

The Study of Language (LING 2100) – Spring 2025

Prerequisites: None

Course meeting times

Class meeting time: Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays, 11:30 am – 12:20 pm

Class meeting location: Psychology 0111

Instructor information

Instructor: Prof. Steven Foley (any pronouns)

Email: srfoley@uga.edu
I will respond to emails within 24 hours

Office hours: Mondays, 2:00–4:00 pm
and by appointment
Gilbert Hall 118A

Website: <https://stevenrfoley.github.io/>

Course description and details

This course introduces the scientific study of language, emphasizing such topics as the mental organization of grammar, the relationship between the study of language and other disciplines, and the relationship between language and its use in society. In order to provide a broad understanding of human language, this course covers major formal and functional subfields in linguistics, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, language acquisition, sign language, language variation, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course you should be able to:

- Use linguistic terminology accurately, having read a substantial body of material related to the scientific study of language
- Discuss basic linguistic facts, theories, and research methodologies
- Analyze samples of written or spoken language from a variety of world languages
- Understand both language change and how language supports all learning and communication
- Undertake more advanced and specific linguistic studies

This course also fulfills the following University-wide learning outcomes:

- Students will be able to express ideas in writing with clarity and fluency.
- Have the ability to express, manipulate, and apply mathematical information, concepts, and thoughts using appropriate mathematical forms, including numeric, graphical, verbal, and symbolic forms for solving a variety of problems
- Explain how knowledge is constructed in the sciences using the scientific method.

- Locate and evaluate reliable sources of scientific evidence to construct arguments, to apply scientific knowledge, and to critically assess real-world issues
- Express and manipulate quantitative information, concepts, and thoughts in verbal, numeric, graphical, computational, and symbolic form to frame and devise a solution to a problem
- Evaluate conclusions drawn from or decisions based on quantitative data

Course topics

- Properties of the vocal apparatus, and conventions for transcribing speech in English and beyond (phonetics)
- Fundamental concepts in linguistic theory related to phonology (phonology), the structure of words (morphology) and sentences (syntax), and the expression of meaning (semantics–pragmatics)
- How language is acquired by children and adults (acquisition), how it is processed by the mind (psycholinguistics), how it changes over time (historical linguistics), how it varies across the world (typology), how it expresses identity (sociolinguistics)

Required course materials

Textbooks: Yule, David. 2010. *The Study of Language*. Fourth Edition. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0-521-74922-0.

Dawson, Hope C., and Michael Phelan (editors). 2016. *Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics*. Twelfth edition. The Ohio State University Press. ISBN: 0814252702.

All readings (including textbook chapters) will be posted on eLC

Assessment and grading

Course assignments and requirements

<i>Quizzes</i>	15%	There will be three 3 online quizzes (5 points each), with in-class review sessions beforehand. You are allowed 2 attempts, and eLC will keep your highest score. These quizzes must be completed individually, without peer collaboration. The goal is to help make sense of the course content and to demonstrate your understanding of key concepts.
<i>Short homeworks</i>	25%	5 short written assignments (5 points each) task you with linguistic problems that will help you see how linguistics connects with the real world. They must be completed individually, but you are encouraged to collaborate as you work on them. They are low-stakes assignments to help you prepare for higher-stakes ones.
<i>Long homeworks</i>	30%	3 medium-length written assignments (1–3 pages) consist of language problem-sets about phonology, syntax, and language

		acquisition. The tasks are expansions of the short assignments and invite you to think like a linguist. You are strongly encouraged to collaborate, but you must write up your work individually. Be sure to list any collaborators clearly.
<i>Final group project</i>	20%	This project can be based on any topic within the field of linguistics, allowing you to explore and investigate subfields and specific topics discussed in class, given your own interests. You will work in groups of 3 or 4. You all need to decide on your topic and communicate it to me by Monday, 3/24. You will present your project on one of the last days of classes. A signup form will be made available for choosing presentation dates/times. No project write-up or final paper is required.
<i>Participation and attendance</i>	10%	Regular attendance and active participation are the best (perhaps the only) way to keep up with the material. The textbook is more of a crutch than your main source of information, so you will not want to miss class. UGA policy allows you two unexcused absences. If you cannot make it to class or if you know you will be late, please email me beforehand.

See eLC for more information about each assignment.

Missed exams, late assignments, and regrading requests

Group projects, your individual paper, and your final paper, are due at 11:59 pm ET on their respective due dates, unless otherwise instructed. These items may be turned in after the deadline, but you will be eligible for fewer points once the deadline has passed: you will only be eligible for 95% of the total grade if it is submitted by 3 am that night, and you will lose an additional 10% from the total you are eligible to earn for every 12 hour period it is late thereafter. Papers more than three days late will earn a grade of 0.

Extensions will not generally be permitted, but if you think you are subject to an exceptional circumstance, please discuss it with me outside of class or by emailing me at least 24 hours before the original deadline.

Final grades

<i>A</i>	93–100	<i>C+</i>	76–79
<i>A–</i>	90–92	<i>C</i>	73–75
<i>B+</i>	86–89	<i>C–</i>	70–72
<i>B</i>	83–85	<i>D</i>	60–69
<i>B–</i>	80–82	<i>F</i>	<60

Final grades will be rounded to the nearest whole number (e.g. 89.50 to 90, and 89.49 to 89).

Course statements and policies

UGA honor code

“I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.” A Culture of Honesty, the University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at honesty.uga.edu.

Honesty and transparency are important features of good scholarship. On the flip side, plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses with serious consequences. If you are discovered engaging in either behavior in this course, I will follow the procedures laid out in UGA’s Academic Honesty Policy. There you can also find more information about what counts as prohibited conduct.

I encourage you to work together on homework assignments and to make use of campus resources like the Office of Student Success & Achievement and the Writing Center. While collaboration is encouraged, *each student must submit a unique assignment* reflecting their own work.

If you have questions about my integration of the Student Code of Conduct into this course, please do not hesitate to ask: my aim is to foster an environment where you can learn and grow, while ensuring that the work we all do is honest and fair.

Accommodation for disabilities

If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>.

Attendance & participation policy

Class participation is a very important part of the learning process in this course. Although not explicitly graded, you will be evaluated on the *quality* of your contributions and insights. Quality comments possess one or more of the following properties:

- Offers a different and unique, but relevant, perspective;
- Contributes to moving the discussion and analysis forward;
- Builds on other comments;
- Transcends the “I feel” syndrome. That is, it includes some evidence, argumentation, or recognition of inherent tradeoffs. In other words, the comment demonstrates some reflective thinking.

We will use our assessment of your participation to manage borderline grades. While your participation grade is subjective, it will not be random or arbitrary. And, clearly, more frequent quality comments are better than less frequent quality comments.

Use of AI in this course

UGA’s policy is that the use of AI for coursework is not permitted unless explicitly authorized by me (your course instructor) ahead of time. In this course, to ensure you develop and master the foundational knowledge and skills in this course, the use of generative AI (GAI) tools is strictly prohibited. This includes all stages of your work process, even the preliminary ones. This prohibition extends to AI writing tools like Grammarly and Wordtune, as well as GAI

tools like ChatGPT, Copilot, Writesonic, Rytr, and Rtutor. If you are uncertain about using a particular tool to support your work, please consult with me before using it.

Well-being resources

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.

Disclaimer

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Course schedule and activities

Subject to change — pay attention to announcements on eLC

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
1	M, Jan 6	Introduction		
	W, Jan 8	What is language?	Yule, ch. 1–2 (skim)	Welcome survey
	F, Jan 10			
2	M, Jan 13	Phonetics	Yule, ch. 3	
	W, Jan 15			
	F, Jan 17			Short HW #1
3	M, Jan 20	<i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No class</i>		
	W, Jan 22			
	F, Jan 24			Short HW #2
4	M, Jan 27	Phonology	Yule, ch. 4	
	W, Jan 29			Long HW #1
	F, Jan 31	<i>Class Cancelled</i>		
5	M, Feb 3	Morphology	Yule, ch. 5–6	
	W, Feb 5			
	F, Feb 7			Quiz #1
6	M, Feb 10	Syntax	Yule, ch. 7–8	
	W, Feb 12			
	F, Feb 14			Short HW #3
7	M, Feb 17			
	W, Feb 19			
	F, Feb 21			Long HW #2
8	M, Feb 24	Semantics– Pragmatics	Yule, ch. 9–10	
	W, Feb 26			
	F, Feb 28			Quiz #2
<i>Spring Break</i>				
9	M, Mar 10	Language, Mind, and Culture	Yule, ch. 12 & 20	
	W, Mar 12			
	F, Mar 14			Short HW #4
10	M, Mar 17	Language Acquisition	Yule, ch. 13–14	
	W, Mar 19			
	F, Mar 21			Long HW #3

11	M, Mar 24	Language Variation	Yule, ch. 18–19	
	W, Mar 26			
	F, Mar 28			Short HW #5
12	M, Mar 31	Language Change	Yule, ch. 17	
	W, Apr 2			
	F, Apr 4			Quiz #3
13	M, Apr 7	Spillover, or other topics of interest	TBA	
	W, Apr 9			
	F, Apr 11			TBD
14	M, Apr 14			
	W, Apr 16			
	F, Apr 18			Bonus Activity
15	M, Apr 21	Group presentations		
	W, Apr 23			
	F, Apr 25			
16	M, Apr 28			