

Today's topics:

- **Course overview**
- **What is linguistics?**
What is phonetics?

This is **LING/ANTH 520, Linguistic Phonetics**

0. Today's objectives

After today's class, you should be able to:

- Describe the goals, structure, and requirements of this course
 - And know where to go to find the details
- Give a basic definition of the terms *linguistics* and *phonetics*
- Give a basic explanation of the kinds of research questions that are relevant for linguistic phonetics

1. Introduction to the course

Welcome!

- I am **Jen Smith** [[my web site](#)]
 - Please call me Jen or Dr. Smith or Prof. Smith (“Ms. Smith” is not my professional title)

1. Introduction to the course

- Required for **first-year MA students** in linguistics
 - Prerequisite for Phonological Theory I (LING 523)
 - *Useful for:* phonetics, phonology, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, documentation
- Fulfills a “core course” for **BA LING majors**
 - *Relates to:* phonology, experimental linguistics, sociolinguistics, speech & hearing science
- Fulfills **Data Science BA major/minor** electives
 - *Useful for:* experiment design, data analysis and interpretation, quantitative language science

1. Introduction to the course

- This is an **upper-level course** but with **no prerequisites**
 - What does that mean?
- There is **no** required background knowledge
 - Exception: High-school algebra (solve for x)
 - ***Useful*** background (for undergrads):
LING 101, SPHS 530 or 540, or a “Structure of ...”
language course

1. Introduction to the course

- Why is this an **upper-level** course?
 - Assigned readings are short, but dense—you'll probably want to go over them a couple of times
(The preparation questions will also help!)
 - There is a **research project**

1. Introduction to the course

- **Textbooks:**

- **V&C:** P. Ladefoged & S. Disner, *Vowels & Consonants*, 3rd edition
- **AAP:** K. Johnson, *Acoustic & Auditory Phonetics*, 3rd edition

Also available through [Course Reserves](#) on Canvas

1. Introduction to the course

- **Course web site:**

<https://users.castle.unc.edu/~jlsmith/ling520.html>

- Check the “**Daily syllabus**” page after every class to find out about new readings and assignments
 - Today’s entry has the “**Course info and policies**” handout — ***download and keep in a safe place***

*Remember to REFRESH your web browser
to get the latest version of a web page*

1. Introduction to the course

Some key course policies

- See the “[Course info and policies](#)” handout
 - Grading information
 - Exam dates

...and more

2. What is 'linguistic phonetics'?

Group discussion

Please introduce yourselves in your groups!

- **Linguistics** is...

2. What is 'linguistic phonetics'?

- **Linguistics** is...
the systematic study of human language
 - Mental grammar:

2. What is 'linguistic phonetics'?

- **Linguistics** is...

the systematic study of human language

- Mental grammar: the unconscious, but systematic, rules and principles governing how humans produce and understand language

- How do you pronounce the plural of...

cat

dog

flea

2. What is 'linguistic phonetics'?

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- Mental grammar: the unconscious, but systematic, rules and principles governing how humans produce and understand language

- How do you pronounce the plural of...

*cat***[s]**

*dog***[z]**

*flea***[z]**

- Mental “rules” governing this choice

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syntax
morphology
phonology
phonetics

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- **Linguistics** is...

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- Mental grammar: the unconscious, but systematic, rules and principles governing how humans produce and understand language
- The mental grammar includes:

semantics	meaning structure
syntax	phrase and sentence structure
morphology	word structure
phonology	the mental organization of sounds
phonetics	speech articulation, acoustics, perception

2. What is 'linguistic phonetics'?

- Are all patterns involving the sounds of language caused by **articulation/acoustics/perception**?
 - How do you pronounce the plural of...
 - cat***[s]**
 - dog***[z]**
 - flea***[z]**
 - Would *cat***[z]** or *flea***[s]** be hard to say?

2. What is 'linguistic phonetics'?

- Are all patterns involving the sounds of language caused by **articulation/acoustics/perception**?

- How do you pronounce the plural of...

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>cat</i> [s] | • <i>cat</i> [z] — disallowed in English |
| <i>dog</i> [z] | [tz] very rare across languages |
| <i>flea</i> [z] | • <i>flea</i> [s] — sounds like <i>fleece</i> ! |
| | [is] common across languages |

2. What is 'linguistic phonetics'?

- Are all patterns involving the sounds of language caused by **articulation/acoustics/perception**?
 - *cat*[s] vs. *cat*[z] — **phonetic factors** involved
 - *flea*[z] vs. *flea*[s] — **arbitrary** choice of sounds in the English lexicon (mental “word” list)

2. What is 'linguistic phonetics'?

- Are all patterns involving the sounds of language caused by **articulation/acoustics/perception**?
 - Try saying a “hard” tongue twister silently

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- Are all patterns involving the sounds of language caused by **articulation/acoustics/perception**?
 - Try saying a “hard” tongue twister silently
 - It’s still hard! → Not just physical (articulation)
 - **mental sound organization** = *phonology*
- The phonetics/phonology interface is complex (and very interesting!)
 - We will focus on articulation, acoustics, and a little perception in this course = *phonetics*
 - For more about phonology, try LING 200 or 523

2. What is 'linguistic phonetics'?

- **Linguistics** is...
the systematic study of human language
- **Phonetics** is...
the study of speech articulation, acoustics, and perception
- **Linguistic phonetics** is...
the study of speech articulation, acoustics, and perception **as applied to** understanding why languages are the way they are

2. What is 'linguistic phonetics'?

- What kinds of research questions would **linguistic phonetics** be interested in?

One example:

Languages with and without **front rounded vowels**

- What is a front rounded vowel?
- Do you know any languages that have them?

2. What is 'linguistic phonetics'?

One example:

Languages with and without front rounded vowels
(from the [World Atlas of Language Structures Online](#))

- Some questions to consider:
 - Are FRVs relatively common, or uncommon?
Why?
 - This map plots *high* and *mid* FRV — why are *low* ones extremely rare?
- Does understanding the articulation and acoustics of FRVs help answer these questions? (*Stay tuned...*)

3. For next time

- On Wednesday, we will talk about
 - The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
 - The speech sounds of American English
- What should you do to be prepared for class?
 - Check the “[Daily Syllabus](#)” page to see!