English

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306A  Introduction to Linguistics
09:30-10:20 MWF DWE 3522A

Hagey Hall 247, x5362
Hours: 8:00 - 9:20, Mondays, Wednesdays; 10:00-11:00, Tuesdays
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We study what it means to know and use a language: you need to know the sounds, the words, the way words group together, and how those word groups fit into a web of meaning. That's a lot just to get someone to pass you the salt or agree that the Leafs sucked last night, but you deploy those systems effortlessly every day. What's more, you know them pretty much the way you know how to breathe or swallow or ride a bike: at a below-the-surface level. At the surface, you don't know which of your consonants resonate out your nose, but you know it, because you always send the right ones out the nose. In this course, we're going to drag that knowledge to the surface, kicking and screaming.

We're also going to see how that knowledge interacts with other, non-linguistically areas of cognition—in particular, perception, emotion, categorisation, abstraction processes, and reasoning—to get some purchase on the way we express and exchange ideas and thoughts through weird little noises or marks on a page or lines and circles on a screen, like these ones.

Midterm I (8 October) 20%
Midterm II (5 November) 30%
Final (whenever they tell us) 50%


English 306A is a core course in the Cognitive Science option.

Please have the required readings done before class, and be prepared to read them again after class, and, if you're not clear about something, ASK.

The textbook will be supplemented very regularly with concepts and examples, and the lectures have a strongly cumulative structure. It is, therefore, not a very good idea to miss class.

Familiarize yourself with policy #71, particularly with regard to plagiarism and other forms of cheating.
Course links and downloads

Answers to the textbook exercises here

Miscellaneous pdfs

Consonant and Vowel Charts
Prospectus/Schedule
A FAQ for 306A
Word Categories.pdf
English Inflectional Morphemes.pdf
Forms of English be and pronouns.pdf
Klingon.pdf
Láadan.pdf

Lecture materials

Please note these files were developed to support lectures only, and made available for your convenience; they were not developed for home-study, independent of the course, and they contain many redundancies, partial explanations, enigmatic notes, and so on—the sorts of things which depend on in-class lectures to clarify. They have the extra, added aggravation of not being up-to-date until after the relevant lectures. You can download and use what’s here before the lectures, but things come up, and I frequently change the materials as the course develops, and don’t post the authoritative versions until after I have finished with a topic. Sorry. That’s the way it is.

For onscreen viewing
Intro&History.pps (2.2 MB)

For printing
Intro&History.pdf (5.3 MB)

Linguistics sites

Fields of linguistics
Linguistic Society of America FAQ
LINGUIST list site

Cognitive linguistic sites

Cognitive linguistics, the journal
Cognitive and functional linguistics page
Karen van Hoek's article on Cognitive Linguistics
Bert Peeters's article on Cognitive Linguistics
Marijolijn Verspoor's home page

Language pages

Klingon language page
I love languages page (formerly the Human languages page)
Phonetics and Phonology sites

International Phonetics Association
Interactive phonemic lessons
IPA Help
Get the IPA font here

Writing systems

Hieroglyphics
Evolution of alphabets

Miscellaneous sites

Online english grammar
Glossary of linguistics terms

Please report linkrot: HeyRandyYourLinksAreStartingToSmell!

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This is secret linguistic code for "schedule": it's a link.