

Syllabus

Linguistics 523 (Moreton)*

2025 January 8 (W)

Time: MW 3:35–4:50
Places: Hamilton 423, or: Zoom: Meeting ID: 938 6609 2502, passcode: 984443 ➡
Instructor: Elliott Moreton, moreton@unc.edu
Office hours: (tentatively:) W 1–2, Θ 1–2, and by appointment
Office: Smith 101, or: Zoom: Meeting ID 933 8826 2342, passcode 426812 ➡
Textbook: none

This class is in-person only. Zoom links are provided in case of emergency.

1 Description

LING 523 is a graduate-level introduction to phonology, the study of the sound systems of naturally-occurring spoken human languages. We will study phonology by building and testing *models*—devices that simulate human speakers, except that we’ll only be building them on paper—with the goal of explaining

1. *productivity* of sound patterns within a given language (predicting what speakers will and won’t do)
2. *typology* of sound patterns across all languages (predicting what languages will and won’t do)
3. *acquisition* of sound patterns by language learners (predicting what learners will and won’t do)

Our models will simulate many of the world’s most common phonological phenomena, such as allophony, neutralization, harmony, and assimilation. We will apply formal modelling tools including distinctive features, autosegmental and prosodic representations, rewrite rules, and Optimality Theory.

LING 523 is intended mainly for second-semester graduate students in Linguistics. Credit cannot be had for both LING 523 and LING 200.

The prerequisite for LING 523 is LING 520, Linguistic Phonetics, or consent of instructor.

2 Requirements

Final grades for the course will be calculated as follows:




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- 10% *Attendance and participation.* Students are supposed to come to class, do the assigned readings on time, and participate in class activities and discussion. Missing classes will make it hard to keep up. It will also lower your participation grade (unless due to illness or other unavoidable events, which it is your responsibility to document).
- 40% *Homework and quizzes.* In addition to two quizzes, there will be numerous problem sets throughout the semester. As is often the case in linguistics courses, the homework may be meant as preparation for the class, not the other way around. Students may have to figure out how to do things which they have not yet been shown how to do.
- 30% *Exams.* There will be one midterm and one final, both in-class, all cumulative from the beginning of the course.
- 20% *Squib.* A squib is essentially an extended, self-designed homework problem: You design it, you solve it, you present your solution to the class. You'll start looking for a topic later in the semester; I'll give you more information at that time.

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). It is possible to do well in this class and still get a grade other than A.

3 Where to find necessary things on line

The main tools we will be using to communicate in this course are the following:

1. The class log ¹, on the World Wide Web, which is updated after each class. Here you will find
 - (a) A brief outline of what was covered each day
 - (b) A list of any assignments made that day
2. The Canvas site ². Everyone who is enrolled in the class should already have access to it. Our class's ID, if you need it, is 82598. The main things we will need there are
 - (a) Course materials like slides, handouts, and readings, (under **Modules**)
 - (b) The place to pick up written assignments (under **Assignments**)
 - (c) A discussion forum for asynchronous collaboration (under **Discussions**)
 - (d) The gradebook (under **Gradebook**)
3. The Zoom meeting link (see p. 1 of the syllabus). If Zoom is not already installed on your computer, please go to zoom.unc.edu ³ to get it.

¹<http://users.castle.unc.edu/~moreton/Ling523/523log.html>

²<https://uncch.instructure.com/courses/82598>

³zoom.unc.edu

4 The International Phonetic Alphabet

We'll need to use the IPA. Here are some links that may help:

1. A freeware Unicode IPA font, Charis SIL⁴ that works on Windows, Mac, and Linux systems.
2. An IPA keyboard⁵ webpage. You type by clicking on IPA symbols, then cut and paste the result into your word processor.
3. Guidance on typing IPA on a Windows machine⁶
4. Guidance on typing IPA on a Mac⁷

5 Policies

Attendance. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get missed materials from me or other students. Always check the website if you have been absent.

Reading. Students are expected to come to class having done the readings. If I start getting the impression that people aren't doing the readings, I'm going to institute pop quizzes. These are annoying because they waste class time, but coming to class without having done the reading wastes even more class time.

Homework. You'll get detailed information about each one when it's assigned, but there are some general points that apply to all of them. When you hand in homework, it can be handwritten, word-processed, or even typewritten, but it has to be (1) neat, (2) legible, (3) on paper, and (4) well-organized. Homeworks handed in on time (i.e., at the start of class on the due date) will be graded on a scale from 1 to 3 in a way that will be explained along with each assignment using a grading rubric. The 1–3 scale will map approximately onto a 60–100 scale in computation of the final grade; hence, a 0 is *much* worse than a 1. Other homeworks will receive a zero.

Late assignments. As a general rule, NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT. Exceptions *may* be made if

- You got *advance* permission (by asking me *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 at the earliest possible opportunity with a *written explanation* of the situation. Email is best.

Collaboration and citation. 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. If you work with others, or look up information in sources that aren't officially part of this course, you are required to acknowledge them in the writeup. (There is no shame in collaborating, or in digging out information independently, but you need to give credit where it is due.)

Generative artificial intelligence. “People” in the preceding paragraph means “humans”. Use of generative AI for this class is governed by the guidelines developed by UNC-CH's Generative AI Committee, which can be found at this link⁸ starting at the heading “Syllabus guidelines for

⁴<https://software.sil.org/charis/>

⁵<https://westonruter.github.io/ipa-chart/keyboard/>

⁶<https://www.gouskova.com/2016/09/04/international-phonetic-alphabet-fonts-and-keyboards/>

⁷http://wstyler.ucsd.edu/posts/ipa_with_osx.html

⁸<https://provost.unc.edu/student-generative-ai-usage-guidance/>

generative AI” and continuing through the end of the page. The instructor (and the Honor Court, if it comes to that) will expect you to have read these guidelines. They apply to every aspect of the course, as long as they are not superseded by explicit written instructions from the instructor in an assignment.

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.

6 (Approximate) schedule

Week	Date	Topics
1	1/10 W	Course overview. What is phonology?
2	1/13 M 1/15 W	Motivating phonology: Predictable vs. unpredictable information; grammar vs. lexicon. Deciding between competing analyses. Phonological distributions.
Representations and rules		
3	1/24 M 1/22 W	Natural classes.
4	1/27 M 1/29 W	Distinctive-feature theory. Testing predictions.
5	2/3 M 2/5 W	Phonological modelling using derivational rules. Rule ordering.
6	2/12 M 2/14 W	Structure below the segment level: autosegmental representations.
7	2/17 M 2/19 W	Structure above the segment level: syllables, syllabification, and syllable-sensitive processes. MIDTERM.
Optimality Theory		
8	2/24 M 2/26 W	Optimality Theory: the basics. Candidates, optimality, markedness, faithfulness.
9	3/3 M 3/5 W	Ranking constraints. Alignment. Universality of constraints.
10	3/17 M 3/19 W	Factorial typology.
Case studies		
11	3/24 M 3/26 W	Segmental processes.
12	3/31 M 4/2 W	Positional privilege: Positional Markedness and Positional Faithfulness.
13	4/7 M 4/9 W	Acquisition of phonology in a first language.
14	4/14 M 4/16 W	Beyond Optimality Theory: empirical challenges and theoretical alternatives.
15	4/21 M 4/23 W	Course summary. Squib presentations.
16	4/28 M 5/1	Squib presentations. FINAL EXAM, 4–7 p.m.

7 General UNC-CH course policies and resources

Accessibility Resources The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu.

AI Use Policy Use of generative AI in this class is governed by the guidelines developed by UNC-CH's Generative AI Committee, which can be found at this link [➡⁹](#) starting at the heading "Syllabus guidelines for generative AI" and continuing through the end of the page. The instructor (and the Honor Court, if it comes to that) will expect you to have read these guidelines.

Attendance Policy No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).

Please communicate with me early about potential absences. Please be aware that you are bound by the Honor Code when making a request for a University approved absence.

Code of Conduct All students are expected to adhere to University policy and follow the guidelines of the UNC Code of Conduct. Additional information can be found at <https://studentconduct.unc.edu/>.

Counseling and Psychological Services UNC-Chapel Hill is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body. The Heels Care Network website [➡¹⁰](#) is a place to access the many mental health resources at Carolina. CAPS is the primary mental health provider for students, offering timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services. Go to the CAPS website [➡¹¹](#) or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health building for an initial evaluation to learn more. Students can also call CAPS 24/7 at 919-966-3658 for immediate assistance.

Diversity Statement I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve, I appreciate suggestions.

⁹<https://provost.unc.edu/student-generative-ai-usage-guidance/>

¹⁰<http://care.unc.edu/>

¹¹<https://caps.unc.edu/>

Equal Opportunity and Compliance — Accommodation Equal Opportunity and Compliance Accommodations Team (Accommodations — UNC Equal Opportunity and Compliance [➡](#)¹²) receives requests for accommodations for disability, pregnancy and related conditions, and sincerely held religious beliefs and practices through the University’s Policy on Accommodations. EOC Accommodations team determines eligibility and reasonable accommodations consistent with state and federal laws.

Grade Appeal Process If you have any concerns with grading and/or feel you have been awarded an incorrect grade, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. If we cannot resolve the issue, you may talk to our director of undergraduate studies or department chair.

Honor Code Statements

1. All students are expected to follow the guidelines of the UNC honor code. In particular, students are expected to refrain from “lying, cheating, or stealing” in the academic context. If you are unsure about which actions violate that honor code, please see me or consult honor.unc.edu. (source: Department of Asian Studies)
2. Students are bound by the Honor Code in taking exams and in written work. The Honor Code of the University is in effect at all times, and the submission of work signifies understanding and acceptance of those requirements. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please consult with me if you have any questions about the Honor Code. (source: syllabus from section of HIST 486 offered in 2015)
3. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-administered honor system and judicial system for over 100 years. The system is the responsibility of students and is regulated and governed by them, but faculty share the responsibility. If you have questions about your responsibility under the honor code, please bring them to your instructor or consult with the office of the Dean of Students or the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. This document, adopted by the Chancellor, the Faculty Council, and the Student Congress, contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. Your full participation and observance of the honor code is expected (honor.unc.edu). (source: syllabus from section of GEOG 67 offered in 2015)

Syllabus changes The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

Title IX Resources Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC [➡](#)¹³ or by contacting the University’s Title IX Coordinator, Elizabeth Hall (titleix-coordinator@unc.edu), or the Report and Response Managers in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu). Please note that I am designated as a Responsible Employee, which means I must report to the EOC any information I receive about the forms of misconduct listed in this paragraph. If you’d like to speak with a confidential resource, those include Counseling and Psychological Services, the University’s Ombuds Office, and the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu). Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

¹²<https://eoc.unc.edu/accommodations/>

¹³<https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>

Undergraduate Testing Center The College of Arts and Sciences provides a secure, proctored environment in which exams can be taken. The center works with instructors to proctor exams for their undergraduate students who are not registered with ARS and who do not need testing accommodations as provided by ARS. In other words, the Center provides a proctored testing environment for students who are unable to take an exam at the normally scheduled time (with pre-arrangement by your instructor). For more information, visit <http://testingcenter.web.unc.edu/>.

- Additional student resources**
1. The Learning Center: The UNC Learning Center is a resource both for students who are struggling in their courses and for those who want to be proactive and develop sound study practices to prevent falling behind. They offer individual consultations, peer tutoring, academic coaching, test prep programming, study skills workshops, and peer study groups. If you think you might benefit from their services, please visit them in SASB North or visit their website to set up an appointment: <http://learningcenter.unc.edu>.
 2. The Writing Center: The Writing Center is located in the Student and Academic Services Building and offers personalized writing consultations as well as a variety of other resources. This could be a wonderful resource to help with your writing assignments in this course (and any assignments in your other courses). You do not need a complete draft of your assignment to visit; they can help you at any stage! You can chat with someone in the writing center or set up as appointment on their website: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu>.
 3. Resources for Success in Writing: UNC has a Writing Center that provides one-on-one assistance to students free of charge. To make an appointment, browse the Writing Center's online resources, or submit a draft online. They have additional useful information, such as handouts on how to cite online.