English 306A:
An Introduction to Linguistics
Spring 1995

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday: 1:30-3:30
Other times by appointment

8:30-10:00 Tues./Thurs.
ML 117

English 306A is an introduction to the methods of linguistic analysis as applied primarily to the English language. In a survey such as this is, only a limited number of topics can be considered but the few that we can discuss should give you some an appreciation for some issues which have, in the past several decades, influenced anthropology, psychology, literary criticism, and philosophy. I hope that you will also come to appreciate more fully the power and richness of human language.

306A is not a "grammar" course as "grammar" is popularly understood. We will be less concerned with the way any one person or group of people assume language "ought" to be used than with ways in which it is used. For this reason, you should begin to listen closely to the varieties of English spoken around you and to make yourself aware of the varying sounds, structures, and gestures which you use and which you hear and see others using. Keep in mind that we are focusing attention primarily upon the spoken language and not upon writing. Our examination will range from the individual sounds used in human language, to the structure of discourses and the development of meaning. Clearly, this will involve detailed examination of some points but while details are important, I am also concerned that you be alert to the methods involved in our analysis and the assumptions underlying those methods.

TEXT READINGS: Please read the assigned section before the days on which the subject is scheduled for discussion. You might follow the schedule outlined below even if we fall behind in lectures. It is confusing and frustrating—to say nothing of boring—to sit through classes for which you are not prepared. Obviously we are not able to talk about everything in the textbook; there is not time enough nor is there much point in rehearsing what you can read by yourself. Instead I will pick out certain issues and approach them in a slightly different manner from the textbook.

A good plan of approach is to read each section through once completely, and then to go back and re-read it, taking notes as you do so. Because the amount of reading assigned in this course is very small, such a plan is not impractical. To assist in your understanding both of method and detail, the exercises at the end of each chapter are very useful. As students have observed in the past, these exercises drive home the points in the text and if you are able to do them, you will probably have mastered the material. From time to time, we will go over a few of these and similar exercises, doing them collectively to assure ourselves that we understand the concepts.

If you have any questions about the reading or the class lectures, be sure to ask me. My job is to help you with what may be new and, at times, puzzling material. If you are reluctant to speak in class—though you may be certain that others have the same questions you do—be sure to see me after class or during office hours.
I would also recommend the formation of "study groups" of three to five people to review the sample questions that will be handed out a week or ten days before each of the three "mid-term" examinations. In fact, such groups might meet periodically to go over the exercises in the textbook and to talk about the material in the text and lectures.


**EXAMINATIONS:**
1. **20%** May 25 | These examinations will be based on the material in the textbook.
2. **25%** June 15 | and on the lectures and classes.
3. **25%** 13 July | Final (covering all of the course). Scheduled by the university during the examination period.

Lectures will cover the following topics from Akmajian et al. If you follow this schedule in your reading you should have no difficulty getting through the material:

1. **Weeks of 2 May and 9 May.**
   - Introduction
     - "The Structure of Human Language"; Chapter 1: "What is Linguistics";
     - Appendix: "The Written Representation of Language"; Chapter 11: "Language Acquisition in Child and Chimp";

2. **Weeks of 16 May, 23 May, and 30 May.**
   - Chapter 3 and Chapter 4: "Phonetics" and "Phonology."
   - Exam 1: 25 May—in class.

3. **Weeks of 6 June, 13 June, and 20 June.**
   - Chapter 2: "Morphology...."
   - Exam 2: 15 June—in class.

4. **Week of 27 June and 4 July.**
   - Chapter 5: "Syntax...."

5. **Week of 11 July and 18 July (and the day of the 26th)**
   - Chapter 6: "Semantics...."
   - Chapter 9: "Pragmatics...."
   - Exam 3: 11 July—in class
Supplementary Reading

There are a number of introductory linguistic texts available in the Dana Porter Library or as used books. These generally cover the same ground as the assigned text but with variation in presentation and examples. The text by O'Grady and Dobrovolsky also provides illustrations drawn from Canadian English and may, therefore, be of special interest:


