

Syllabus

Linguistics 101H (Moreton)*

2025 August 19 (T)

1 Course organization

Time: TΘ 2:00–3:15 (3 credits)
Places: Dey 412 or: Zoom: Meeting ID: 920 1368 6748 ➡^a
Instructor: Elliott Moreton, moreton@unc.edu
Office hours: (Tentatively:), Θ 11–12, F 2:15–3:15, and by appointment
Office: Smith 101 or: Zoom: Meeting ID 973 4347 1746, passcode 531096 ➡^b
Textbook: O’Grady et al., *Contemporary Linguistics*, 7th ed. (required).

^a<https://unc.zoom.us/j/92013686748>

^b<https://unc.zoom.us/j/97343471746?pwd=cGRMUElraDAyRVY4UmcxT1RFcmxiZz09>

<i>This is an in-person class. Zoom links are provided in case an emergency forces us to switch to remote instruction.</i>
--

2 Target audience, course goals, and learning objectives

LING 101H is a general introduction to the structure, function, and development of natural human language. The questions addressed include

- What do you know when you know a language?
- How do children come to know it?
- How and why do languages change over time?
- Why are there so many languages?
- How can we tell when two languages have a common ancestor? When the ancestor did not survive, how can we reconstruct it?
- What properties are common to all natural languages, and why?

These questions are approached through formal analysis (usually qualitative, but sometimes quantitative) of data elicited from humans (sometimes ourselves).

*Copyright © 2025 by Elliott Moreton. Permission to re-publish this document or any part of it in any form is expressly *denied* without written permission of the copyright holder. In particular, (1) the copyright holder does *not* grant permission for this document to be posted on any website by anyone other than himself. THIS MEANS YOU, COURSEHERO.COM AND YOUR ILK. And (2), the copyright holder does *not* grant permission for this document to be used to train large language models or anything that advertises itself as “artificial intelligence”.

3 Prerequisites and requirements

There are no prerequisites. LING 101H fulfills the following requirements:

- The Ways of Knowing requirement in IDEAS In Action *or*
- The Natural Scientific Discovery requirement in IDEAS In Action

but not both (i.e., the “or” is an exclusive or).

4 Approximate semester schedule

Week	Date	Topics	Events
1	8/19 T 8/21 Θ	Knowledge of language. Architecture and components of language.	
2	8/26 T 8/28 Θ	Phonetics: anatomy, articulation, sound. The International Phonetic Alphabet.	
3	9/02 T 9/04 Θ	Phonology: distribution, contrast and allophony.	
4	9/09 T 9/11 Θ	Natural classes and phonological rules	
5	9/16 T 9/18 Θ	Morphology: morphemes. Roots, derivation, and inflection.	
6	9/23 T 9/25 Θ	Lexical categories and word structure.	Midterm 1, 9/25.
7	9/30 T 10/02 Θ	Syntax: Constituency. X-bar theory.	
8	10/09 Θ	Movement and dependency. Parametric variation.	
9	10/14 T	Semantics: Extension vs. intension; truth value vs. truth conditions. Compositionality.	
10	10/21 T 10/23 Θ	Language acquisition: Induction and inductive bias. Acquisition of first-language phonology.	
11	10/28 T 10/30 Θ	Acquisition of syntax. Critical periods.	Midterm 2, 10/30.
12	11/04 T 11/06 Θ	Language variation: Language varieties and sociolinguistics.	
13	11/11 T 11/13 Θ	Language change: Lexical change. Regular sound change.	
14	11/17 T 11/19 Θ	Comparative reconstruction.	
15	11/25 T	Language families.	
16	12/02 T 12/06 S	Wrap-up	FINAL EXAM, 12–3.

5 Class in the time of coronavirus

As I write this, the University's plan is to remain open for a full 15-week semester, and to hold classes in person. If the virus situation deteriorates, we may go to all-Zoom classes, at the Zoom link on p. 1 of this syllabus. Otherwise, we will meet in person and the class will not be streamed or recorded.

If you are too ill (with Covid or otherwise) to attend class safely, please contact me in advance to arrange to attend by Zoom. Others will not be admitted into the Zoom room.

6 Where to find course components

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

1. Face-to-face meeting in class. Class is where paper documents will be distributed and collected: handouts, in-class problem sets, homework assignments, midterms, etc.
2. The class log ➡¹, on the World Wide Web, 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
3. 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 LING101H.001.FA25, and the course number is 101248. The main things found there are
 - (a) Non-paper course materials like slides and audio files (under **Modules**)
 - (b) Electronic copies of paper materials (these may not appear until after class)
 - (c) The gradebook (under **Grading**)
4. The Zoom meeting links (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. *This is an in-person class. The Zoom links are provided in case an emergency forces us to meet on-line.*

7 Course components and grading

Final grades for this course will be calculated as follows:

40% *Homework*. There will be problem sets approximately weekly, amounting to a total of 20–40 pages of written work per student over the course of the semester.

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 will not be accepted unless it is

- on time
- on paper
- honor-pledged.

¹<http://users.castle.unc.edu/~moreton/Ling101H/101Hlog.html>

²<http://canvas.unc.edu>

³<http://zoom.unc.edu>

Homework meeting these criteria will be graded on a scale from 1 to 3. 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! Homework that does not meet the criteria, or is not handed in, will receive a 0.

45% *Exams.* There will be two midterms and a final, all in-class and cumulative from the beginning of the course, all equally weighted (15% each). Please note that the exams may cover material from **any component of the course**, be it lecture, recitation, reading, or homework.

15% *Attendance and participation.* Class will involve a lot of discussion, which everyone should contribute to over the course of the semester. Multiple unexcused absences from recitation or lecture will have a direct negative effect on the attendance and participation grade (as well as an indirect one on the other components). The same applies to a pattern of coming late or being unprepared for class discussion.

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).

8 Policies

Attendance. If you must miss class because of a medical or family emergency, you should let me know *beforehand* by emailing or buttonholing me in person. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get missed materials from me or other students. Always check the class log and the Canvas website if you have been absent.

Reading. You are expected to come to class having done the reading and thought about it until either (a) it makes sense, or (b) you can express precisely what about it doesn’t make sense. Either way, you’ll have something to talk about in class!

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.

Late assignments. Homework solutions will normally be discussed in class the day the assignment is due. Therefore, 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 other people in the class and solve the problems together. However, each person (or each partnership) should write up their solution alone. If you work with other people, 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 with other people, 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 link ➡⁴ starting at the heading “Syllabus guidelines for

⁴https://web.archive.org/web/20241209070939if_/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.

Recording. Permission to make audio or video recordings of class will be given only in special circumstances (e.g., to students with hearing impairments).

Dates are still tentative at this point. I’ll give at least two weeks’ notice of the midterm, and will hand out an exam syllabus (a study guide) one week before each exam.

The Carolina Honor Code^a is in effect in this class, and I will treat violations seriously. You should review it. If you have questions about interpretation, you should bring them to me.

^a<http://instrument.unc.edu>

9 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 link⁵ 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 Serviceand/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/>.

⁵https://web.archive.org/web/20241209070939if_/https://provost.unc.edu/student-generative-ai-usage-guidance/

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 website⁶ 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 website⁷ 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.

Equal Opportunity and Compliance — Accommodation Equal Opportunity and Compliance Accommodations Team (Accommodations — UNC Equal Opportunity and Compliance⁸) 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)

⁶<http://care.unc.edu/>

⁷<https://caps.unc.edu/>

⁸<https://eoc.unc.edu/accommodations/>

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 EOC⁹ 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.

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 an 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.

⁹<https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>