<h1 style="text-align:center">LING 200 | Phonology — Spring 2026 | UNC Chapel Hill
Course information & policies (Syllabus)</h1>

Instructor	**Jennifer Smith** (jlsmith@email.unc.edu), 309 Smith Bldg, *she/her* • You are welcome to call me Jen, Dr. Smith, or Prof. Smith.
Course meets	**MWF 12:20–1:10** [see Canvas Syllabus for location]	3.0 credit hours • Includes lecture, group discussion, and hands-on analysis/problem-solving. • Pre-class preparation: practice problems, assignments, and/or readings.
Course materials (no textbook)	**Website:** `https://users.castle.unc.edu/~jlsmith/ling200.html` • 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.
Office hours	Tu 2:00-3:30 (309 Smith Bldg) **and** by appointment; Zoom by request • 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 the similarities as well as the differences 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.	Quizzes (2)	20%
C.	Skill-check assignments (3)	20%
D.	Exams (midterm, final)	30%
E.	Analysis paper (1)	15%

*No A+ course grades at UNC-CH

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

If you have any questions of concerns about grading, please discuss them with me as soon as possible. If you and I cannot resolve the issue, you may talk to our [director of undergraduate studies or department chair](#).

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 **participation activities** (completed during class, often as part of a discussion). These are graded **complete/incomplete**.
  - *Preparation questions* are complete if they (a) are fully answered and (b) show application of course concepts, even if they are only partly correct. They are often based on a PP assigned for the upcoming class.
  - *Participation activities* are complete if there is evidence that you participated (this will depend on the type of activity).

  Your participation & preparation grade is determined by the percentage of complete activities out of the total possible, with the lowest 10% of actiivties dropped. 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 participation 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 outlines, handouts, data sets, and any upcoming preparation or assignments.

B. Quizzes

There are two **quizzes** (in class, closed book). Preparing for these helps you master key basic skills that we will build on for more advanced thinking.

- The **segments and classes quiz**, on **F Jan 16**, assesses your ability to recognize Ling 101 IPA symbols and use sound properties to describe sound classes.
- The **OT analysis quiz** is currently scheduled for **late March**. This quiz assesses your ability to use and understand the OT formalism (constraint tableaus).

C. Skill-check assignments

There are **3 skill-check homework assignments**. These will be similar to preparation questions, but will check your mastery of skills once they have been covered in the course, including higher-level analysis and argumentation skills.

- Each skill-check assignment is given a **letter grade**. An assignment earns an A if it is complete, is mostly correct, is neatly and clearly presented, and shows mastery and insightful application of course skills and concepts.
- Completing your skill-check assignments **on time** will help you keep up in the course and allows us to discuss the analysis in class on the day the assignment is due. 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 penalty (10 points before class discussion; 20 points after class discussion), and feedback from me may be delayed.

D. Exams (midterm and final)

This course has one midterm and one final exam (in class, closed book). A notes page may be allowed for part or all of each exam; see the exam review guides for details.

- The **midterm** exam covers the first two units of the course. It is currently scheduled for **W Feb 25**. This date will change only if there is a significant schedule disruption, including if class is canceled on M Feb 23 or W Feb 25.
  - If you must miss the midterm exam, contact me *in advance* to determine whether you are eligible for a **make-up midterm**. 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 is cumulative, but with a focus on material covered after the midterm. It will take place on **Th May 7, 12-3pm**, in our regular classroom.
  - Final exams are scheduled by the university. Apply for an Exam Excuse if you need to schedule a **make-up final**.
- The two exams together are worth 30% of the course grade. Whichever exam is higher for you will contribute 20% to your grade, and the other will be 10%.

E. Analysis paper

The **analysis paper** gives you a chance to apply your knowledge of phonology and to demonstrate your skills in analytical thinking and problem solving.

- The core of the assignment is a **phonological analysis** problem, similar to what you will have been doing in practice problems and in-class discussion exercises.

- The analysis paper 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."

- More information about **expectations and grading criteria** will be provided later. A tentative **due-date** is shown on the "[Schedule of topics](#)" web page, subject to minor adjustment if needed.

- **Deadline extension** policy for the analysis paper:
  - (i) If you know your analysis paper 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 the analysis paper 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. 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). Some portions of class time are **device-free** (except for official accommodations).

B. Artificial intelligence (AI) use: Use of generative AI tools of any kind is not permitted in this course unless otherwise specified on an assignment. Any unauthorized use of these tools will be considered an instance of academic dishonesty and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

C. 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.

D. Class absences: See information under II.A. Participation & preparation above, and see below for the UNC Attendance Policy on University Excused Absences.

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 assignments:* 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) *Analysis paper:* Again, discussion with other members of the class is encouraged, but every student must write the assignment **independently**. Please **list any collaborators** you discussed the analysis assignment with.

(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 (UNC standard and required 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 University Compliance Office , or in the case of short-term military service, the Dean of Students.
  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 University Compliance Office.

- Code of Conduct — I expect all students to follow the guidelines of the UNC Student Code of Conduct. In particular, students are expected to be aware of policies related to academic integrity. You can read more about the Code of Conduct at studentconduct.unc.edu. In any course, including mine, what constitutes cheating can change from one activity to another. For example, collaboration may be encouraged for an assignment but qualify as cheating during an exam. Please see my guidelines for each activity, and if you are unsure, please ask me to clarify.

- Non-discrimination policy — As set out in the University's Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination, the University is committed to providing an environment where all members of our community can learn, work, and thrive. Consistent with these principles and applicable laws, it is therefore the University's policy not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status as consistent with the University's Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct. No person, on the basis of protected status, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under any University program or activity, including with respect to employment terms and conditions. The University will consider only relevant factors such as individual abilities and qualifications in admissions, hiring, disciplinary action, and all other decisions and will apply consistent standards of conduct and performance.

  If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (email reportandresponse@unc.edu or see additional contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the University Compliance Office. Please note that I am designated as a Responsible Employee, which means that I must report to the UCO any information I receive about harassment or discrimination. If you'd like to speak with a confidential resource, those include Counseling and Psychological Services and the University's Ombuds Office.

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) use — Carolina students are expected to follow these AI guidelines:
  1. AI should help you think, not think for you. You may be able to use these tools to brainstorm

ideas, research topics, and analyze problems, but you must decide what's appropriate and accurate.

2. Engage responsibly with AI. You must evaluate AI-generated outputs for potential biases, limitations, inaccuracies, false output, and ethical implications. Do not put personal or confidential data into these tools.
3. The use of AI must be open and documented. You should declare, explain, and cite any use of AI in the creation of your work using applicable standards (e.g., APA, MLA, course guidelines). Understand that you are ultimately 100% responsible for your final product.
4. Follow specific AI guidelines in this syllabus. If you are unsure, check with me. Guidance offered in this syllabus would be referenced should an issue be referred to Student Conduct for alleged academic misconduct.

- Acceptable Use policy — By attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the acceptable use of IT systems and services. The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) sets the expectation that you will use the University's technology resources responsibly, consistent with the University's mission. In the context of a class, it's quite likely you will participate in online activities that could include personal information about you or your peers, and the AUP addresses your obligations to protect the privacy of class participants. In addition, the AUP addresses matters of others' intellectual property, including copyright. These are only a couple of typical examples, so you should consult the full [Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy](#), which covers topics related to using digital resources, such as privacy, confidentiality and intellectual property.

  Additionally, consult the [Safe Computing at UNC](#) website for information about data security policies, updates, and tips on keeping your identity, information, and devices safe.

- 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.

Resources for student wellness and learning

- University Compliance Office — University Compliance Office (UCO) Accommodations Team ([Accommodations - UNC 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. UCO 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 UCO](#) or by contacting the [University's Title IX Coordinator](#), Elizabeth Hall, or the [Report and Response Managers](#) in the University Compliance Office (UCO) (formerly the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office). Please note that I am designated as a Responsible Employee, which means I must report to the UCO 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](#). Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](#).

- Writing Center and Learning Center — The [Writing Center](#) and [Learning Center](#) have many valuable resources to support student learning.

IV. Schedule of course topics

The schedule of course topics is available on the course website, 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 website:* Check the course website to see what is due for the next class and what new materials 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 outline 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.

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?