

Linguistics/Anthropology 200
Introduction to the Scientific Study of Language
Rice University
Spring 2025
Syllabus

Class Meetings: Tues./Thurs. 9:25-10:40am, Herring 100

Course Canvas Site: <https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/73324>

Instructor: Dr. Robert Englebretson (“Dr. E”) he/him/his
Office: Herring 206
Office Hours: Tues. 11:00am-1:00pm, Herring 206; & by appointment on Zoom
E-mail: reng@rice.edu (I answer emails within 24 hours, usually sooner.)
Office Phone: 713 348-4776 (Leave a voicemail and I will return your call ASAP.)

TA’s:	Kaitlyn Keyes (she/her)	Elise Stewart (they/she)	Nadia Thieriot (she/they)
	Mon. 4-5pm	Weds. 2-3pm	Thurs. 4-5pm
	Will Rice Commons	Herring 202	Herring 202
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Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This foundation course serves as an introduction to language and linguistics. We will begin by examining social interaction and the structure of conversation (Conversation Analysis); the principles that account for how language works in actual use (pragmatics); how words are related to each other and what word meaning reveals about the mind (lexical and cognitive semantics). We will then move on to an analysis of language form at all levels: the physiology of speech sounds and the vocal tract (articulatory phonetics); how speech sounds are organized systematically (phonology); how words are built up from smaller parts (morphology); and how words are arranged in sentences (syntax). Next we will study language variation, the complex relationship between language and society, the principled and systematic ways in which languages change over time, and how languages are acquired by children. We will conclude the course with a discussion of endangered languages and fieldwork, followed by brief sketches of specific languages, in order to demonstrate how the tools of linguistics are applied in documenting and describing a field language.

After taking this class:

- ✓ You will have learned the basic concepts, vocabulary, and analytic techniques of linguistics.
- ✓ You will have gained experience with hands-on data analysis from a number of languages.
- ✓ You will have developed the ability to critically assess claims and popular misconceptions about language, and to approach language issues from a systematic, empirical perspective.
- ✓ You will have a basic understanding of how linguistics is relevant to other disciplines and careers.

Successful completion of this course will enable you to enroll in other linguistics courses if you are interested in pursuing more in-depth study on any of the topics we cover this semester.

Required Textbook

Genetti, Carol (ed). 2019. *How Languages Work*, 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press
ISBN: 9781108454513 (Paper); 9781108553988 (Digital).

The textbook is available at the Rice Campus Bookstore or your favorite online seller. Since many of the concepts in Linguistics 200 may be new to you, you will find that you will do your best in this course if you do the reading at the beginning of the week in which it is assigned.

Grade Policies

<input type="checkbox"/>	Successful completion of 11 Canvas Course Modules (2% each, Fridays 5pm)	22%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Midterm Exam #1 (Feb. 4)	20%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Midterm Exam #2 (Mar. 13)	25%
<input type="checkbox"/>	Final Exam (during Registrar-scheduled date/time, TBA)	33%
TOTAL		100%

Course letter grades will be assigned as follows:

0-59.99%	60-69.99%	70-79.99%	80-89.99%	90-100%
F	D	C	B	A

Designations of plus and minus will be given to grades ranging within 1 percentage point of the cutoff. For example: 99.0-100% is an A+, 90.0-90.99% is an A-, 89.0-89.99% is a B+, and so on. Students who earn less-than 60% will fail the course.

Course Attendance Policy

Ling 200 is an in-person course, and you are expected to physically attend all class meetings in Herring 100 unless you are ill or away on a Rice-sponsored activity.

Canvas Course Modules (due Fridays by 5pm)

There are 11 course modules for this class, available on the Canvas course page. Each module consists of a short supplementary reading, video, survey, and/or other material relevant to the current in-class topic. Each module also contains a quiz, to allow you to assess your learning of the material from the textbook and lectures. The quizzes are open-note, open-book, and you may discuss them with other students. You will receive instant feedback on your answers, and you can take the quiz as many times as you like before the due-date, in order to achieve a perfect score. To receive credit for completion of a module, you must submit the quiz by 5pm on the Friday of the week in which the module is due. Completion of each module counts as 2% of your total course grade. (Modules are ungraded; simply completing the module gives you 2%, no matter what your actual quiz score is.) Please take these seriously! Their purpose is to help you assess your mastery of the material for each unit, to give you things to think about outside of class, and to help you prepare for exams.

Midterm Exams

There are two midterm exams for this course. Both midterms will be administered online via Canvas during regular class time (9:25-10:40am). Midterm #1 will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 4, is worth 20% of your course grade, and covers all material up to that point (introduction, conversation, pragmatics, and semantics). Midterm #2 will take place on Thursday, March 13, is worth 25% of your course grade, and covers all material since the first midterm (phonetics, phonology, morphology, word-classes, and syntax). Both midterms are closed-book, closed-note, and you are not allowed to work together or to discuss the exam with anyone while you (or they) are taking it. Make-up exams will be given only under extreme extenuating circumstances, and you must make arrangements with me beforehand. If you miss a midterm and do not clear it with me ahead of time, you will receive a score of 0 on it.

Final Exam

The final exam (worth 33% of your overall course grade) is cumulative and covers all course material from the semester. It will be online on canvas, closed-book, closed-note, during the exam time scheduled by the Registrar's office for this course (TBA). You will have three hours to complete the exam. Students who miss the final or fail to turn it in will receive a score of 0 on the exam. Students are not permitted to work together or discuss the exam in any way until after it has been turned in.

Technology Policy

Since all exams and assignments in this course will be completed online, you will need regular access to a reliable computer and stable internet connection.

The use of mobile devices and computers is permitted in the classroom for course-related purposes only, such as taking notes and accessing materials on Canvas. All personal uses of technology (such as texting, social media, shopping, watching videos, working on assignments for other classes, etc.) are not permitted, as they are bothersome to those sitting around you. If another student is distracting or disturbing you by inappropriate use of technology in the classroom, please politely ask them to stop, or let me know and I will address the problem.

Rice Honor Code

In this course, all students will be held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, a code that you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. If you are unfamiliar with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the Honor System Handbook at <http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/>. This handbook outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process.

Appropriating someone else's work and portraying it as your own is cheating. Obtaining answers to homework assignments or exams from previous semesters is cheating. Falsifying data or experimental results is cheating. (The foregoing is not intended to be a complete list.) If you are suspected of cheating, you will be referred to the Honor Council. If you are unsure about whether a specific action is cheating, please check with me first. Some general guidelines are:

- Do not look at notes, assignments, or exams from previous semesters.
- Do not seek solutions to exams from outside sources, including books, the internet, or by any use of AI.
- Do not copy other (current or former) students' work.
- Once you have opened your midterms or final exam, do not discuss it with other students, until after you (and they) have turned it in and the exam time has ended.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Support Services (Allen Center, Room 111 / adarice@rice.edu / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

Mental Health Statement

The wellbeing and mental health of students is important; if you are having trouble completing your coursework, please reach out to the Wellbeing and Counseling Center.

Rice University provides cost-free mental health services through the Wellbeing and Counseling Center to help you manage personal challenges that threaten your personal or academic well-being. If you believe you are experiencing unusual amounts of stress, sadness, or anxiety, the Student Wellbeing Office or the Rice Counseling Center may be able to assist you. The Wellbeing and Counseling Center is located in the Gibbs Wellness Center and can be reached at 713-348-3311 (available 24/7).

Title IX Responsible Employee Notification

Rice encourages any student who has experienced an incident of harassment, pregnancy discrimination or gender discrimination, or relationship, sexual, or other forms of interpersonal violence to seek support from The SAFE Office.

At Rice University, unlawful discrimination in any form, including sexual misconduct, is prohibited under Rice Policy on Harassment and Sexual Harassment (Policy 830) and the Student Code of Conduct. As the instructor and a responsible employee, I am required by Title IX to disclose all incidents of non-consensual interpersonal behaviors to the Title IX Coordinator on campus. Although responsible employees are required to make this notification, it is the student's choice to pursue a formal complaint. The goal is to make sure that students are aware of the range of options available and have access to the resources when in need. For more information, please visit safe.rice.edu, titleix.rice.edu, or email titleixsupport@rice.edu.

Course Outline

* The following schedule may change slightly as the semester progresses. Any changes will be communicated in class and published in the Announcements section on the course Canvas site.

DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK 1	Introduction		Module #1
1/14	Introduction	Ch. 1	
1/16	Conversation #1	None	
WEEK 2	Interaction		Module #2
1/21	Conversation/Pragmatics	Ch. 8	
1/23	Pragmatics #2	Ch. 8	
WEEK 3	Meaning		Module #3
1/28	Semantics #1	Ch. 7	
1/30	Semantics #2	Ch. 7	
WEEK 4	Speech Sounds		Midterm #1
2/4	Midterm #1	None	
2/6	Phonetics #1	Ch. 2	
WEEK 5	Speech Sounds		Module #4
2/11	Phonetics #2	Ch. 2	
2/13	No Class (Spring Recess)		
WEEK 6	Sound Patterns		Module #5
2/18	Phonology #1	Ch. 3	
2/20	Phonology #2	Ch. 3	
WEEK 7	Word Structure		Module #6
2/25	Morphology #1	Ch. 4	
2/27	Morphology #2	Ch. 4	
WEEK 8	Word Classes / Sentence Structure		Module #7
3/4	Word Classes	Ch. 5	
3/6	Syntax #1 Ch. 6		
WEEK 9	Sentence Structure		Midterm #2
3/11	Syntax #2	Ch. 6	
3/13	Midterm #2	None	
WEEK 10	Spring Break!		
3/18	No Class		
3/20	No Class		
WEEK 11	Language & Society		None
3/25	Sociolinguistics #1	Ch. 11	

3/27	Sociolinguistics #2	Ch. 11	
WEEK 12	Language & Society / Language Change		Module #8
4/1	Sociolinguistics #3	Language Profile 11	
4/3	Historical Linguistics #1	Ch. 12	
WEEK 13	Language Change		Module #9
4/8	Historical Linguistics #2	Ch. 12	
4/10	Language Contact	Ch. 13	
WEEK 14	Typology; Acquisition		Module #10
4/15	Language Universals & Typology	None	
4/17	Child Language Acquisition	Ch. 14	
WEEK 15	Language Endangerment & Revitalization		Module #11
4/22	Endangered Languages	TBA	
4/24	Language Documentation & Description	TBA	
FINALS WEEK			Final Exam
Online final during Registrar-scheduled exam period – date/time TBA			