Catalog description

Linguistic study of structural and cognitive aspects of language. Examines language design: how sounds, words, sentences, and conversation create meaning; the relationship of language, brain, mind, and thought; the ability of humans, animals, and machines to acquire language.

Course Description

Every mentally competent member of our species shares an ability of amazing flexibility and complexity: language, which many describe as the quintessential human skill. On the one hand, language seems very simple: it develops so naturally and quickly that even 3-year-old children can use it well. On the other hand, as we will see upon closer inspection, this evident simplicity masks extreme complexity. Despite decades of serious work, computers capable of true, wide-ranging conversation are still just science fiction, and it is a matter of considerable debate whether other species of animals really have language.

A deep understanding of how language works requires and leads to understanding of our cognitive processes: language is a window on the mind, telling us a great deal about what it means to be a human and a thinker. During this term, we will closely examine language in its various parts and components, study how the brain is used in language comprehension and production (and what happens when things go wrong), and consider how language and mind interrelate. We consider how humans acquire language and how we compare to animal and computational communication systems, and address complex current linguistic issues.

Required Texts

- Additional .pdf articles will be available via Canvas.

Course Objectives & University Student Learning Goals

- Examine the component parts that comprise our complex human language capability, so that we may use it better.
- Acquire a working knowledge of the vocabulary and principles of the science of language, so we may discuss language more precisely.
- Study the workings of the brain and mind in the process of learning and using language.
- Dispel common myths about language, to become better “linguistic consumers.”
- Identify the similarities and differences between the communication systems used by humans, animals, and machines.

University Student Learning Goals 4 (Critical and Creative Thinking)

Students will be able to think critically and creatively, as demonstrated by their broad, adaptable and versatile use of reasoning, logic, and evidence, to access and evaluate information and solve complex problems both independently and in groups.

See the full rubric at http://www.mtu.edu/assessment/program/university-learning-goals/Goal%204_Critical_CreativeThinking.pdf

- Demonstrate clear and comprehensive communication of some application of linguistic analysis to a current issue or problem.
- Articulate a critical analysis or synthesis of information from a variety of linguistically relevant, high quality sources.
- Consider other’s diverse viewpoints in developing your own imaginative perspective, thesis, or hypothesis on a critical linguistic issue.
- Demonstrate creative problem-solving by developing linguistically informed alternatives to choose from.
- Apply significant linguistic ideas/analyses in the production of a final paper.

Course Requirements

- Participation
  - Active participation in discussions 10%
  - Problem sets/short assignments, timely submission 20%
- Exam #1 (5/28/15) 20%
- Exam #2 (6/18/15) 20%
- Final Essay Project
  - Conference w/ VB (4th week, June 1-4, 2015) 1%
  - Prospectus (6/8/15) 1%
  - Presentations/peer review/drafts to VB (6/22) 8%
  - Final Essay (4 pp.) (6/25/15) 20%

TOTAL 100%
Grading System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade points/credit</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92% &amp; above</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>87% – 91.9%</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82% – 86.9%</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>77% – 81.9%</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72% – 76.9%</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>67% – 71.9%</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>Below average</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 66.9%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.9% and below</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Failure</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete; given only when a student is unable to complete a segment of the course because of circumstances beyond the student's control. A grade of incomplete may be given only when approved in writing by the Chair of Humanities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Conditional, with no grade points per credit; given only when the student is at fault in failing to complete a minor segment of a course, but in the judgment of the instructor does not need to repeat the course. It must be made up within the next semester in residence or the grade becomes a failure (F). A (X) grade is computed into the grade point average as a (F) grade.</td>
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</table>

Details of Course Requirements & Policies

Attendance Policy
Regular preparation and participation are **required** to keep up with the pace of ideas and information exchange in this class. I will frequently explain examples or topics not covered in the book or put on reserve or e-mail. It is also **your responsibility** to read the material and to be prepared to discuss it. You learn linguistics by doing it; thus, active engagement in class is very important. Please note the following policy carefully:

- Up to **two** absences are excused without penalty, but each **unexcused** class absence **after the first two** subtracts 5% from your total grade, up to 30% of your grade.
- Notify me in writing (e-mail) of any absences—in advance, if possible.

Preparation for class
Try to begin each module by reading the text first. This will enable you to join in discussions, work through problem sets, and to ask informed questions. Generally, there are problem sets or other assignments due for each module (roughly 2 modules per week this summer). Much of the material in the book is quite detailed linguistically. My lectures and notes will give guidance on where to focus, but are **not** the sole basis of what we will cover. I will expect you to read and extend your knowledge offline.

Problem sets
The assignments are designed to help you practice linguistic problem solving or to get you thinking about issues in the study of language. **You may work together to solve problem sets, but do not simply copy others’ answers.** These questions represent the kinds of questions you will be asked on exams, and the problem sets provide critical practice.

Turn the problem sets or papers by the deadlines noted. Papers that are late (because of excused absences) are accepted only with prior permission and arrangement; other late papers will be systematically downgraded (5% or roughly a grade a day) according to their lateness, and assignments more than 2 days late may not be accepted at all; contact me if you have a truly legitimate reason for delay in turning a paper in.

It is important for you to practice doing the problems in any case. Please do these carefully, **post on Canvas on time, always bring a copy to class to discuss**, and raise any difficulties during the class discussion.

Examinations
The two examinations generally cover the material of that section of class, but the material in some instances builds on previous work, so some questions in the second exam will be comprehensive. The exams often build on the exercises covered in the problem sets, which employ the kinds of analysis that linguists use to address problems and issues in language. The exams will have some short answer, multiple choice, and/or matching questions as well as essays. Again, it is critical to read the texts. I cannot cover all material in the class, and I will assume that you will be familiar with the general issues and approaches of the texts.

Final Essay
The last part of the class addresses the application of linguistic science to current social issues (e.g., the use of animals in research, government use of linguistic systems in broad surveillance, the requirement of second language acquisition in Michigan schools). Students will research and compose a final 4-page (+sources) essay that addresses one major applied linguistic issue (on approval from me, after a conference to discuss ideas). To receive a passing grade on this assignment, students must demonstrate a clear ability to articulate a well-founded position on (an approved) linguistic topic on the basis of solid research, engaging in creative and innovative thinking. Students will present and discuss their papers within peer groups during the final week of class and present a draft to me for approval before the final submission.
University Assessment
Student work products (exams, essays, projects, etc.) may be used for purposes of university, program, or course assessment. All work used for these assessment purposes (beyond the course) will not include any individual student identification.

Selected essays from the class may be chosen to be evaluated as part of the university's assessment of Student Learning Goal 4: Critical and Creative Thinking. This will have no effect on your grade for this course.

NOTE: Keep copies of all stages of research on hand until you receive a final grade for the course, from research notes and sources to final form, in order to document and substantiate that this is your own research. If you work in a group, you need to keep a separate copy for your own portfolio, and to write me a memo detailing your contribution to the whole project. I will give more details on this process and the project later in the semester.

Other Important Course Policies

Electronics in the classroom
I give you my full attention during class; likewise, I appreciate your full attention in class. You need to be present (not just physically, but also mentally), and prepared and ready to participate in class. Thus, ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (such as laptops, iPads, cell phones, iPods, etc.) MUST BE TURNED OFF in the classroom (unless there is a compelling need, e.g., if you have a Kindle textbook and arrangements are made in advance with me). You will get one reminder. After that, you may be marked absent for that day.

If you are expecting an important phone call and need to keep your cell phone on, let me know in advance. The phone should be set on vibrate; take the call outside the classroom.

Any information exchanges on these devices during exams are also prohibited and violate the Academic Integrity Code of Michigan Tech.

Academic Integrity
Researchers often do their best work together, in consultation with others. However, taking the work of others and passing it off as your own is academic theft and will be punishable by failing the assignment/course or dismissal from school. Cases of plagiarism will be turned over to the Dean of Students' Office. See details about Michigan Tech's Academic Integrity definitions, policies, and enforcement procedures at http://www.mtu.edu/dean/conduct/integrity/

You may consult with others on your papers for this class, but you must document all sources used, and you must write up the final form of the paper yourself (or clearly document your contributions to a group project).

We will discuss the proper practice of research and citation during the term. See me or visit the Multiliteracies Center (http://www.mtu.edu/humanities/resources/mtmc/) if you have any questions about appropriate research processes or writing concerns.

Institutional Equity
Michigan Tech strives to offer equal opportunity to all of its employees, students, applicants for employment, and applicants for admission without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, height, weight, marital status, disabled veteran status, veteran status, arrest record, or disability.

The Institutional Equity Office facilitates Michigan Tech's development of an environment that is free from prejudicial discrimination or harassment and that is conducive to learning and individual growth for all campus members and visitors. See http://www.mtu.edu/equity.

For more information, contact the Institutional Equity Office, Room 308, Administration Building; Phone: 906-487-3310, Fax: 906-487-2842, Director: Jill Hodges, Ph.D., email: jhodges@mtu.edu.

Accommodation for Disabilities
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please see the Dean of Students (487-2212) as soon as possible. See the Dean of Students’ website regarding Disability Services: http://www.mtu.edu/dean/disability/policies/

For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, the Chair or Dean of your academic unit, the Humanities department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (487-3310).

Abbreviations
Some abbreviations that I commonly use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lg</td>
<td>language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lx</td>
<td>linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Problem Set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5ML</td>
<td>5-Minute Linguist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lg File</td>
<td>Language File</td>
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</table>
Schedule of Course Assignments

The accompanying schedule presents my best estimate of the progress through the class; it maybe subject to change to meet class needs, upon formal notification to the class members. On the online syllabus, which will have the course readings and assignments specified, you may not see individual parts until the relevant week/module is made live week by week.

The general format of the course will work like this:

The course is arranged by Modules, which roughly correspond to different files in the Language Files text, though the numbering is different, about two modules per week, compressed into 7 weeks but tracking with the regular fall term weekly schedule of 14 weeks. Each week will have similar parts:

1) a reading assignment that you should do each week before or alongside my powerpoints;
2) (narrated) powerpoints (in class or flipped online, generally Mon. & Wed.) that encapsulate my lectures, demonstrating linguistic processes, analyses, and applications;
3) short problem sets or assignments that go along with the different parts, to make sure you understand and practice the concepts from that module (usually due on Tues. and Thurs. each week); and
4) class discussions of problem sets, discussion questions, etc.

Due Dates of Written Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T 5/12</td>
<td>Linguistic Autobiography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 5/14</td>
<td>PS#1 Knowledge of Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 5/19</td>
<td>PS#2 Language and Thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 5/21</td>
<td>PS#3 Morphology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 5/26</td>
<td>PS#4 Phonetics/Phonology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 5/28</td>
<td>EXAM #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 6/ 2</td>
<td>PS#5 Syntax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 6/ 4</td>
<td>PS#6 Semantics/Pragmatics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 6/ 8</td>
<td>Prospectus for final paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 6/ 9</td>
<td>PS#7 Language Acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 6/11</td>
<td>PS#8 Animal Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 6/18</td>
<td>EXAM #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 6/22</td>
<td>drafts to VB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 6/23</td>
<td>oral presentations, peer-reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 6/24</td>
<td>oral presentations, peer-reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 6/25</td>
<td>Final papers due</td>
</tr>
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HU2910-S15-Track A Schedule

WEEK 1: May 11-14

- **Module 1**: Introduction: the knowledge of language
  - Readings:
    - Language Files 1.0-1.5
    - 5ML Chap 1 Rodman
    - 5ML Chap 2 Chapin
  - Problem set from Language File 1.6
  - T, 5/12: Linguistic Autobiography
  - W, 5/13: Syllabus Quiz

- **Module 2A**: Language in the brain
  - Readings:
    - Language Files 9.1-9.2
    - 5ML Chap 25 Curtiss
    - 5ML Chap 17 Haarmann
  - R, 5/14: PS#1 Knowledge of Lg, Lg File 1.6

WEEK 2: May 18-21

- **Module 2B**: Language and thought
  - Readings:
    - Language Files 11.2 & pdfs
    - Online debate link: Economist debate between Boroditsky and Liberman: http://www.economist.com/debate/days/view/626
    - 5ML Chap 18 Pullum
  - T, 5/19: PS#2 Language and Thought essay

- **Module 3**: Morphology
  - Readings:
    - Language Files 4.0-4.5
    - 5ML Chap 46 McKean
  - R, 5/21: PS#3 Morphology, Lg File 4.6
WEEK 3: May 26-28

(No class Mon, 5/25: Memorial Day)
- Module 4: Phonetics/Phonology
  o Readings:
    - Language Files 2.0-2.7
    - Selections from Language Files 3.0-3.3
    - 5ML Chap 29 Ladefoged
    - 5ML Chap 31 Weinberger
  o T, 5/26: PS#4 Phonetics, Lg File 2.8
- Review
- R, 5/28: Exam #1

WEEK 4: June 1-4

- ONLINE (or in-person) CONFERENCE WITH VB (this week)
- Module 5: Syntax
  o Readings:
    - Language Files 5.0-5.5
    - 5ML Chap 13 Bybee
    - 5ML Chap 14 Baker
  o T, 6/2: PS#5 Syntax, Lg File 5.6

- Module 6: Semantics/Pragmatics
  o Readings:
    - Language Files 6.0-6.4
    - Language Files 7.0-7.5 (selections)
    - 5ML Chap 47 Hendzel
    - 5ML Chap 15 Golinko
  o R, 6/4: PS#6 Semantics/Pragmatics Lg Files 6.5, 7.6

WEEK 5: June 8-11

- M, 6/8 Prospectus of final paper due
- Module 7: Language acquisition
  o Readings:
    - Language Files 8.0-8.5
    - 5ML Chap 22 Johnson
    - 5ML Chap 32 Sprang
    - 5ML Chap 33 Garrett
    - 5ML Chap 34 Phillips
    - 5ML Chap 35 Lang
    - 5ML Chap 36 Lipton

- T, 6/9: PS#7 Language Acquisition, Lg File 8.6

- Module 8: Animal Communication: Bees, Birds, Clever Hans, Cetaceans, Apes
  o Readings:
    - Language Files 14.0-14.3
    - 5ML Chap 16 Napoli
  o R, 6/11: PS#8 Animal Communication

WEEK 6: June 15-18

- Module 9: Computers and language
  o Readings:
    - Language Files 16.0-16.5
    - 5ML Chap 37 Otto
    - 5ML Chap 48 Savignac

- Mop-up, Review
- R, 6/18: EXAM #2

WEEK 7: June 22-25

- M, 6/22: drafts to VB
- Module 10: Real world applications, jobs, and careers in lx
  o Readings:
    - Language Files 17.0-17.6
    - 5ML Chap 45 Jackson
    - 5ML Chap 49 Rodman

- T-W, 6/23-24: Presentations, peer reviews
- R, 6/25: Why linguistics matters, mop-up, Final papers due