

LING 200 | Phonology — Fall 2024 | UNC Chapel Hill

Course information & policies (Syllabus)

<i>Instructor</i>	Jennifer Smith (j1smith@email.unc.edu), 309 Smith Bldg, <i>she/her</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You are welcome to call me Jen, Dr. Smith, or Prof. Smith.
<i>Course meets</i>	TuTh 11:00–12:15, Dey 304 [E-8 on map] 3.0 credit hours <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	Web site: https://users.castle.unc.edu/~j1smith/ling200.html <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 Canvas site.
<i>Office hours</i>	W 12:15-1:15 (309 Smith Bldg) and by appointment; Zoom by request <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 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 (see also **VI.** below for FC-NATSCI 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 & preparation	15%
B. Phonetics review quiz (1)	5%
C. Skill-check HWs (~5)	20%
D. In-class (midterm) exam (1)	20%
E. Write-up assignments (2)	40%

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. Participation & preparation

Phonology is best learned by doing. To get the most out of this course, you should plan to **attend** class, **complete** preparation on time, and **participate** in activities and discussion. That said, any of us may have health, family, or personal issues that interfere with class attendance, so **flexibility** is built into the participation & preparation course component.

- **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 points:** Expect frequent **preparation questions** (submitted in Canvas before class) and **in-class activities** (completed during class, often as part of a discussion). These are graded pass/fail; a pass earns **one** participation point.
 - *Preparation questions* earn a point 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 a PP assigned for the upcoming class.
 - *In-class activities* earn a point if there is evidence that you participated (this will depend on the type of activity). Some may use PollEverywhere.

Your participation & preparation grade is determined by the percentage of participation points earned out of the total possible, except that anyone who earns **at least 90%** of the possible points will earn an A (95). This allows you to miss or skip several activities with no consequence. For this reason, there are no make-ups for missed preparation questions or in-class 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. But

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 lecture slides, handouts, and any upcoming preparation or assignments.

B. Phonetics review quiz

- The phonetics quiz is on **Tu Aug 27** (in class, closed book). It reviews Ling 101-level phonetic symbols like [æ] or [ŋ] and properties like *velar* or *fricative*.

C. Skill-check HWs

There will be approximately **5 skill-check homework assignments**. These will be similar to preparation questions, but will check your mastery of skills that have already been covered in the course.

- Each skill-check HW will be **graded 95/85/0**. For 95, an assignment is complete, mostly correct, and shows mastery and insightful application of the skill. For 85, an assignment is at least mostly complete and shows at least some mastery of the skill.
- Completing your skill-check HWs **on time** will help you keep up in the course. However, to allow for some flexibility in case of emergencies, any skill-check HW will be **accepted late** for two weeks after the deadline. Late skill-checks will incur a 10-point penalty, and feedback from me may be delayed.
- There will be one optional **make-up** skill-check HW assigned near the end of the semester, which will replace your lowest skill-check grade; the make-up skill-check must be submitted on time (no late submissions).

D. In-class (midterm) exam

- The in-class exam is scheduled for **Tu Oct 29** (this date will change only if class is canceled on Th Oct 24 or Tu Oct 29). It covers the first three units: segment representations, morpheme representations, and syllable structure.
- 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.
- This course does not have a sit-down final exam (see **WU #2**).

E. 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.”

- 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 end of the final-exam period, **Tu Dec 10, 3pm**.
- **Deadline extension** policy for write-up assignments:
 - (i) If you know a write-up 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. Course policies

- A. 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, language variety, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, physical and learning ability, and any other way in which individuals differ from one another. I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students, and I appreciate any suggestions.
- B. 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).
- C. Artificial intelligence (AI) use: Use of generative AI tools of any kind is not permitted in this course without written permission from me. Any unauthorized use of these tools will be considered an instance of academic dishonesty and will be referred to the Honor System.
- D. Recording of class sessions: In general, no audio or video recording of class sessions is permitted. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with me.
- E. Class absences: See information under II.A. Participation & preparation above.
- F. Extensions, make-up exams and late submissions: Please see under the relevant grading information section in II. above.
- G. Collaboration/citation for assignments:
 - (i) *Practice problems, preparation questions, and skill-check HWs:* You are encouraged to **discuss** these with other members of our class. However, any **written work** you submit 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**.

- H. 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 (UNC standard items):

- Attendance policy — As stated in the University's [Class 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: [University Approved Absence Office \(UAAO\)](#) website provides information and [FAQs for students](#) and [FAQs for faculty](#) about University Approved Absences
 2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by 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).
- 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 [studentconduct.unc.edu](#).
- 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.
- Equal Opportunity and Compliance / Accommodations — Equal Opportunity and Compliance Accommodations Team ([Accommodations - UNC Equal Opportunity and Compliance](#)) 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.
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) — UNC-Chapel Hill is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body. The [Heels Care Network](#) website 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](#) 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.
- Title IX and related 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](#) or by contacting the [University's Title IX Coordinator](#), Elizabeth Hall, or the [Report and Response Coordinators](#) in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office. 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 and the [Gender Violence Services Coordinators](#). Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](#).

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 refresh/reload!]
- **Review:** Go back over the day's data sets to **make sure you understand** what analysis we proposed and why. Review the lecture slides and see if you have any questions about the material. If a new handout has been posted, read it and think about how it relates to what we have discussed in class. Check the feedback on your work to find anything that you need to 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.
- **Supplemental readings:** Optional readings are available for certain course topics (through Course Reserves on Canvas), for additional examples and discussion.
- UNC learning resources: The [Learning Center](#) and the [Writing Center](#) have many programs and resources that might be useful!

VI. Focus Capacity: Natural Scientific Investigation

Learning Outcomes | *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 | *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?