

**Course Title:** Introduction to Language

**Course Number:** LING 101, Fall 2011

**Sections & Meeting Times:** Sec. 1-21737, TTh, 9:30–10:45, GMCS-314  
Sec. 3-21739, TTh, 12:30–13:45, NE-173

**Final Exam Times:** Sec. 1-21737, Tuesday, Dec 13, 8am–10am  
Sec. 3-21739, Tuesday, Dec 13, 10:30am–12:30pm

**Instructor:** Assistant Professor DS Bigham

**Office Hours:** EBA 329 :: M 12–1, W 9:30–10:30 & 3–4, Th 3:30–4:30.

**E-mail:** douglas.bigham@mail.sdsu.edu

**DESCRIPTION:** The nature of language. Sound, meaning, and grammar. Language history and change. Dialects and variation. Language acquisition. Animal communication. Language and the brain. This course introduces you to *linguistics*, the scientific study of *language*. You will learn how languages are structured: how sounds become words, how words become sentences, how sentences become statements, questions, compliments, and insults. We will discuss how languages function in society: how a dialect becomes a language, how compliments can become insults, whether or not men and women speak different 'languages,' and what your language use says about your 'personal style.' We will talk about the biology of language and the practical application of linguistics: how hominids evolved to learn and use language, whether or not animals have 'language,' how electronic devices process language, and how computers might eventually learn and use language. Finally, we will investigate major theories of linguistics: how languages change, the diversity of language on Earth, and what linguists still don't know about language.

This course is one of nine courses that you will take in General Education Foundations. Foundations courses cultivate skills in reading, writing, research, communication, computation, information literacy, and use of technology. They furthermore introduce you to basic concepts, theories and approaches in a variety of disciplines in order to provide the intellectual breadth necessary to help you integrate the more specialized knowledge gathered in your major area of study into a broader world picture.

This course is one of two Foundations courses that you will take in the area of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Upon completing this area of Foundations, you will be able to: 1) explore and recognize basic terms, concepts, and domains of the social and behavioral sciences; 2) comprehend diverse theories and methods of the social and behavioral sciences; 3) identify human behavioral patterns across space and time and discuss their interrelatedness and distinctiveness; 4) enhance your understanding of the social world through the application of conceptual frameworks from the social and behavioral sciences to first-hand engagement with contemporary issues.

Linguists study the patterns of language, which carry meaning and articulate social and linguistic identity. Though the details of the patterning vary from language to language and culture to culture, the kinds of patterning are constant. All languages have systems of sounds, units of meaning called words, and larger units called phrases and

sentences. All languages have ways of signaling and acknowledging differences of social status and group, and all languages fall into one of a small number of types, which characterize how the different levels of patterning come together, In this course you will learn how linguists analyze language patterns and what kinds of evidence and arguments they use to support those analyses, and you will have the opportunity to explore and defend linguistic analyses of your own.

**OFFICE HOURS:**

EBA 329 :: M 12–1, W 9:30–10:30 & 3–4, Th 3:30–4:30.

I can also be available at additional times by appointment.

Anytime my office door is open, I'm available. Feel free to send professionally composed e-mail (see below). I check my e-mail frequently and I will respond, though I do NOT check e-mail after 7pm or on weekends. I am not responsible for e-mails unreceived or read late; if I haven't responded within 36 hours, you may send me a polite reminder.

**READINGS & TEXTBOOK:**

*Linguistics for Everyone: An Introduction*. 2009. Kristen Denham & Anne Lobeck.

ISBN-13: 978-1413015898. Cost: New ~\$105; Rental ~\$70

Additional readings and materials will be made available via handouts, Blackboard, and Wikipedia. Keep an eye on Blackboard for various course documents, readings, answer keys, review sheets, etc. You are responsible for finding a computer and printer capable of displaying/printing relevant course material. "It wouldn't download/open/print/etc" is not a sufficient excuse. The Student Computing Center is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of the Love Library.

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:** In this course, you will begin to...

- Learn how to recognize and describe the basic components of linguistics (syntax, semantics, phonology/phonetics, morphology, sociolinguistics) and be able to list and define key terms applicable to each.
- Recognize, understand the organization of, and know how to use the International Phonetic Alphabet.
- Understand how the basic components of linguistics fit together and operate in human languages.
- Examine new problems in linguistics and show how you would go about solving these problems.
- Analyze real-world conflict settings for the role linguistics and language variation play in these conflicts.
- Evaluate the validity of linguistic- and language-based argumentation.
- Develop solidly grounded theories of how language and linguistics operate in the real world.

**PROFESSIONALISM/CONDUCT:** You are expected to treat your fellow students with respect. When fellow students are talking, you should show them the same courtesy and attention as you show your professor. No questions are stupid. No ideas are crazy. Not everyone learns at the same pace or in the same way.

Computers, tablets, iPads, phones, etc. should be silenced (“vibrate” isn’t silent) or turned off. Headphones should remain off. If you plan on multi-tasking during class, please sit towards the back corner of the room. Do not let your technology interfere with your or other students’ ability to participate or pay attention. Texting during class will very likely annoy your professor and drastically lower your participation grade.

**E-mail:** E-mail sent to your professor and/or fellow students should be professionally composed with an opening (“Prof. Bigham, ...”) an explicit body (“This is Diana Prince from your 9:30 LING 101 class, I have a question about phonemes...”), and an appropriate closing (“Yours, Diana” or “-Diana”). Unprofessional and/or disrespectful e-mail will be deleted without being read. I will not discuss grades or academic standing via e-mail. I do not check e-mail after 7pm or on weekends. It is suggested that you use Blackboard’s messaging system for course-related e-mail.

**Twitter, Facebook, Etc.:** Do not contact your professor via Facebook or any other online social network. If you use Twitter in reference to the course, I suggest using the #sdsulx101 hashtag for crowd-sourcing your fellow students. Don’t DM me (your professor), but I \*may\* check #sdsulx101 for questions, especially before tests.

## **ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING:**

Quizzes – 36%, Test – 18%, Final – 5%, Homework – 30%, Participation – 11%

Grading Scale, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, D, F

100-94: A, 93-90 A-, 89-87 B+, 86-84 B, 83-80 B-, 79-70 C, 69-60 D, 59-0 F

3 Quizzes, 12% each, non-cumulative. You will have 50 minutes to take each quiz.

1 Test, 18%, cumulative. This is very much like the three quizzes except that it is cumulative. Think of it as a 'pre- Final Exam'. You will have a full class period to take the test.

Final Exam, 5%, cumulative. The Final Exam is similar to the Test in both material and scope, but longer. If your Final Exam grade is lower than your Test grade, the Final Exam grade will be dropped and the Test will account for 23% of your total grade. You will have the entire exam period to complete the Final.

10 homeworks, 3% each. Homework is due at the beginning of class on the date specified. ***All homework must be typed and stapled.*** For typing IPA symbols: use the Lucida Sans Unicode font. Exception: Hand draw ALL tree diagrams. ***Only IPA symbols and tree diagrams may be handwritten.***

Participation, 11% (preparedness and discussion). All materials should have been read before the date listed on the syllabus. We will be using Blackboard for additional class discussion. You are required to participate in 7 of the online discussions. Participation is determined by (a) in-class & online discussion and (b) additional "engagement" (like coming to my office hours, participating in every discussion, creating new online discussion topics, etc.).

For a perfect participation grade, a student will have:

- Responded to in-class question prompts during nearly every class.
- Responded to all online discussion prompts.
- Asked questions and suggested discussion points both in class and online.
- Stopped by Prof. Bigham's office hours for additional discussion of the material.
- Acted courteously and professionally when dealing with fellow students.

Extra Credit: There are two Extra Credit assignments. The first will replace your lowest homework grade; the second will 'bump up' your lowest homework grade. Extra credit is all-or-nothing. You do every question assigned on the e.c. and do them well, or you get no points. The first e.c. is a regular assignment. The second e.c. is a 1500-word report on a linguistically relevant movie of my choice.

**HOMEWORK:** Homework is due at the beginning of class on the date specified. Homework turned in late will receive a reduced grade. No homework will be accepted after the answers have been discussed in class or an answer key has been posted.

**All homework must be typed & stapled.** For typing IPA symbols: use the Lucida San Unicode font. **Only** IPA symbols and tree diagrams may be handwritten.

If you cannot make it to class the day that a homework is due, it is your responsibility to get the homework to me during my **office hours** on or before the due date, otherwise your homework will be considered late and your grade will be reduced accordingly. **Do not e-mail your homework to me. EVER.**

Again, you are responsible for finding a computer and printer capable of displaying/printing any homework and relevant course material (again, you can use the Student Computing Center, Love Library, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor). "It wouldn't download/open/print/etc." is not a sufficient excuse. "My printer died" is not a sufficient excuse. "My laptop was stolen" *\*is\** a sufficient excuse, but don't lie about it. Lies about laptop theft are extraordinarily vile.

**ATTENDANCE:** Come to class. Come to class on time. If you arrive late, do not interrupt the class or professor upon entering. If you need to miss class, come to my office hours and explain the situation as soon as possible (**do NOT e-mail me when you miss class**). People who miss class should be prepared to get the notes from classmates. People who repeatedly miss class or come late may be excluded from grading curve benefits.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Do not cheat. If you work with a partner on a homework assignment, indicate this at the top of your homework AND make sure you each turn in your own UNIQUE copy of the homework. In essays, failing to cite another person's words or ideas is cheating. Don't cheat. Don't even do anything that might get you suspected of cheating. Be honest. If you cheat, you will be given a grade of "F" for the course and may be suspended from SDSU. If you have questions about the definition or specifics of "cheating" or "plagiarism" you may contact me, the Linguistics Dept. Chair, a member of the Student Discipline Office at (619) 594-3069. For further details regarding conduct, please refer to <http://csrr.sdsu.edu/>

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** For students with disabilities, I am available during my office hours to discuss any appropriate academic accommodations that might be necessary. Before course accommodations are made, a student may be required to obtain and/or provide documentation from the Office of Student Disability Services (for more information see: <http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/sds/index.html> or call 619-594-6473).

## **SCHEDULE OVERVIEW:**

Dates & materials listed are subject to change.

KEY: D&L = Denham & Lobeck – *Linguistics for Everyone*; HO = Handout;

WP = Wikipedia; HW = Homework; EC = Extra Credit

### **WEEK ONE – What is Language?**

T, 8-30: HW: Blackboard / Personal Info Form  
Th, 9-1: D&L: Ch. 1: *What Is Language and How Do We Study It?* (27pp)  
HO: Hockett  
HW: HW 1 (What is Language) Due!

### **WEEK TWO – Morphology**

T, 9-6: D&L: Ch. 5: *Morphology – Words and Their Parts* (41pp)  
Ch. 6: *Morphological Typology and Word Formation* (29pp)  
WP: Linguistic Typology  
Th, 9-8: HW: HW 2 (Morphology) Due!

### **WEEKS THREE & FOUR– Phonetics & Phonology**

T, 9-13: D&L: Ch. 3: *Phonetics – Describing Sounds* (33pp)  
HO: Fun-etics & Fun-ology!  
Th, 9-15: D&L: Ch. 4: *Phonology: The Sound Patterns of Language* (37pp)  
T, 9-20: HW: HW 3 (Phonetics & Phonology) Due!  
HO: Speech Perception  
WP: McGurk Effect  
Th, 9-22: **QUIZ ONE**

### **WEEK FIVE – Syntax**

T, 9-27: D&L: Ch. 7: *Syntax: Heads & Phrases* (33pp)  
D&L: Ch. 8: *Syntax: Phrase Structure and Syntactic Rules* (39pp)  
Th, 9-29: HW: HW 4 (Syntax) Due!

### **WEEK SIX – Semantics**

T, 10-4: D&L: Ch. 9: *Semantics – Making Meaning with Words* (35pp)  
Th, 10-6: D&L: Ch.10, p.322-331: *Sentence Semantics – Meaning of Sentences* (10pp)  
HW: HW 5 (Semantics of Words) Due!

### **WEEKS SEVEN & EIGHT – Pragmatics / Language Acquisition / Language & the Brain**

T, 10-11: D&L: Ch. 10, p.331-352: *Pragmatics – How Context Shapes Meaning* (21pp)  
Th, 10-13: D&L: Ch. 2, p.30-52: *Our Capacity to Acquire Language* (22pp)  
WP: Poverty of the Stimulus  
T, 10-18: D&L: Ch. 2, p.52-63: *Language & the Brain* (10pp)  
HW: HW 6 (Semantics of Sentences / Lg. Acquisition) Due!  
Th, 10-20: **QUIZ TWO**

**WEEK NINE – History of English**

T, 10-25: D&L: Ch. 11: *The Early Story of English* (39pp)  
EC: E.C. 1 Due!  
Th, 10-27: HW: HW 7 (Historical Linguistics) Due!

**WEEKS TEN & ELEVEN – Dialects of English & Sociolinguistics**

T, 11-1: D&L: Ch. 12, p.400-409: *English Goes Global* (10pp)  
Th, 11-3: D&L: Ch. 12, p.409-428: *English Goes Global* (21pp)  
T, 11-8: HW: HW 8 (Sociolinguistics) Due!  
Th, 11-10: HO: Person Paper

**WEEK TWELVE – Pidgins & Creoles**

T, 11-15: D&L: Ch. 14: *The Life Cycle of Language* (33pp)  
WP: Creole Language, Pidgin  
Th, 11-17: **QUIZ THREE**

**WEEK THIRTEEN – Writing & Sound Symbolism**

T, 11-22: D&L: Ch. 13: *Representing Language – The Written Word* (31pp)  
HO: Booba-Kiki  
WP: Sound Symbolism  
HO: Computers & Language  
Th, 11-24: **THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS**

**WEEK FOURTEEN – Lg. Philosophy, Lg. Planning, ConLangs, Evolution of Lg.**

T, 11-29: D&L: n/a  
HO: Conlangs  
WP: Esperanto, Klingon, Solresol  
EC: E.C. 2 Due!  
Th, 12-1: HW: HW 9 (TBD) Due!  
HO: Dogs, Birds, Tones, Chimps  
HO: Evolution of Language

**WEEK FIFTEEN – Super Review**

T, 12-6: HW: HW 10 (Super Review) Due!  
Th, 12-8: **TEST ONE (cumulative)**

**T, 12-13: FINAL EXAM!!**

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