

Linguistics 404: Research Methodologies and Linguistic Theories  
Rice University  
Spring 2013

## Syllabus

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Office: Herring 206  
Office Hours: Thurs. 2:30-4:00, and By Appointment.  
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Course Meetings: Tuesdays/Thursdays 1:00-2:15, Herring 125

## Course Description

This course aims (1) to provide students with an introduction to current broad theoretical approaches to linguistics, and (2) to foster discussion and awareness of research methodologies in each of these approaches. Through a meta-discussion of the methodology employed in various subfields of linguistic research, students will have the opportunity to explicitly consider different types of data and argumentation (e.g. elicited sentences, grammaticality judgments, interviews, ethnography, experimentation, and corpus-based research). What are pros and cons of each of these approaches? What kinds of questions does each let us answer? What counts as “explanation” according to different theoretical orientations? What are the goals and assumptions of e.g. generative vs cognitive vs functional-typological vs discourse-functional linguistics? What is statistics, and what kinds of questions can we answer using statistical methods? Is linguistics a “science?” Are some approaches to linguistic theory more “scientific” than others? Readings for the course include articles from the philosophy of science, history of linguistics, works that explicitly deal with data and methodology, and papers by well-known linguists which we will deconstruct specifically in terms of data, assumptions, argumentation, and methodology.

The first three weeks of the course will situate the field in terms of historical context and the philosophy of science. The remainder of the course will consist of units on each of several approaches to linguistics. The first part of each unit will present a general overview of the specific framework, and the remainder of each unit will involve the critique and discussion of ‘primary source’ articles written in that framework.

Because this is a 400-level course, I assume students already have an intermediate- to advanced-level familiarity with linguistics. The course will be conducted as a seminar, focusing on discussion and analysis of source readings. Students are required to actively lead and participate in discussions.

## Readings

Published chapters and articles, as listed in the bibliography of this syllabus. Source articles listed as TBA are to be decided by the group responsible for that particular unit.

## Course Requirements

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance and <b>active participation</b> in class | 15% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion points for each class meeting            | 20% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group Project and discussion                        | 35% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Article Critique Paper                              | 30% |

\*Note: This course has no midterms, no homework assignments, and no final exam. There are however **a lot** of readings, which you are expected to carefully read, thoroughly understand, and be ready to discuss in class.

Participation: Because this is a small, seminar-style class, your involvement and attention is crucial! Students are required to attend class and to actively participate in class discussion and discussion of readings. Please e-mail me if you know you will be missing class on a given day.

Attendance and participation is worth 15% of your course grade. You will lose 1 percentage point for each class absence not cleared with me ahead of time or which is not due to illness/emergency.

Discussion Points: For each of the class days this semester with assigned readings, you are required to submit three discussion points: questions, quibbles, rants, notable quotations from or observations about the readings, etc. Submit your discussion points as an entry on the course Owlspace blog before noon of each class day. You are encouraged to read and comment on each other's blog entries if you wish to do so. Please note that these are a set of three discussion points for the day, not per each article. I.e. if there are two readings for a given day, you only need to submit three discussion points total, not six. (Since there are no readings on 1/8, 1/17, and 4/18, no discussion points are due on these days.)

Discussion points are worth 20% of your course grade. You have one freebee! Failure to submit discussion points for more than one day this semester will lead to a deduction of 1 percentage point from your course grade for each day skipped.

Group Project and Discussion: Students will be divided into three groups. Each group will be assigned to one of the following subfields: (1) sociolinguistics, (2) cognitive linguistics, or (3) typology, description, and field linguistics. Let me know ASAP which group you might like to be in. Each group will find three appropriate source articles (from linguistics journals or book chapters), and will lead discussion of these articles during the class meetings scheduled for the source-discussion of that subfield (sociolinguistics on Feb. 10 and Feb. 12; cognitive linguistics on Feb. 21 and March 5; and typological, descriptive, and field linguistics on March 14 and March 19). The group must decide on the readings two weeks ahead of time so that the rest of the class can get

them as well. Each group should plan to meet with me early in the semester to plan these units and choose appropriate readings.

Article review/Critique Paper: Each student is expected to submit a short paper (4-6 pages max!) related to the subject matter of this course. It should present a review/critique and discussion of a published linguistics journal article of your own choosing, and should address issues of data, argumentation, methodology, and assumptions. This is not a research paper: no library research is necessary, other than finding an article to critique. More information on this assignment will be made available in class later in the semester. The final version of the paper is due on Owlspace by the last day of finals week: May 1 before 5pm. (I will gladly read and comment on pre-final paper drafts, if you submit them to me before April 24.)

\* If you require this material in another format or need special accommodations due to a disability, please contact the instructor and the Disability Support Services Office (111 Allen Center).

## Course Outline

Please remember to submit three discussion points on the course's Owlspace blog before noon on each day with assigned readings.

DATE	TOPIC	READING
WEEK 1		
1/8	Course Intro & Overview	None
1/10	Linguistics as Science?	Halpern; Lazard
WEEK 2		
1/15	History of Linguistics	Joseph
1/17	History of Linguistics (cont.); Philosophy of Science	None
WEEK 3		
1/22	Philosophy of Science (cont.)	Popper
1/24	Philosophy of Science (cont.); Research Design	Kuhn
WEEK 4		
1/29	Generative Linguistics (Overview #1)	Chomsky (1965)
1/31	Generative Linguistics (Overview #2)	Radford (skim); Derwing
WEEK 5		
2/3	Generative Linguistics (Source Discussion)	Chomsky (1970)
2/5	Sociolinguistics (Overview)	Tagliamonte
WEEK 6		
2/10	Sociolinguistics (Source Discussion #1)	TBA (group)
2/12	Sociolinguistics (Source Discussion #2)	TBA (group)
WEEK 7		
2/19	Cognitive Linguistics (Overview)	Radden; Langacker
2/21	Cognitive Linguistics (Source Discussion #1)	TBA (group)

## WEEK 8

2/26 No Class (Spring Break)

2/28 No Class (Spring Break)

## WEEK 9

3/5 Cognitive Linguistics (Source Discussion #2) TBA (group)

3/7 Functional-Typological Linguistics (Overview) Croft

## WEEK 10

3/12 Field Linguistics Newman & Ratcliff (skim);  
(Overview) Vaux & Cooper; Duranti

3/14 Typology/Description/Field (Source Discussion #1) TBA (group)

## WEEK 11

3/19 Typology/Description/Field (Source discussion #2) TBA (group)

3/21 Emergent Grammar Hopper; Weber

## WEEK 12

3/26 Discourse-Functional Linguistics (Overview) Cumming et al.

3/28 No Class (Midterm Recess)

## WEEK 13

4/2 Discourse-Functional Linguistics (Source discussion) Thompson & Mulac;  
Du Bois4/4 Interactional Linguistics Ford et  
(Overview) al.

## WEEK 14

4/9 Interactional Linguistics (Source Fox et al.; Curl  
discussion)

4/11 "Formalism" versus "Functionalism" Newmeyer

## WEEK 15

4/16 "Formalism" versus "Functionalism" (cont.) Bybee

4/18 Genie Video / Course Wrap-up None

## FINALS WEEK

5/1 Paper due by 5pm

## List of Readings

Readings are listed in the order in which they are assigned.

Halpern, Mark. 2001. "The End of Linguistics". *The American Scholar*, Winter 2001. pp. 13-26.

Lazard, Gilbert. 2012. "The case for pure linguistics". *Studies in Language* 36 (2): 241-259.

Joseph, John E. 1995. "Trends in twentieth-century linguistics: an overview". In E.F.K. Koerner and R.E. Asher, eds. *Concise History of the Language Sciences: From the Sumerians to the Cognitivists*, 221-233. New York: Pergamon.

Popper, Karl R. 1959. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. London: Hutchinson. (Ch. 1; Pp. 27-48.)

- Kuhn, Thomas S. 1962/1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Ch. 2-5; Pp. 10-65.)
- Chomsky, Noam. 1965. *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge: MIT Press. (Ch. 1; Pp. 3-62.)
- Radford, Andrew. 2004. *Minimalist Syntax: Exploring the Structure of English*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Ch. 1; Pp. 1-32.)
- Derwing, Bruce L. 1973. "Chomsky's 'revolution' reconsidered". In Bruce L. Derwing, *Transformational Grammar as a Theory of Second Language Acquisition: A Study in the Empirical, Conceptual and Methodological Foundations of Contemporary Linguistics*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Pp. 225-258.)
- Chomsky, Noam. 1970. "Remarks on nominalization". In Roderick Jacobs and Peter Rosenbaum, eds. *Readings in English Transformational Grammar*, 184-221. Waltham, Mass.: Ginn.
- Tagliamonte, Sali. 2006. *Analyzing Sociolinguistic Variation*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Ch. 1-2; Pp. 1-36.)
- Radden, Günter. 1992. "The cognitive approach to natural language". In Martin Pütz, ed. *Thirty Years of Linguistic Evolution*, 513-542. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Langacker, Ronald W. 1995. "Cognitive Grammar". In E.F.K. Koerner and R.E. Asher, ed. *Concise History of the Language Sciences: From the Sumerians to the Cognitivists*, 365-368. New York: Pergamon.
- Croft, William. 1990. *Typology and Universals*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Ch. 1 & 9; Pp. 1-26 & 246-259.)
- Newman, Paul and Martha Ratliff. 2001. "Introduction". In Paul Newman and Martha Ratliff, eds. *Linguistic Fieldwork*, 1-14. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vaux, Bert and Justin Cooper. 1999. *Introduction to Linguistic Field Methods*. München: Lincom Europa. (Excerpts from Ch. 1, Pp. 5-21.)
- Duranti, Alessandro. 1994. *From Grammar to Politics: Linguistic Anthropology in a Western Samoan Village*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Excerpts from Ch. 2, Pp. 14-32.)
- Hopper, Paul J. 1987. "Emergent grammar". *BLS* 13:139-157.
- Weber, Thilo. 1997. "The emergence of linguistic structure: Paul Hopper's emergent grammar hypothesis revisited". *Language Sciences* 19:177-196.
- Cumming, Susanna, Tsuyoshi Ono, and Ritva Laury. 2011. "Discourse, grammar and interaction." In Teun A. van Dijk (ed). *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, 2nd ed, pp. 8-36. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Thompson, Sandra A. and Anthony Mulac. 1991. "The discourse conditions for the use of the complementizer 'that' in conversational English". *Journal of Pragmatics* 15:237-251.

- Du Bois, John W. 1987. "The discourse basis of ergativity." *Language* 63: 805-855.
- Ford, Cecilia E., Barbara A. Fox and Sandra A. Thompson. 2002. "Social interaction and grammar". In Michael Tomasello, ed. *The New Psychology of Language*, vol. 2, 119-143. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Fox, Barbara A., Makoto Hayashi, and Robert Jasperson. 1996. "Resources and repair: a cross-linguistic study of syntax and repair". In Elinor Ochs, Emanuel Schegloff, and Sandra A. Thompson, eds. *Interaction and grammar*, 185-237. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Curl, Traci S. 2006. "Offers of assistance: constraints on syntactic design". *Journal of Pragmatics* 38:1257-1280.
- Newmeyer, Frederick J. 2003. "Grammar is grammar and usage is usage". *Language* 79:682-707
- Bybee, Joan L. 2006. "From usage to grammar: the mind's response to repetition". *Language* 82:711-733.