

# Field Methods of Linguistics / Linguistic Field Research

LING 415 / LING 610 — Winter 2016

M,W 1:05–2:25, Stuart Biology s2/2<sup>1</sup>

## Instructors

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<i>office hours</i>	Thursdays 1:30–3:00, by appt.	by appt.

Language consultant — Karima Ouzar

## Content of the course

The primary goals of this course are to learn how to collect and analyze reliable and accurate language data through direct work with a native speaker, as well as to gain practice in formulating and testing linguistic hypotheses. In doing this, we'll also learn about topics in linguistic typology, create a collaborative language database, as well as focus on topics specific to the grammar of the language at hand. We'll read and discuss fieldwork best practices, but primarily we will learn by doing. You'll gain practice writing up your findings and supporting proposals with linguistic data.

## Requirements and evaluation

We will investigate the above topics through a combination of readings, short-assignments, in-class discussion, group work, and—most importantly—active elicitation. The evaluation break-down is as follows:

	LING 415	LING 610
short assignments	50%	25%
participation (in-class work, blog posts)	25%	25%
final paper & presentation	25%	50%

## Participation in in-class sessions

This class is a workshop, not a lecture, and active participation in class and in your group is absolutely essential to its—and your!—success. Participating in class means asking questions, contributing ideas, and taking careful notes. After the add/drop deadline, the class will be divided into 6 small groups. These groups will meet together with Karima during the out-of-class sessions, and will be responsible for planning and guiding elicitations for certain in-class sessions (see schedule below). While certain groups will be responsible for guiding our elicitation on any given meeting, *everyone should be participating actively in all class sessions.*

## Participation in out-of-class sessions

Groups will meet regularly with Karima outside of class beginning in Week 4. Attendance and participation in these sessions is mandatory; the extra hour will be offset by reduced Wednesday meeting time (for 415 students). These out-of-class sessions are designed to allow you to get more direct elicitation time, delve deeper into certain topics, and to develop independent projects. After each out-of-class session, your group is responsible for making a short blog post with notes about what you did and any highlights from the session.

<sup>1</sup>Beginning Week 4, the Thursday class will finish at 2:00pm for LING 415 students and groups will begin to meet with Karima one hour/week outside of class. Out-of-class elicitation schedule to be determined.

## Leading elicitation

Together with your group, you will be responsible for leading in-class elicitation for one week during the semester, either on the topic assigned for the week, or on a modification of the topic mutually agreed upon by the class. This will involve completing the reading for the week and coming up with a plan for material to elicit. You will submit your plan by email to the instructors (1–2 pages, including specific example sentences), Sunday by 5pm. Your group will be responsible for ensuring that the online database is up-to-date with the material elicited in class that week.

## Short assignments

Over the course of the semester, you will have 10 short assignments to turn in, roughly one per week. These assignments are due on MyCourses in PDF format **at 5pm on Sunday** (see *Late Work* below). These will be graded on a 4-point scale: 3/3 = exceeds expectations; 2/3 = meets expectations; 1/4 = below expectations; 0/3 = not turned in. This coarse-grained scale allows us to give you feedback quickly, and given the large number of these assignments, will average out over the course of the term.

## Late work

You have one free late-pass which you may use to turn in one of your short assignments 24 hours late. In order to use your late pass, you must let us know you are using it by the original deadline. Once this pass has been used, late work cannot be accepted for grades without a documented medical excuse.

## Final paper and presentation

You will be asked to write a final paper on a topic in the grammar of the language of your choosing (in consultation with us). Final papers are due April 22nd, and will be discussed further in class. You will give a short presentation on your chosen topic the last week of class.

## Readings

There is two books for this course, available at the McGill bookstore:

- Payne, Thomas E. 1997. *Describing morphosyntax*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bower, Claire. 2008. *Linguistic fieldwork: A practical guide*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

We will read most of the Payne book, which will familiarize you with linguistic typology, discuss what kinds of questions we need to ask, and provide background and structure to our class elicitation sessions. The topics for each given week may serve as the topic for elicitation, or we may decide to modify topics as needed.

Though there are general good practices for conducting field work, there is no magic formula. What works in one situation, may not work in another situation. In this class we will learn by doing, and on the whole we will not devote much in-class time to discussing the assigned readings on fieldwork methodology. Nonetheless, there are a number of good resources on the topic, and many of the course readings are intended to give you a sense for some of the issues we will want to keep in mind as we go along. The Bower book covers many aspects of linguistic fieldwork, and will be supplemented by additional readings made available on the MyCourses website. Your responsibility is to complete the reading before coming to class; all readings are required unless marked as optional. Altogether, you can expect to read approximately 2–3 articles or chapters per week (roughly 100 pages).

## **University regulations**

### **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.

## Course outline (readings subject to modification)

date	topic/to do	readings: □ = required, ☆ = optional	due
1/7	<b>Introduction</b> , logistics, consent fieldwork handout, record a text	□ - Bowers (2008), ch. 11 – <i>Ethical field research</i> ☆ - Rice (2001) – <i>Learning as one goes</i>	
1/11	<b>Phonology</b> fieldwork handout cont.	□ - Bowers (2008), chs. 1 & 3 – <i>Introduction</i> □ - Vaux and Cooper (2003), chs. 2 & 3 – <i>Transcription</i>	📅 1
1/13		□ - Bowers (2008), ch. 5 & app. C – <i>Phonetics and phonology</i>	
1/18	<b>Phonology cont.</b>	□ - Maddieson (2001) - <i>Phonetic fieldwork</i> □/☆ - Ladefoged and Johnson (2011) - review as needed: ch. 1; Part III (esp. ch. 7) ☆ - Ladefoged (2003), chs. 4–6	📅 2
1/20		□ - Vaux and Cooper (2003), chs. 7 & 8	
1/25	<b>Typological overview</b>	□ - Bowers (2008), ch. 6 – <i>Eliciting basics</i> □ - Payne (1997), chs. 0–3 – <i>Describing morphosyntax</i>	📅 3
1/27		□ - Matthewson (2004) – <i>Methodology of semantic fieldwork</i>	
2/1	<b>Constituent order</b>	□ - Payne (1997), ch. 4 – <i>Constituent order typology</i> □ - Vaux and Cooper (2003), ch. 11 – <i>Syntax</i>	📅 4
2/3		☆ - Noonan (2005): <i>Grammar writing</i>	
2/8	<b>Group 1: NPs</b>	□ - Payne (1997), ch. 5 – <i>Noun and NP operations</i>	📅 5
2/10		☆ - Rice (2006) – <i>Letting the language tell its story</i>	
2/15	<b>Group 2: Predicate nominals</b>	□ - Payne (1997), ch. 6 – <i>Predicate nominals</i>	📅 6
2/17		☆ - Mithun (2001) – <i>Who shapes the record?</i>	
2/22	<b>Group 3: Grammatical relations</b>	□ - Payne (1997), ch. 7 – <i>Grammatical relations</i>	📅 7
2/24			
3/7	<b>Group 4: Voice and valence</b>	□ - Payne (1997), ch. 8 – <i>Voice and valence operations</i>	📅 8 paper proposal
3/9			
3/14	<b>Group 5: Other VP operations</b>	□ - Payne (1997), ch. 9 – <i>Other verb and VP operations</i>	📅 9
3/16			
3/21	<b>Group 6: Other VP operations cont.</b>		📅 10
3/23			
3/28		— No class —	
3/30	<b>Pragmatically marked structures</b>	□ - Payne (1997), ch. 10 – <i>Pragmatically marked structures</i>	
4/4	<b>Clause combinations</b>	□ - Payne (1997), ch. 11 – <i>Clause combinations</i>	
4/6			
4/11		— Class presentations —	
4/13		— Class presentations —	

**Final papers due April 22nd, 5pm**

## Readings

- Bowern, Claire. 2008. *Linguistic fieldwork: A practical guide*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Ladefoged, Peter. 2003. *Phonetic data analysis: An introduction to fieldwork and instrumental techniques*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ladefoged, Peter, and Keith Johnson. 2011. *A course in phonetics*. Wadsworth Publishing, 6th edition edition.
- Maddieson, Ian. 2001. Phonetic fieldwork. In *Linguistic fieldwork*, ed. P. Newman and M. Ratliff, 211–229. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Matthewson, Lisa. 2004. On the methodology of semantic fieldwork. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 70:369–415.
- Mithun, Marianne. 2001. Who shapes the record: the speaker and the linguist. In *Linguistic fieldwork*, ed. Paul Newman and Martha Ratliff, 34–54. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Noonan, Michael. 2005. Grammar writing for a grammar-reading audience. *Studies in Language* 30:351–365.
- Payne, Thomas E. 1997. *Describing morphosyntax*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Rice, Keren. 2001. Learning as one goes. In *Linguistic fieldwork*, ed. Paul Newman and Martha Ratliff, 230–249. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Rice, Keren. 2006. Let the language tell its story? the role of linguistic theory in writing grammars. In *Catching language: The standing challenge of grammar writing*, ed. Felix K. Ameka, Alan Dench, and Nicholas Evans, 235–268. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Vaux, Bert, and Justin Cooper. 2003. *Introduction to linguistic field methods*. Muenchen: LINCOM Europa.