Ling 98a: The History of Linguistics
Instructor: Bridget Samuels (bdsamuel@fas)
Tuesdays, 3-5pm in Sever 205
Fall Term, 2008-2009
Office hours: Wednesdays, 2-4pm in Boylston 306 or by appointment

The purpose of this tutorial is to provide an introduction to the philosophers, grammarians, and scientists who paved the way for the past half-century of advancement in linguistics. I hope this will give you a sense of historical perspective, grounding the knowledge you gain from other departmental courses, and provide an avenue for those students pursuing a joint concentration, minor, or related field to explore how their areas of linguistic and non-linguistic interest relate to each other.

Requirements:
Participation: 25%; discussion leading: 25%; timeline: 20%; final paper: 30%
Throughout the course, students will construct a timeline of important milestones in linguistic history, which will be expected to include brief descriptions of events discussed in course readings as well as independently-researched material. Students will also write a final paper (10-12 pages) on a topic related to the course, subject to the instructor’s approval. This paper may focus on a particular individual, trace an idea through time, or connect a topic discussed in class to an outside field.

One or more students will be assigned to lead the discussion on each reading assignment (depending on class enrollment, this may be on a weekly or less-frequent basis). You need not give a detailed presentation on the reading, but instead provide us with a brief summary and pose some questions to help facilitate discussion. All students are nevertheless responsible for reading all assigned material.

Due dates:
Timeline for first half of the course (to 1900): in class Week 4
Proposal for final paper: Friday of Week 5
Timeline for second half of the course (from 1900): Friday of Week 6
Final paper: TBA
⇒ ⇒ LATE WORK WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF ZERO. ⇐ ⇐
Course schedule:

Week 1 – Cognitive Science in the Ancient World

- Introductions
- No readings due for the first meeting

Week 2 – Rationalism

- Chomsky, *Cartesian Linguistics*
- Chomsky, *Language & Mind* – Ch. 1: Linguistic Contributions: Past
- Boeckx, *Language in Mind* – Ch. 2: The Mechanization of the Mind Picture

Week 3 – Diachronic Linguistics

- Sampson, *Schools of Linguistics* – Ch. 1: Prelude
- Allan, *The Western Classical Tradition in Linguistics* – pp. 200-224
- Matthews, *Structural Linguistics* – Ch. 4: Diachrony
- Robins – Ch. 7: Comparative & Historical Linguistics in the 19th century

Week 4 – Language & Thought

- **DUE IN CLASS: Timeline (<1900)**
- Chapman, *Philosophy for Linguists* – Ch. 5: Language & Mind (to top of p. 158)
- Sampson – Ch. 4: The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis
- Whorf – “The relation of habitual thought & behavior to language”
- Allan – pp. 225-244

Week 5 – Structuralism & Functionalism

- **DUE FRIDAY: Proposal for final paper**
- Sampson – Ch. 5: Functional Linguistics
- Allan – pp. 275-284 (Bloomfieldian Linguistics)
- Harris, *The Linguistics Wars* – pp. 16-28
- Samuels, short paper on Saussure
- Robins – Ch. 8: Linguistics in the 20th century: first period

Week 6: Behaviorism to Biolinguistics

- **DUE FRIDAY: Timeline (>1900)**
- Chomsky, review of Skinner’s *Verbal Behavior*
- Harris – Ch. 3: The Chomskyan Revolution
- Boeckx & Grohmann, “The Biolinguistics Manifesto”
- Chomsky, “Of Minds & Language”
- Miller, “The cognitive revolution: a historical perspective”

**FINAL PAPER DUE: TBA**