Syllabus

Instructor:  Dr. Robert Englebretson  
Office:  Herring 206  
Office Hours:  Thurs. 2-4, and by Appointment.  
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Class Meetings: MWF 2:00-2:50, Linguistics Grad Lounge

Course Description

This two-semester course sequence in field methods addresses techniques for the documentation and description of a field language. The language for A2014-2015 is Gikuyu. Class meetings on Mondays and Wednesdays will consist of collaborative elicitation sessions with the consultant. Class meetings on Friday will not include the consultant, and will consist of data analysis, planning the following week’s sessions, and general discussions of issues related to data collection, transcription, analysis, and fieldwork experiences and ethics. In addition to in-class sessions, students will work individually outside of class. Each student will be allotted one hour per week of time with the Gikuyu consultant for work on individual and group projects. Students will be responsible for entering elicited data into a shared class database, to which all students in the class will have access.

Individual Written Assignments

Two ‘provisional’ individual written reports will be due each semester, and will be made available to all class members. Because of the emergent nature of a course in field methods, the exact due dates for these reports are flexible and negotiable. During the first semester, the topics of these reports will be: (1) basic phonetic inventory of Gikuyu (due early October); (2) an individually-chosen topic of interest related to Gikuyu phonetics and/or phonology (Due early December). During the second semester, the topics will be: (3) a short Gikuyu text with interlinear glosses and free translation (due early March); and (4) an individually-chosen topic of interest related to morphosyntax, semantics, and/or discourse and grammar (due late April). Each student will make his/her provisional reports available to all members of the class.

Near the end of each semester, students will give in-class presentations related to their individual projects.
Collaborative Research Projects

In addition to the individual assignments, there will be one collaborative class project due each semester. The topic of the first semester’s collaboration will be an overview of Gikuyu phonetics, phonology, and basic morphology, and is due by the last day of finals week. The topic of the collaborative report for the second semester is Gikuyu morphology and syntax. A draft of this report will be due early March, and the final version is due by the end of finals week. Ideally, we will compile both semester’s projects into a sketch grammar of Gikuyu.

Course Requirements and Grading

☐ Actively participate in class elicitation, discussion, and data sessions 35%
☐ Two ‘provisional’ written reports 35%
☐ Individual in-class presentation 10%
☐ Contribution to collaborative class project 20%

Textbook


We will be discussing this book during our Friday class meetings, one chapter per week beginning the first Friday of the semester.

* If you require course material in an alternative format or need special accommodations due to a disability, please contact the instructor and the Disability Support Services Office (111 Allen Center).
Recommended Supplementary Readings


Vol. 1: Clause structure

Vol. 2: Complex constructions

Vol. 3: Grammatical categories and the lexicon.