

Introduction to Language¹

Syllabus
Rosina Lippi Green

[contact info]

True or False?

- English is, like, degenerating before our eyes
- Good grammar is a matter of self discipline
- Your language determines how you construe reality
- Inuit languages have hundreds of words for snow
- Children learn to talk from imitating caregivers
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Course Description

The study of language offers a way of looking at some of the most intriguing aspects of human experience. In this course we will explore the human capacity for language, beginning with a comparison of human language and animal communication. Next we examine the way children acquire spoken language. We will review major aspects of language structure (sounds, words, sentences) and spend some time looking at language as a social construct: where our attitudes about language originate, and what they mean, and why language varies and changes.

Texts

Required Texts

1. Victoria Fromkin and Robert Rodman: An Introduction to Language
2. Steven Pinker: The Language Instinct

Required Coursepack. The coursepack will be available through the library, online. A table of contents for the coursepack is included at the end of this syllabus.

Requirements and Evaluation

¹ update readings before using

Participation	10%	First Take Home Exam 25%
Quizzes	15%	Second Take Home Exam 25%
Midterm, March 10	25%	Optional Take Home

There are two take-home exams. These will be short essays of no more than one page in length, double spaced. Exact guidelines will be provided at the time of the exam. The take-homes cannot be postponed or taken after the fact; they will not be accepted late. A third **optional** take-home will be made available for those worried about their grades or who have missed an earlier exam.

Two hourly exams (the midterm on March 10, and the final hourly, on April 21) will take the entire period. They will include short answer and short essay questions. **Students will be allowed to bring and use a single, one-sided sheet of lecture and study notes for each exam.** Quizzes are given in discussion section, every week. There are 12 quizzes scheduled. The highest ten grades will make up 25 percent of your final grade. A missed quiz will be recorded as a zero. Quizzes will cover a) lecture topics not included in the readings; b) readings; c) film content. Every Wednesday you will receive, by email, a study guide for the following week's readings and films.

NOTE: You MUST be officially registered for this course in order to receive assignments, study guides and exam materials, all of which will be distributed by email. The email list will include only those persons appearing on the official class roll.

Groundrules

1. Because a lot of work goes into preparing lectures, and because new material will be presented in lecture which is not duplicated in the readings, AND because there are 360 people enrolled in this course., it is very important that the lecture hall be quiet. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be allowed. After one warning offenders will be asked to leave the lecture hall. Please do not read newspapers, do other homework assignments, listen to music, conduct business meetings, take care of personal hygiene, plan parties, or carry on group crossword puzzle consultations during lecture. Give us your attention and respect and we will do our best to give you interesting and well prepared lectures.
2. Any cellphone that rings during lecture will be confiscated for twenty-four hours. The same is true for text messaging.
3. Should there be any grade disputes, you must submit a written statement by email to your GSI **fully explaining on what grounds you feel the grade is inaccurate or unfair.** If the dispute cannot be resolved in this way, Professor Lippi-Green will review the case and reevaluate the work. You are always welcome to come to Professor Lippi-Green's office hours, or to contact her by email.
3. If you have a disability which will effect your performance in class, please let me know so that we can work together to find ways to facilitate your participation.

4. We do not consider you officially enrolled in the class until you have signed, dated and handed in to us a copy of the Statement of Cooperation.

About your Instructors

Professor

Graduate Student Instructors

SYLLABUS

F&R = Fromkin & Rodman's Introduction to Language

P = Pinker's The Language Instinct

CP = Coursepack

Date	Topic	To be read for this week
1/8 L	Intro & organizational (Lippi-Green)	
1/10 S		Discussion section
1/13 L	What is language? (Lippi-Green)	•F&R Ch 1 •P Ch 1-2
1/15 L	Written/spoken language (Lippi-Green)	•F&R Ch 9
1/17 S		Discussion section
1/22 L	Languages of the world (Dyer)	•P Ch 8 CP Part 1: •D. Crystal "How many languages?" •D. Crystal "The Indo-European family" •F. Wheelock "Indo-European" •D. Crystal "Endangered languages" and "The dreaming"
1/24 S		Discussion section
1/27 L	First language acquisition	•F&R Ch 10
1/29 L	Film: <i>Acquiring the human language</i> (Lippi-Green)	•P Ch 9
1/31 S		Discussion section
2/3 L	Animal communication	•P Ch 11;
2/5 L	Film: <i>Signs of the apes, songs of the whales</i> (Lippi-Green)	CP Part 2: •(3) www articles •R. Demers "Linguistics and animal communication"

2/7 S		Discussion section
		FIRST TAKE HOME EXAM DISTRIBUTED
2/10 L	American Sign Language (Guest lecturer: Prof. van Hoek)	CP Part 3: •K. Emmorey "Sign Language"
	FIRST TAKE HOME EXAM DUE IN LECTURE	
2/12 L	Second language acquisition (Lippi-Green)	•F&R 421-424 •F. Parker and K. Riley "Second language acquisition." CP Part 4: M. Mithun & W. Chafe "Recapturing the Mohawk language."
2/14 S		Discussion section
2/17 L	Lg change & evolution	•F&R Ch 8
2/19 L	Film: <i>The human language evolves.</i> (Lippi-Green)	
2/21 S		Discussion section
2/24 L	Review (Lippi-Green)	
2/26 L		MIDTERM (IN LECTURE)
2/28 S		Discussion section
		<i>break week</i>
3/10 L	Phonetics (guest lecturer: Prof. Beddor)	•F&R Ch 5 •P Ch 6
3/12 L	Phonology/Morphology (Lippi-Green)	•F&R Ch 2, 6
3/14 S		Discussion section
3/17 L	Syntax	•F&R Ch 3
3/19 L	Film: <i>Discovering the human language</i> (Ueno)	
3/21 S		Discussion section
		SECOND TAKE HOME EXAM DISTRIBUTED
3/24 L	Pidgins and Creoles (Dowdy)	•F&R 295-298 CP Part 5: •J. Arends, P. Muysken, N. Smith "The study of pidgin and creole languages"
	SECOND TAKE HOME EXAM DUE IN LECTURE	
3/26 L	Spatial Variation in language FILM: <i>American Tongues</i> (Lippi-Green)	•F&R pp 275-282 CP Part 6: •R. Shuy "Dialects: How they differ" •various by W. Wolfram
3/28 S		Discussion section

3/31 L	Multilingual America	CP Part 7:
4/2 L	FILM: <i>Yeah, you right!</i> (Lippi-Green)	•J. Molesky "Understanding the American linguistic mosaic" •R. Lippi-Green "The stranger within the gates"
4/4 S		Discussion section
4/7 L	AAVE: What is it?	•F&R pp. 287-291
4/9 L	(Dowdy) AAVE: Social, political and ideological issues (Lippi-Green)	CP Part 8: •W. Labov "The logic of non-standard English" •J. Jordan "Nobody mean more to me than you and the future life of Willie Jordan" •R. Lippi-Green "The real trouble with Black English"
4/11 S		Discussion section
4/14 L	Language & communication (Lippi-Green)	•P: Ch 12 CP Part 9 •D. Cameron: "Political Correctness"
4/16 L	Language and gender (Dyer)	CP Part 10: •D. Tannen "Different words, different worlds." •D. Crystal "Sex." •C. Miller and K. Swift "Is language sexist? One small step for genkind." •D. Spender "The circumstantial evidence."
4/18 S		Discussion section
4/21	THIRD OPTIONAL TAKE HOME EXAM DISTRIBUTED HOURLY EXAM (+ optional third take home due)	

Course Pack Contents

Part 1

- D. Crystal (1989) "How many languages?" The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language. Cambridge: CUP.
- D. Crystal (1989) "The Indo-European family." The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language. Cambridge: CUP.
- F. Wheelock (1995) "Indo-European." Wheelock's Latin. New York: HarperCollins.
- D. Crystal (1989) "Endangered languages." and "The dreaming." The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language. Cambridge: CUP.

Part 2

- R. Demers. (1988) "Linguistics and animal communication." Linguistics: The Cambridge survey. Volume 4. Cambridge: CUP.

G. Johnson. Chimp talk debate: Is it really language?

<http://www.santafe.edu/~johnson/articles.chimp.html>

J. Mitani. Review of "Kanzi: The Ape at the Brink of the Human Mind" Sue Savage-Rumbaugh and Roger Lewin, John Wiley & Sons, 1994

http://envirolink.org/arrs/essays/kanzi_review.html

P. Hoffman. Could Bonzo go to college? http://web-cr01.pbs.org/newshour/bb/science/chimp_5-6.html

Part 3

K. Emmorey (1994) "Sign language." Encyclopedia of human behavior. Vol. 4. New York: Academic Press.

Part 4

F. Parker and K. Riley. (1994) "Second language acquisition." Linguistics for non-linguists. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

M. Mithun & W. Chafe (1979) "Recapturing the Mohawk language." Languages and their status. T. Shopen, ed. Philadelphia: UP Press.

Part 5

J. Arends, P. Muysken, N. Smith (1995) "The study of pidgin and creole languages." Pidgins and creoles: An introduction. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Part 6

R. Shuy (1985) "Dialects: How they differ." (also appearing as "Sense and Nonsense about American dialects") in Dialects in Culture: Essays in general dialectology by Raven I. McDavid, Jr. W. Kretzschmar, ed. The University of Alabama Press.

S. Romaine (1994) "Sociolinguistic patterns." Language in society: An introduction to sociolinguistics. Oxford: OUP.

Part 7

J. Molesky (1988) "Understanding the American linguistic mosaic." in Language diversity: Problem or resource? S. Lee McKay and S.C. Wong, eds. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.

R. Lippi-Green (1997) "The stranger within the gates" from English with an accent: Language, ideology and discrimination in the United States. London, New York: Routledge.

Part 8

W. Labov (1969) "The logic of non-standard English." Georgetown Monographs on Language and Linguistics 22: 1-22, 26-31.

J. Jordan (1985) "Nobody mean more to me than you and the future life of Willie Jordan." On Call: Political Essays. Boston: South End Press: 123-139.

R. Lippi-Green (1997) "The real trouble with Black English" from English with an accent: Language, ideology and discrimination in the United States. London, New York: Routledge.

Part 9

D. Cameron (1995) "Political Correctness." Verbal hygiene. London and New York: Routledge.

Part 10

- D. Tannen (1990) "Different words, different worlds." You Just Don't Understand. New York: Morrow.
- D. Crystal (1989) "Sex." The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language. Cambridge: CUP.
- C. Miller and K. Swift (1996) "Is language sexist? One small step for genkind." in Language Matters,
T. Capossela, ed. ?NY: Harcourt Brace.
- D. Spender (1980) "The circumstantial evidence." Man Made Language. London: Routledge.