

## Course information & policies (Syllabus)

<i>Instructor</i>	<b>Jennifer Smith</b> (j1smith@email.unc.edu), 309 Smith Bldg, <i>she/her</i> • You are welcome to call me Jen, Dr. Smith, or Prof. Smith.
<i>Course meets</i>	<b>TuTh 12:30–1:45, Dey 304</b> [F-8 on map]   3.0 credit hours • Includes lecture, group discussion, and hands-on analysis/problem-solving. • Pre-class preparation: practice problems, assignments, and/or readings.
<i>Course materials</i> (no textbook)	<b>Web site:</b> <a href="https://users.castle.unc.edu/~j1smith/ling200.html">https://users.castle.unc.edu/~j1smith/ling200.html</a> • Required readings, optional readings, and assignments. • Lecture outline slides, relevant links, assigned preparation, and a detailed course syllabus (updated after every class). See also the LING 200 <b>Canvas</b> site.
<i>Office hours</i>	Tu 2:15-3:15 (309 Smith Bldg) and by appointment • Come if you have questions, need help, or want more information—or just say hi!

### I. Overview

To “know a language,” a speaker needs to know its **phonology**—how its speech sounds pattern. Phonological knowledge is largely unconscious, but it shapes language behavior in many ways: it determines which speech sounds seem similar or different, it produces a “foreign accent” in a new language, and it affects what happens in tongue twisters and speech errors. Phonological knowledge also plays a role in child language acquisition, language disorders, how words are borrowed from other languages, the development of reading and writing skills, and more.

In LING 200, we will investigate the phonology of many different languages. Through both discussion and problem solving, we will work to develop a general model of phonological knowledge that accounts for both the similarities and also the differences seen in the sound-system structures of the world’s languages.

Course goals and key learning objectives

This course will enable you to:

- Identify systematic patterns in, and state insightful generalizations about, language data
- Apply tools and methods of phonological theory to analyze patterns in language data
- Use the results of phonological data analysis to critically evaluate claims and proposals about the human language system
- Identify real-life situations where phonological theory provides predictions or insights
- Develop and strengthen general skills for critical thinking, model building, hypothesis testing, and argumentation

Who is this course for?

This course is designed for linguistics majors and minors, and others who would like to know more about the mental patterning of language sounds. The **prerequisite** is LING 101/ Introduction to Language. This course satisfies the Natural Scientific Investigation Focus Capacity (FC-NATSCI) in the IDEAs in Action curriculum.

Note: You may count **either** LING 200 **or** LING 523/Phonological Theory I toward the Linguistics major, but not both. To explore language sound structure in more depth after LING 200, try LING 526/Second-Language Phonetics and Phonology, LING 520/ Linguistic Phonetics, or LING 422/Research Methods in Phonetics and Laboratory Phonology.

## II. Course requirements and grading information

Course final grades are calculated as follows:

A. Participation	15%
B. Phonetics review quiz	5%
C. Write-up assignments (2)	45%
D. Midterm exam	20%
E. Final exam	15%

### Grading scale (letter→ number)

A+*	97–100 (98)	C+	77–79 (78)
A	93–96 (95)	C	73–76 (75)
A–	90–92 (91)	C–	70–72 (71)
B+	87–89 (88)	D+	67–69 (68)
B	83–86 (85)	D	60–66 (65)
B–	80–82 (81)	F	0–59

\*No A+ course grades at UNC-CH

### A. Attendance/participation

Phonology is best *learned by doing*. In general, plan to **attend** class, **complete** the assigned preparation on time, and **participate** in class activities and discussion.

That said, any of us may encounter health, family, or personal issues that interfere with attendance and participation. Therefore, flexibility is built into the attendance and participation course components as follows.

- **Practice problems:** Before most class meetings, one or more **practice problems** (PPs) will be assigned. These are usually phonology data sets that you are asked to analyze. PPs prepare you for the upcoming class discussion and/or help you review course material, and they may *build on* or *extend beyond* concepts covered in previous class discussions.
  - PPs are **essential preparation** for class. Budget **enough time** for each PP, possibly even an hour or more depending on the problem. For best results, **print out the data sets and mark them up while you think**. This really does make them easier to solve.
- **Participation grades:** There will be frequent **preparation questions** (submitted online before class) and **participation activities** (completed during class, often as part of a discussion or problem-solving activity). These will all be graded pass/fail.
  - *Preparation questions* earn a pass if they (a) are complete and (b) show some application of course concepts, even if they are only partly correct. They are often based on the PP assigned for the upcoming class.
  - *Participation activities* earn a pass if there is evidence that you participated (this will depend on the type of activity). Some will be PollEverywhere polls.

Participation grades are determined by the percentage of preparation questions and participation activities passed after the lowest 15% of scores are dropped. This allows you to miss or skip several with no consequence. For this reason, there are no make-ups for missed questions/activities except in cases of University Approved Absence (see below).

- There is no grade for attendance specifically. If you need to miss class for health or other reasons, you do not need to ask permission or explain your absence. However, note that you may miss participation activities when you miss class, and remember that it is your responsibility to check the “[Daily syllabus](#)” web page for upcoming preparation or assignments.

#### B. Phonetics review quiz

- The phonetics quiz is on **Tu Jan 17** (in class, closed book). It reviews Ling 101-level phonetic symbols like [æ] or [ŋ] and properties like *velar* or *fricative*.

#### C. Write-up assignments

There will be **2 write-up assignments**. These give you a chance to apply your knowledge of phonology, and to develop your skills in analytical thinking and problem solving.

- The core of each write-up is a **phonological analysis** problem, similar to what you will have been doing in practice problems and in-class discussion exercises.
- The write-up also includes **argumentation** in defense of your solution, perhaps showing why it is better than an alternative. You may also be asked to go beyond what has been covered in class in order to consider the implications or shortcomings of a particular analysis or approach. **Grades will depend on how clearly and carefully you present and argue for your analysis**, not only on whether the analysis is “right.”
- Specific information about **expectations and grading criteria** will be provided for each write-up assignment. A tentative **due-date** for WU #1 is shown on the “[Schedule of topics](#)” page on the course web site, subject to minor adjustment as the course proceeds. WU #2 is due at the final-exam period, **Th May 4, 12-3pm**.

#### D. Midterm exam

- The midterm exam is scheduled for **Th March 23** (this date will change only if class is canceled on Tu Mar 21 or Th Mar 23). It covers the first two units of the course: segmental phonology and syllable structure.

#### E. Final exam

- The final exam is scheduled, according to the Registrar’s calendar, on **Th May 4, 12-3pm**. It is cumulative, which means it may include all topics covered in the course.

### III. Course policies

Devices in class: Please use laptops or other devices only for class-related activities.

Studies show that students who use devices for non-class activities impair their own learning—and their neighbors’ learning too (Fried 2006; Sana, Weston, & Cepeda 2013).

Class absences: If you need to miss class for health or other reasons, be sure to keep up with course material and assignment deadlines posted on the course web site.

Lecture outlines and other items will be posted there shortly before or after class.

Extensions for write-up assignments:

- (i) If you know an assignment will be late, please email me to request an extension **at least 24 hours** before it is due. I don’t need proof that you

“need” extra time, and in most cases, I will give you an extension. Note that in some cases (such as when the material will be discussed in class before your extended deadline), there will be a one-grade or two-grade late penalty.

- (ii) If an emergency makes you unable to complete an assignment by its deadline, please email me to let me know as early as possible. Such assignments will generally be accepted, possibly with a late penalty.
- (iii) Preparation questions are **not** accepted late for credit (except in cases of a University Approved Absence; see below), because the lowest 15% of scores are dropped (see above).

Collaboration/citation for assignments:

- (i) *Practice problems and preparation questions:* You are encouraged to **discuss** these with other members of our class. However, any **written work** you submit for your preparation questions must be written by yourself alone.
- (ii) *Write-up assignments:* For each write-up, you will be told whether it must be completed individually or may be completed as a group. Again, discussion with other members of the class is encouraged, but every student or group must write up his/her/their solution **independently**. Please **list any collaborators** you or your group worked with on a write-up assignment.
- (iii) *Consulting outside materials* (materials other than course readings, handouts, course web pages, or in-class notes) for an assignment is **discouraged** unless otherwise stated, and may negatively impact your grade—but if any outside materials are consulted, you are required to **cite such outside references**.

Make-up exams: If you must miss the midterm exam, contact me *in advance* to determine whether you are eligible for a make-up exam. Without prior permission, a missed exam may not be made up unless you have documentation from Health Services, your dean, or another appropriate authority to demonstrate that your absence was unexpected and unavoidable. (The *final* exam may only be made up with official permission from the office of the Dean of Students.)

Weather cancellations: Unless University classes are officially canceled, you should assume that our class will be held, but if there is bad weather, use your own judgment about whether it is safe for you to travel to campus. If classes are canceled, check the course web site for announcements and schedule changes.

Other policies and resources: See the document “Information for Undergraduate Classes” at [this link](#) for general policies on: syllabus changes, attendance policy (including University Approved Absences), Honor Code, acceptable use of technology resources, Accessibility Resources (ARS), Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Title IX, non-discrimination, diversity, the Undergraduate Testing Center, the Learning Center, the Writing Center, and grade appeals.

#### IV. Schedule of course topics

The schedule of course topics is available on the course web site, at:  
<https://users.castle.unc.edu/~jlsmith/ling200/schedule.html>

## V. Strategies for success in this course

This course proceeds on the assumption that students do the following between class meetings **every time**, even if no written assignment is due:

- **Check the web site:** Check the course web site to see what is due for the next class and what new handouts have been posted, if any. [Remember to use the Refresh/Reload button or Ctrl+F5 to get the latest version of each page that you visit.]
- **Review:** Go back over the day's data sets—both assigned practice problems (PPs) and in-class discussion exercises (DEs)—to **make sure you understand** what analysis we proposed and why. If a new handout has been posted, read through it and think about how it relates to what we have discussed in class. Check the instructor comments on your completed preparation questions to see if there are topics or concepts that you should review or ask questions about.
- **Prepare:** If a practice problem (PP) has been assigned, download it, print it out, and work through it—*then* answer the corresponding preparation questions. **Class discussion next time will assume that you have already completed the most recent PP.** If a discussion exercise (DE) has been announced in advance for the next class, you may wish to print it out.
- **For more information:** Optional readings are available for certain course topics (through Course Reserves on Canvas), for additional examples and discussion.

## VI. Focus Capacity: Natural Scientific Investigation

Learning Outcomes |

These are the learning outcomes that are expected of students after completing a course.

- Demonstrate the ability to use scientific knowledge, logic, and imagination to construct and justify scientific claims about naturally occurring phenomena, including validation through rigorous empirical testing.
- Analyze and apply processes of scientific inquiry as dictated by the phenomena and questions at hand. These include generating and testing hypotheses or theories pertaining to the natural world; using logic and creativity to design investigations to test these hypotheses; collecting and interpreting data about the natural world; making inferences that respect measurement error; building and justifying arguments and explanations; communicating and defending conclusions; revising arguments and conclusions based on new evidence and/or feedback from peers; and synthesizing new knowledge into broader scientific understanding.
- Evaluate science-related claims and information from popular and/or peer-reviewed sources by examining the relationship between the evidence, arguments, and conclusions presented and by assessing consistency with existing knowledge from valid and reliable scientific sources.
- Identify, assess, and make informed decisions about ethical issues at the intersections of the natural sciences and society.

Questions for Students

These are the types of questions you should be able to answer after completing a course.

- What rules govern the natural world and how are they discovered, tested, and validated?
- What is distinctive about the approach to understanding employed in the natural sciences?
- What challenges are encountered in making measurements of the natural world?
- What are the limits of investigation in the natural sciences?