

# Introduction to the Study of Language

LING 200 — Winter 2016  
MWF 12:35–13:25, Macdonald-Harrington Building G-10

## Instructor

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## Teaching assistants

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**Office hours:** Mondays 16:30–17:30, Room 201 of PE1085

## Content of the course

This class will provide some answers to basic questions about the nature of human language. Throughout the course, we will be examining a number of ways in which human language is a complex but law-governed mental system. We will study some core aspects of this system in detail, and then use what we have learned to address a variety of other questions – including how language is acquired, how dialects arise, how languages change over time, and others. The main component of evaluation will be linguistic problem solving through assignments and exams.

## Requirements and evaluation

6 homework assignments	30% (5% each)
2 midterms	20% (10% each)
1 final exam	40%
Conference participation	10%

## Readings

- **Coursepack** (available at McGill bookstore and on reserve at Redpath Library), contains:
  - Madalena Cruz-Ferreira and Sunita Anne Abraham *The Language of Language: A Linguistics Course for Starters*, chapter 1 (pages 1-24)
  - Ladefoged *A Course in Phonetics*, chapter 1 (pages 1-20)
  - Vedrana Mihalicek and Christin Wilson *Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics*, chapter 3.1-3.3 (pages 101-123)
  - Bruce Rowe and Diane Levine *A Concise Introduction to Linguistics*, chapter 4 (pages 89-114)
  - Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman and Nina Hyams *An introduction to Language* chapter 3 (pages 76-87)
  - Vedrana Mihalicek and Christin Wilson *Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics*, chapter 5.4-5.5 (pages 215-229)

- William McGregor *Linguistics: An Introduction*, chapter 7 (pages 155-178)
- William O’Grady and John Archibald *Contemporary Linguistic Analysis*, chapter 6.1 (pages 190-199)
- Frank Parker and Kathryn Riley *Linguistics for Non-Linguists* chapter 2 (pages 4-25)
- Andrew Merrison, Aileen Bloomer, Patrick Griffiths, and Christopher Hall *Introducing Language in Use*, chapter 15 (pages 349-363)

## Course rules and procedures

### Conferences

Starting in Week 3, Friday sessions will be held as conferences run by a TA. Conferences will be held at different times on Fridays as follows:

	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>TA</b>
003	Friday 12:35–13:25	EDUC 629	Colin Brown
004	Friday 13:35–14:25	PE1085 002	Colin Brown
005	Friday 10:35–11:25	PE1085 002	Donghyun Kim
006	Friday 12:35–13:25	MDHAR G-10	Donghyun Kim
007	Friday 11:35–12:25	PE1085 002	Francesco Gentile
008	Friday 12:35–13:25	PE1085 002	Francesco Gentile

To determine which conference you will attend, you must sign up on Minerva. Once you have signed up for one conference, you cannot switch to another. An effort will be made to divide the students evenly between conferences. This means that once a conference has a certain number of students, no more students will be accepted into that conference.

You are responsible for the material covered in conferences just as you are responsible for the material covered in lectures. If for some reason you cannot attend a conference or lecture, you should make sure that you get the relevant notes from a classmate.

### Office hours and appointments

TA office hours are held every week, starting in Week 3. The TAs will take turns covering the office hours so you will have a chance to meet with different TAs. If you are unable to meet with TAs or professors during their office hours, you can ask for individual appointments and generally these can be arranged within one week of the request.

### Tutors

If you feel that you need more individual attention, we encourage you to contact either the Student Tutorial Service (398-6011) or SLUM (the undergraduate linguistics student association: [slum.linguistics@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:slum.linguistics@mail.mcgill.ca)). It is understood that tutors help with the content of the course but do not help directly with assignments. Make sure that your tutor knows what is being covered in the course this term since the content can change from term to term.

### Email

You can expect TAs and professors to respond to your e-mail questions and comments. However, please do not expect instant responses. We will try to respond within two working days (though we will be more vigilant closer to assignment due dates and exam times). Students often find that the discussions on the MyCourses website helpful.

## **Homework assignments**

Problem sets may be done in groups. However, a group may contain a maximum of three students and all group members must be from the same conference. A group should submit **a single assignment** with all group members names on it. Everyone in the group will receive the same grade for the assignment. You are not required to work in a group.

All problem sets must be submitted electronically on myCourses, and will be due Mondays at 11:59pm (roughly one week after they are distributed). Assignments will not be accepted late unless you have a documented medical excuse and we have been notified within 24 hours of when the assignment was due.

## **Midterms**

There will be two lecture-long midterms during the semester. More information will be provided in the lectures prior to each midterm to help you prepare for these.

## **Note on assignments, midterms, and exams**

No make-up assignments or midterms will be given to anyone who does not have a certified medical excuse. We must be notified within 24 hours of a missed assignment or midterm exam. You may leave messages at (514) 398-4222, even on weekends. According to Senate regulations, instructors are not permitted to make special arrangements for final exams. Please consult the Calendar, section 3.7, General University Information and Regulations. (See <http://www.mcgill.ca/student-records/exam/regulations> for more information on final and deferred exams.)

Any problem with grading on a problem set, midterm, or exam must be reported within one week of when the problem set, midterm, or exam was returned. No answer to any graded material will be re-assessed unless the answer was originally written in ink and it has not been written over.

## **Academic integrity**

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/)).

## **Right to submit in French**

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

## **Copyright**

Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., slides, handouts, conference materials, assignments, quizzes, exam questions, answer keys, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

## Timeline

	Date	Topics (tentative)	Reading (may change)	Assignments
<b>1</b>	R	1/7	TBD (Monday schedule)	
	F	1/8	TBD	
<b>2</b>	M	1/11	Intro & overview	<i>(PS 1 available)</i>
	W	1/13	Phonetics 1	
	F	1/14	Phonetics 2	<b>PS 1 due (Mon)</b>
<b>3</b>	M	1/18	Phonology 1	<i>(PS 2 available)</i>
	W	1/20	Phonology 2	
	F	1/22	<i>Conference 1</i>	<b>PS 2 due (Mon)</b>
<b>4</b>	M	1/25	Morphology 1	<i>(PS 3 available)</i>
	W	1/27	Morphology 2	
	F	1/29	<i>Conference 2</i>	
<b>5</b>	M	2/1	The mental lexicon	<b>PS 3 due</b>
	W	2/3	Writing systems	
	F	2/5	<i>Conference 3</i>	
<b>6</b>	M	2/8	Review	
	W	2/10	<b>Midterm 1</b>	
	F	2/12	<i>No conference</i>	
Spring break — no class				
<b>7</b>	M	2/15	Syntax 1	<i>(PS 4 available)</i>
	W	2/17	Syntax 2	
	F	2/19	<i>Conference 4</i>	
<b>8</b>	M	2/22	Syntax 3	<b>PS 4 due (Wed)</b>
	W	2/24	Semantics & pragmatics 1	<i>(PS 5 available)</i>
	F	2/26	<i>Conference 5</i>	
<b>9</b>	M	3/7	Semantics & pragmatics 2	<b>PS 5 due</b>
	W	3/9	Semantics & pragmatics 3	
	F	3/11	<i>Conference 6</i>	
<b>10</b>	M	3/14	Review	
	W	3/16	<b>Midterm 2</b>	
	F	3/18	<i>No conference</i>	
<b>11</b>	M	3/21	Language acquisition 1	<i>(PS 6 available)</i>
	W	3/23	Language acquisition 2	
	F	3/25	<i>No Conference, Good Friday</i>	
<b>12</b>	M	3/28	<i>No lecture, Easter</i>	<b>PS 6 due</b>
	W	3/30	Dialects and variation	
	F	4/1	<i>Conference 7</i>	
<b>13</b>	M	4/4	Sociolinguistics	
	W	4/6	Sign languages	
	F	4/8	<i>Conference 8</i>	
<b>14</b>	M	4/11	Language myths	
	W	4/13	Review	
	W	4/15	<i>Conference Review</i>	