning venture together.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DO when you complete this course successfully:

- Refute popular myths about language
- Explain the difference between prescriptive grammar and descriptive grammar
- Appreciate human language as an orderly, rule-governed system
- Utilize the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to describe speech sounds
- Identify some phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic features of language
- Understand how language functions in the real world
- Describe the relationship between language and society

HOW YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS:

READING: To succeed in this course, you must do the reading from the required text (listed below). Each section should be read **before** the class shown next to it on the course calendar.

REQUIRED TEXT: *Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics*. (2016). 12th edition. H. C. Dawson and M. Phelan, eds. Columbus: Ohio State University Press. (ISBN: 978-0-8142-5179-9)

RECOMMENDED: Pinker, S. (2007). *The Language Instinct*. New York: HarperCollins. (ISBN: 0061336467)

- ATTENDANCE:** Much of the learning in this course occurs during class discussions and group exercises. Therefore, regular attendance, punctuality and participation are required. Three absences are allowed without any consequences. Additional absences and perpetual lateness will affect your final grade, and excessive absence may result in a failing grade for this course. I will assess these based on your verbal, nonverbal, online and written participation and feedback, but ultimately your grade will be based on my perception of your contribution as a member of this class.
- QUIZZES:** Several quizzes are scheduled. These may be listening quizzes and/or contain questions based on material covered in the previous classes. They are designed to reinforce your knowledge of the concepts you learn.
- HOMEWORK:** Homework assignments are short exercises. They are opportunities for you to practice the material covered in class. Homework will either be collected for credit or discussed and reviewed during class as preparation for exams.
- SHORT PAPERS:** Two short reflection papers will be assigned, designed to bring personal awareness to relevant language issues. Papers will be approximately 1 – 2 pages in length.
- TESTS:** There will be two exams. These are not cumulative. Each exam will be worth 30% of your final grade.

HOW YOU CAN ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS:

GRADING SYSTEM: Grades will be assigned according to the CUNY grading system, which is available at:

<http://catalog.hunter.cuny.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1433>

EVALUATION:	Attendance and Participation:	10%
	Quizzes/Homework	20%
	Reflection Papers	10%
	Midterm Exam	30%
	Final Exam	30%

PRACTICES AND POLICIES TO HELP YOU SUCCEED:

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty as serious offenses against values of intellectual honesty. You are expected to adhere to CUNY's standards of academic integrity, which is outlined here: <http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/provost/policies/index.html>

COLLABORATION:

Working through homework assignments and study guides with your classmates is strongly encouraged. I only ask that you acknowledge others' contributions by including the names of the

people you collaborated with on assignments submitted for credit.

LATE OR MISSED ASSIGNMENTS:

Makeup exams will be given only when prior notice of absence is received. Quizzes can not be made up, and no late homework will be accepted. Written assignments that are not submitted on their due dates will receive one full grade penalty for being one day late (e.g. from A to B). Written assignments that are submitted more than one week late will not be accepted. All homework and written assignments must be submitted in hard copy format unless permission is given to submit an electronic copy.

DIGITAL DEVICES:

Cell phones and laptops are great tools, but they have limited (if any) use within a classroom. Use of these electronic devices at inappropriate times is both disruptive and rude.

Laptops may be used for note taking during class lectures. They should NOT be used for Internet access unrelated to class activity. Cell phone use is not permitted at any time in the classroom, in either text or audible mode (unless they are required for a class activity, as specified by your instructor). Your phone should be out of sight and turned OFF (not set to vibrate) while you are in class. iPhones have an automatic DO NOT DISTURB function you can use for this purpose. If you are expecting an emergency phone call, please let me know before class begins. You can then set your phone to vibrate and sit close to the door so that you can leave quickly and quietly if necessary.

Students seen using cell phones or laptops inappropriately will be reminded once of this policy. Continued cell phone use will result in a 10-point penalty per offense and/or my holding of cell phones until the end of class.

ADA STATEMENT:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1214; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating what kind of accommodation is needed. This should be done during the **first week of class**. For more information about services available to Hunter College students, contact the Office of AccessABILITY at 212-772-4857; AccessABILITY@hunter.cuny.edu; or in person in Room 1214B East Building.

BLACKBOARD:

Course materials will be posted on Blackboard, managed using CUNY's Blackboard server. The Blackboard site for this class will be used to distribute supplementary materials, important course-related announcements, homework assignments, and student grades. To access the Blackboard server:

- If you already have a CUNY Portal ID, log in at <https://blackboard-doorway.cuny.edu>
- If you don't have a CUNY Portal ID, go to the CUNY Portal, <http://www.cuny.edu>, and register.
- Check your Blackboard profile to ensure that the email address listed is one you check regularly. If you need to update it, go to <http://esims.cuny.edu> and make the changes there.

COURSE CALENDAR

The following course calendar is tentative and subject to change.

Please read the schedule carefully and make sure that you do not miss any important days.

WEEK & DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENTS
1. 1/30 2/2	Introduction to Linguistics Language Myths Prescription and Description	LF 1.1 – 1.4 (Pinker 1994: Ch. 2)	Pinker Video (BB) Needs Analysis & Topics (BB)
2. 2/6 2/9	Language, Mind, & Thought Phonetics (Consonants)	(Pinker 1994: Ch. 1 & 12) LF 2.0 – 2.2	Reflection #1 due
Language Sounds			
3. 2/13 2/15 2/16	NO CLASSES (CUNY Monday) Phonetics Phonetics (Vowels)	LF 2.3 – 2.6	Quiz #1
4. 2/20 2/23	NO CLASSES Phonetics		Quiz #2
5. 2/27 3/2	Phonology Phonology	LF 3.0 – 3.2	Homework #1 due
6. 3/6 3/9	Phonology TBD	LF 3.3 – 3.5	Homework #2 due
7. 3/13 3/16	Review Midterm Exam		
Words & Sentences			
8. 3/20 3/23	Morphology Morphology	LF 4.0 – 4.2, 4.4 – 4.5	Quiz #3
9. 3/27 3/30	Morphology / Syntax Syntax	LF 5.0 – 5.5	Homework #3 due
10. 4/3 4/6	Syntax Semantics	LF 6.0 – 6.2, 6.4 (not 6.3)	Homework #4 due
11. 4/10 4/13	SPRING BREAK!		
12. 4/17 4/10	SPRING BREAK! Semantics	HEW Chapter 7 (BB)	Quiz #4
Meaning & Use			
13. 4/24 4/27	Pragmatics Pragmatics	LF 7.0 – 7.5	Homework #5
14. 5/1 5/4	Language Variation Language Variation	LF 10.0 – 10.5	Homework #6
15. 5/8 5/11	TBD Class Choice 1	TBA TBA	Quiz #5 TBA
16. 5/15 5/18	Class Choice 2 Review	TBA	Reflection #2 due
17. 5/2?	Final Exam		

*Topics for the last 2 instructional sessions will be determined by a class vote.

