# Syllabus

### Linguistics 101, UNC-Chapel Hill
### Elliott Moreton*

### 2019 August 21 (W)

## 1 Description

LING 101 is a general introduction to the structure, function, and development of natural human language. The questions addressed include

- What do you know when you know a language?

- How do children come to know it?

- How and why do languages change over time?

- Why are there so many languages?

- How can we tell when two languages have a common ancestor? When the ancestor did not survive, how can we reconstruct it?

- What properties are common to all natural languages, and why?

These questions are approached through formal analysis (usually qualitative, but sometimes quantitative) of data elicited from humans (sometimes ourselves).

There are no prerequisites.

## 2 Course organization

|  | Elliott Moreton | Cai Yu | Peng Yiwen |
|---|---|---|---|
| Role | Class instructor | Recitation instructor | Recitation instructor |
| Office | Smith 101 | Smith 304 | Smith 304 |
| Office Hours | $\Theta F$ $12 - 1$ | T 12:30–2:30 | T 12:30–2:30 |
| email | moreton @email.unc.edu | yucai96 @ad.unc.edu | yiweny @live.unc.edu |
| Class | Peabody 104 | Phillips 381 | Peabody 010 |
| Time | MW 11–11:50 | F 10:10–11 | F 10:10–11 |
| Class |  | Phillips 224 | Peabody 220 |
| Time |  | F 11:15–12:05 | F 11:15–12:05 |

Textbook (required): O'Grady et al., <u>Contemporary Linguistics</u>, 7th ed.

Website: `https://users.castle.unc.edu/~moreton/Ling101/101log.html`. **The website is where you will find the reading assignments and homework assignments.**

|  | Monday | Wednesday | Friday |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week $n$ |  | HW and reading assigned. |  |
| Week $n+1$ | HW due, reading finished. |  | HW returned. |

## 3    Requirements

Final grades for this course will be calculated as follows:

40% <u>Homework</u>. There will be problem sets approximately weekly, amounting to a total of 20–40 pages of written work per student over the course of the semester. Homeworks are due at the <u>start</u> of class on Monday. They are to be handed in on paper, but may be typed or hand-written. No homework grades will be dropped. Homework will be graded on a three-point scale from 0 to 2. It is checked for completeness and, additionally, one or two random parts are scrutinized to check the content of your answers. To receive the highest score, 2, the homework must meet two requirements:

– It must be complete.

– The parts that were scrutinized must show understanding of the material and demonstrate real effort on your part.

A homework which meets only one of the criteria will receive a grade of 1, i.e., if it is incomplete (but at least 50% complete), or if the checked portion shows lack of effort or lack of understanding. A homework which fails to meet both criteria will receive a grade of 0. Solutions will be discussed in recitation sections. In calculating final grades, 2 corresponds approximately to 100, a 1 approximately to 80, and a 0 precisely to 0; hence, missing an assignment is much worse than doing it poorly.

45% <u>Exams</u>. There will be two midterms and a final, all in-class and cumulative from the beginning of the course, all equally weighted (15% each). Please note that the exams may cover material from **any component of the course**, be it lecture, recitation, reading, or homework. (For example, an exam question may address material that was covered only in the reading.)

15% <u>Attendance and participation</u>. The recitation sections will involve a lot of discussion, which everyone should contribute to over the course of the semester. Multiple unexcused absences from recitation or lecture will have a direct negative effect on the attendance and participation grade (as well as an indirect one on the other components). The same applies to a pattern of coming late or being unprepared for class discussion.

Numeric grades will be converted to UNC's letter-grade system by mapping the numeric range from 60 to 100 onto the 10 passing letter grades from D to A, with four numeric points per step (except that A has 5 points, 96 to 100).

## 4  Policies

Attendance. If you must miss class because of a medical or family emergency, you should let your recitation TA know beforehand by emailing, phoning, slipping a note under their door, or buttonholing them in person. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get missed materials from the instructors or other students. Always check the website if you have been absent.

Reading. You are expected to come to class having done the reading and thought about it until either (a) it makes sense, or (b) you can express precisely what about it doesn't make sense; either way, you'll have something to talk about in class.

Late assignments: Homework solutions may be discussed in lecture the day the assignment is due, and will certainly be discussed in recitation sections. Therefore, as a general rule, NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT. Exceptions may be made if

- You got advance permission (by asking the recitation instructor before the due date) to hand in an assignment late, or

- You couldn't come to campus on the day the assignment is due because of a serious illness or other unexpected emergency. You need to get the assignment in to your recitation instructor at the earliest possible opportunity with a written explanation of the situation. Email is best.

Collaboration, citation, and outside sources. It is a really good idea to discuss assignments with others in the class and solve the problems together. However, each person should write up their solution alone.

The library and the World Wide Web are full of information about linguistics, and you are encouraged to use them to supplement the class materials. If the explanation of some topic in the class reading leaves you puzzled, it can be very helpful to track down a different explanation elsewhere. HOWEVER, you should remember that HOMEWORK AND EXAM PROBLEMS ARE FOR SOLVING, NOT FOR LOOKING UP THE ANSWERS TO. If your assignment is to figure out how suffix vowels affect root vowels in Pulaar (a Niger-Congo language of Mauritania), it is perfectly fine to look up concepts like "suffix". It is not at all fine to get a reference grammar of Pulaar out of the library and see what it says about suffix and root vowels!

If you collaborate or consult out-of-class sources on an assignment, you need to acknowledge them in the writeup, to give credit where it is due.

> **The Carolina Honor Code is in effect in this class, and I will treat violations seriously**. You should review it at `http://instrument.unc.edu`. If you have questions about interpretation, you should bring them to me. **Every assignment you hand in must be accompanied by a signed statement that you have complied with the Code requirements in everything related to that work**, e.g., "I completed this assignment in full compliance with the Honor Code.".

Recording. Permission to make audio or video recordings of lecture or recitation will be given only in special circumstances (e.g., to students with hearing impairments).

Communication. Email will be the main channel for official communications. Hence, everyone should check email at least once a day from Monday through Friday.

# 5 Approximate schedule

| Week | Date | | Topics | Events |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8/21 | W | Knowledge of language. Language struc- | |
| | 8/23 | F | ture. | |
| 2 | 8/26 | M | **Phonetics**: anatomy, articulation, | |
| | 8/28 | W | sound. International Phonetic Alphabet. | |
| | 8/30 | F | | |
| 3 | 9/4 | W | **Phonology**: distribution, contrast and | |
| | 9/6 | F | allophony. | |
| 4 | 9/9 | M | Natural classes and phonological rules | |
| | 9/11 | W | | |
| | 9/13 | F | | |
| 5 | 9/16 | M | **Morphology**: morphemes. Derivation | |
| | 9/18 | W | and inflection. | |
| | 9/20 | F | | |
| 6 | 9/23 | M | Lexical categories and word structure. | Midterm 1, 9/25. |
| | 9/25 | W | | |
| | 9/27 | F | | |
| 7 | 9/30 | M | **Syntax**: Constituency. X-bar theory. | |
| | 10/2 | W | | |
| | 10/4 | F | | |
| 8 | 10/7 | M | Movement and dependency. Parametric | |
| | 10/9 | W | variation. | |
| | 10/11 | F | | |
| 9 | 10/14 | M | **Semantics**: Extension vs. intension; | |
| | 10/16 | W | truth value vs. truth conditions. Com- | |
| | | | positionality. | |
| 10 | 10/21 | M | **Acquisition**: Induction and induc- | |
| | 10/23 | W | tive bias. Acquisition of first-language | |
| | 10/25 | F | phonology. | |
| 11 | 10/28 | M | Acquisition of syntax. Critical periods. | Midterm 2, 10/30. |
| | 10/30 | W | | |
| | 11/1 | F | | |
| 12 | 11/4 | M | **Language variation**: Language vari- | |
| | 11/6 | W | eties and sociolinguistics. | |
| | 11/8 | F | | |
| 13 | 11/11 | M | **Language change**: Lexical change. | |
| | 11/13 | W | Regular sound change. | |
| | 11/15 | F | | |
| 14 | 11/18 | M | Comparative reconstruction. | |
| | 11/20 | W | | |
| | 11/22 | F | | |
| 15 | 11/25 | M | Language families. | |
| 16 | 12/2 | M | **Wrap-up** | |
| | 12/4 | W | | |
| | 12/10 | F | | FINAL EXAM, noon. |