

LING 240: Language and Mind - Winter 2009
University of Maryland

Lecture

Time: MTuWThF 12:00pm – 3:00pm

Place: MMH 1108B – **but this is going to change!**

Instructor Information

Instructor: Akira Omaki

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email is the best way to get in touch

Phone: 301-405-8306

Office hours: Monday & Wednesday 3:00pm – 4:00pm, or by appointment

Course Web Page

The course webpage is at http://www.ling.umd.edu/~omaki/teaching/Ling240_winter09.htm

Schedule updates, assignments, announcements and slides from lecture will be posted on this site, although I may occasionally send email about important announcements.

Course Description

Language and Mind is a tour of the *science* of language and its position within the study of human mind and nature. In particular, we will investigate the balance of responsibility between nature and nurture, and we will use language as a vehicle for this exploration. The focus of contemporary linguistics is to discover how language knowledge, use and acquisition informs us about the human mind/brain.

We will investigate two arguments: that humans have a mental grammar, and that this mental grammar is (mostly) innately given. The organization of this mental grammar will be a central focus of the class, and the claims about innate knowledge will focus on the debate about nature/nurture. These two themes will lead us into the exploration of areas such as: properties of sounds, words and sentences, language acquisition in various circumstances and critical period for language acquisition.

Since this course serves as a gateway to the linguistics major, there will be an emphasis on mastering the technical skills needed to solve phonology and syntax problems. The Jackendoff text (see below) presents the overarching theme of the course. Readings from other linguistics textbooks will help fill in the technical details. Supplemental readings (linguistics articles, book chapters, etc.) will give students the opportunity to experience some classic literature from the field.

Readings

- Jackendoff, Ray. 1994. *Patterns in the Mind*. Basic Books.
- Excerpts from *Language Files, 10th edition* (Bergmann et al, 2007)
- relevant journal articles / book chapters (TBA)

Student Responsibilities

You are expected to take responsibility for your own learning! (The instructor's job is to facilitate that learning process and provide you with resources.)

Attend class. You will be responsible for all the material covered in class as well as in the readings. We will spend some class time learning how to solve linguistics problems and this will be essential to your success in the class. Also, there will be a group project near the end of the term, and it is going to involve the use of the technical skills that students gain from the lectures. Missing classes could therefore hurt not only your grades, but also your group members'!

Complete homework and exercises thoroughly and on time. This is a hands-on course in which you will learn to solve the types of problems that linguists deal with every day. In addition to graded homework, exercises may occasionally be assigned that will be reviewed in class. It is crucial that you do the assignments and exercises on time in order to learn the skills required to be successful in the course. Later material will build on earlier material.

Communicate. If you have trouble with the course, if you have an emergency where you need to miss class, if you are experiencing an illness or any other situation which is interfering with your ability to participate fully in the course, make sure you contact me as soon as possible to let me know what is happening. There can be no adjustments to grades or accommodations made that will affect your grade after the final exam; you must keep informed about how you are doing and talk to me about any kind of special situation well in advance of the end of the course.

Come to office hours. Office hours are designed for students to come and get extra help, to talk in greater detail about interesting ideas, or to give feedback about the class. Make use of them! If you cannot attend the scheduled office hours but need help, contact me to set up an alternative meeting time. But please plan ahead and give yourself plenty of time to complete assignments.

Participate in class discussions with thoughtful and constructive comments and questions. Please ask questions in class if there is something you do not understand.

Avoid disruptive or distracting behavior. Be respectful to your instructor and peers and sensitive to the needs of those around you. Cell phones should be turned off in class.

Evaluation

Breakdown of final grade:

Homeworks	25%
2 quizzes	10%
Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%
Final Exam	25%

Total	100%

Homework. The homework assignments will be graded carefully. Unclear presentation and murky reasoning will be penalized. Read over your assignment and check the writing when you are done. This can make a big difference to the quality of your work.

Homework assignments are to be typed, stapled and turned in at the beginning of class on the day they are due (unless otherwise noted). As a rule, late homework will not be accepted. If you run into problems, you may contact me and if I agree, you can turn in a late homework.

Exams and quizzes. There will be two quizzes and three exams (all closed-book). The final exam is cumulative. They will mostly not test you on memorized materials, but will require you to think about problems and analyze data you have not seen before. No early or late make-up exams or quizzes will be given – if you miss one, you will receive a “0” on it. Exceptions will be made only in the case of serious, *documented* emergencies that are communicated to me in a timely manner. You must take the final exam in order to pass the class.

Extra credit. **There is no possibility for extra credit in this course**. You should focus on learning the course material and put effort into your assignments. If you are having trouble with anything, make sure you come talk to me immediately.

Experimental Requirement: This course has an experimental requirement. Each student must participate in one 1-hour linguistics experiment (part of on-going research in the linguistics department. Failure to complete this requirement will result in a lowering of your grade by 1/3 of a grade (i.e., A to A-, A- to B+, etc.). More details will be forthcoming.

Grading scale. The grades are not on a curve, so you are not competing against your classmates.

98-100	A+	77-79	C+	59 and below	F
93-97	A	73-76	C		
90-92	A-	70-72	C-		
87-89	B+	67-69	D+		
83-86	B	63-66	D		
80-82	B-	60-62	D-		

Attendance Policy

Religious holidays. The University of Maryland’s policy provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs. Students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances *before* the day to be missed.

Academic Honesty

We follow the University’s policies on academic honesty and will report any form of cheating according to these policies. Please review the terms and penalties of the Student Honor Council’s Code of Academic Integrity at: <http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html>. According to this code plagiarism is defined as “intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise.” This is regarded as a form of academic dishonesty and suspected cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Code for subsequent action. The grade of XF is listed on the transcripts of individuals found to have plagiarized work; this grade means an F was received because of academic dishonesty.”

In accord with the Code, students will be required to write and sign the following statement on each exam, quiz and assignment:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).

You may discuss ideas and assignments with your classmates, but **you must write up and complete all work by yourself and in your own words.** If you are having trouble with class material please seek help from the instructor well before exams or assignments deadlines. Plagiarized material (copied from a book or fellow student) will not be accepted for credit. **If we discover two assignments that have significant portions of identical material, we will assign a grade of “0” to BOTH assignments.**

Students with Disabilities

If you have a physical disability or a learning disability, it is your responsibility to bring it to my attention at the beginning of the course – before any exams or assignments are due. I will make every effort to accommodate your needs.

CORE Distributive Studies

You may have chosen this course as part of your CORE Liberal Arts and Sciences Studies Program, the general education portion of your degree program. CORE Distributive Studies are designed to ensure that you will take a look at several different academic disciplines and the way they create and analyze knowledge about the world.

Want more linguistics?

If you find yourself really enjoying linguistics, consider pursuing linguistics as your major or minor (if you are not already doing so). Talk to me or the Linguistics undergraduate advisors, Dr. Antonisse (mja@umd.edu) or Dr. Blear (tbleam@umd.edu). You should also check out the linguistics undergraduate pages (<http://www.ling.umd.edu/undergraduate/>).

Schedule (subject to change!)

- The schedule of topics and assignments is subject to change over the course of the winter session, and these changes will be announced in class.
- Readings should be read for the day of class listed. J = Jackendoff; LF = Language Files
- Homework assignments are listed on the (approximate) day they will be assigned.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading (when due)	Homework (when assigned)
1	Jan.5 M	Intro. to class Argument for mental grammar Phonetics (IPA)	J. Ch.1-4	Homework 1
	Jan.6 Tu	Phonetics, Phonology	LF Phonetics (up to 2.4)	
	Jan.7 W	Quiz 1 (phonetics); Phonology	LF Phonology (up to 3.3); J. Ch.5	
	Jan.8 Th	Phonology; Child phonology	Werker	Homework 2
	Jan.9 F	Review; Exam 1		
2	Jan. 12 M	Morphology	LF Morphology (all sections)	Homework 3
	Jan. 13 Tu	Syntax	LF Syntax (all sections)	
	Jan. 14 W	Quiz 2 (Syntax); Syntax	J. Ch.6	
	Jan. 15 Th	Syntax and Semantics		Homework 4
	Jan. 16 F	Review; Exam 2		
3	Jan. 19 M	MLK Day **No Class**		
	Jan. 20 Tu	Language acquisition	Crain & Nakayama; J. Ch. 8	
	Jan. 21 W	Critical period; Animal communication	Curtiss; J. Ch.9-10	Homework 5
	Jan. 22 Th	Wrap up; Review		
	Jan.23 F	Final Exam		