

## LINGUISTICS 201 INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS

### TEACHING TEAM

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<b>Instructor Office Hours</b>	Monday 1-2 pm Department of Linguistics, 1085 Av. du Docteur-Penfield, Room 020 Zoom link: See <i>myCourses</i> under the zoom tab	
<b>Teaching assistants</b>	Cheman Baira Agitok Sangma George Bennett Cassi Jones Simon LiVolsi Sabrina Wang	<a href="mailto:cheman.asangma@mcgill.ca">cheman.asangma@mcgill.ca</a> <a href="mailto:george.bennett@mcgill.ca">george.bennett@mcgill.ca</a> <a href="mailto:casandra.jones@mcgill.ca">casandra.jones@mcgill.ca</a> <a href="mailto:simon.livolsi@mcgill.ca">simon.livolsi@mcgill.ca</a> <a href="mailto:yingxuan.wang@mcgill.ca">yingxuan.wang@mcgill.ca</a>

### TA Office hours (TBA)

### COURSE SCHEDULE AND LOCATION

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**Lectures:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday (Jan 10, 17); Maass Chemistry building, room 112, 3:35 pm to 4:25 pm

**Conferences:** Friday Jan 24–Apr 11; *Registration will open on January 15, check Minerva for schedule and location*

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

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#### Overview

This course offers a general introduction to linguistics, the scientific study of human language. It covers the core theoretical subfields of linguistics: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Every semester, the course provides background on other subfields of linguistics such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, historical linguistics, linguistic variation, and language acquisition. This semester, the course includes components focusing on sociolinguistics and language reclamation and maintenance as it applies to Indigenous languages worldwide and in Canada specifically.

#### Course content

This course proposes a journey through grammar which, in linguistics, is broadly defined as the set of rules that language users tacitly agree on and observe when using language. This version of grammar is not taught in schools, it is not even taught explicitly by parents and caregivers raising children. Rather, it is the grammar that language users develop or acquire through exposure to their native language(s). All language users have a grammar, even when the language they use does not have a writing system, and even when it doesn't have dictionaries or written grammars. We usually

divide this grammar into 5 modules: phonetics (sounds), phonology (sound patterns), morphology (parts of words), syntax (phrases and sentences), and semantics (meaning). We will look at these 5 modules in that order and see how they all work together to create a system that is structured and coherent. Once we have a better idea of what grammar is and how it is structured, we will discuss why looking at language(s) through the linguist's lens is useful. We will take a few weeks to explore sociolinguistics, and language reclamation as it applies to Indigenous languages worldwide and in Canada more specifically.

**Course pre-requisites:** none

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES

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At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- understand and refute common misconceptions about language(s) and linguistics;
- analyze grammatical phenomena based on the description of linguistic data;
- use linguistic analysis to understand how differences arise in the speech/grammar of language users and their respective linguistic communities.

#### INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

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**Lectures:** Lectures are given in person, and attendance is required. Recommended readings are assigned for each week. You can do the readings before or after the lectures, based on your personal learning style.

**Conferences:** Starting in week 3 (on January 24), Friday conferences will be led by teaching assistants across 8 sections. You must register in a single section which you will be attending throughout the semester. During conferences, you will work on problem sets and exercises designed to develop your analytical skills with the support and guidance of your TA. You can also use conferences to ask clarification questions.

#### EVALUATION

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##### Assessment weights

Linguistics in the wild (LiW) (10/12)	10%
Assignments (5x8%)	40%
Midterm	20%
Final	30%

##### Assessment descriptions

Linguistics in the wild (LiW) (10%): Every Thursday, I will release a *Linguistics in the wild* question to be answered on *myCourses* before Friday 5pm. These questions are designed to bring you to use your new skills to observe, describe, and analyze language phenomena you encounter as a language user in your daily life. LiW questions are graded based on completion: you need only submit a relevant answer to earn the point. To earn the full 10%, you must submit 10 out of 12 LiW answers.

Assignments (40%): The course includes 5 assignments worth 8% each. Assignments will be released on Mondays and due the following Monday as per the course calendar below.

Midterm (20%): The midterm will be held on February 26 (time and location to be announced).

Final exam (30%): The final exam is scheduled by the Exam Office during the semester. According to Senate regulations, instructors are not permitted to make special arrangements for final exams. **Do not schedule travel plans before the exam schedule is finalized.**

#### LATE SUBMISSION POLICY

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We will not grade LiW late submissions.

In the absence of a medical certificate or analogous circumstances, I will not accept late submissions for assignments.

You can request an extension for an assignment **before the due date** if you are experiencing exceptional circumstances by contacting the instructor (Anne).

#### CONTACTING THE TEACHING TEAM

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Before sending an email, please make sure that your question cannot be answered by checking the syllabus. Issues related to course content should be brought to your conference section or to office hours. For other issues, your first point of contact should be your TA (see above for emails).

Make sure that your emails are sent from your McGill email address with 'LING 201' in the subject line. We will respond to your email within two business days.

#### COURSE RESOURCES

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**Textbook:** The textbook for this course, *Essentials of Linguistics, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, is an open access linguistics textbook published by the Department of Linguistics at the University of Toronto. It is co-written by several linguists working at various Canadian universities. You can access and download the textbook here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/essentialsoflinguistics2/>. Recommended readings for each week are given in the course calendar below.

**Other recommended readings:** Readings for weeks 12 and 13 are taken from the *Oxford handbook of sociolinguistics* and the *Routledge Handbook of Sociolinguistics Around the World* respectively. References are given in the reference section below. The PDFs for both readings can be found on *myCourses*.

**Lecture slides:** Lecture slides will be released on *myCourses* before each lecture. They do not constitute a complete substitute for lectures.

**Lecture recordings:** Lectures will be recorded, and recordings will be released in bulk before each assessment. Recordings are not a substitute for class attendance.

**Other:** Other resources might be recommended throughout the semester, if this happens, relevant links and references will be provided on the lecture slides.

**Problem sets:** Problem sets and exercises to be completed during the conferences will be released on Friday mornings, and answer keys will be released at the end of the day every Friday.

**Tutoring:** If you need additional help with course material, you can contact SLUM (slum.linguistics@mail.mcgill.ca), the undergraduate linguistics association. Tutors can help with the content of the course but they do not help directly with assignments. Make sure that your tutor knows what is being covered in the course this term since the content can change from term to term.

COURSE CALENDAR

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**Dates to remember**

Date	Due
January 20	Assignment 1
February 3	Assignment 2
February 17	Assignment 3
February 26	Midterm
March 17	Assignment 4
March 31	Assignment 5
TBA	Final exam

Date	Topic	Reading	Due
Week 1			
Jan 6	Introduction		
Jan 8	Introduction	1.1–1.4	
Jan 10	Phonetics 1	3.2–3.5	LiW
Week 2			
Jan 13	Phonetics 2	3.2–3.5	
Jan 15	Phonetics 3	3.6	
Jan 17	Phonology 1	4.1–4.4	LiW
Week 3			
Jan 20	Phonology 2	4.1–4.4	<b>Assignment 1</b>
Jan 22	Phonology 3	3.10, 4.6, 4.9	
Jan 24	<i>Conference</i>	4.5	LiW
Week 4			
Jan 27	Morphology 1	5.1–5.5	
Jan 29	Morphology 2	5.6–5.10	
Jan 31	<i>Conference</i>		LiW
Week 5			
Feb 3	Morphology 3	5.11	<b>Assignment 2</b>
Feb 5	Morphology 4	6.1–6.3	
Feb 7	<i>Conference</i>		LiW
Week 6			
Feb 10	Syntax 1	6.1–6.3	
Feb 12	Syntax 2	6.4–6.5	
Feb 14	<i>Conference</i>		LiW
Week 7			
Feb 17	Syntax 3	6.13–6.14	<b>Assignment 3</b>
Feb 19	Syntax 4	6.15–6.17	
Feb 21	<i>Conference</i>		LiW
Week 8			
Feb 24	Review		

Date	Topic	Reading	Due
Feb 26		Midterm (Time and location TBA)	
Feb 28	<i>No conference</i>		
Mar 3–7		<i>Reading break — Have fun!</i>	
Week 9			
Mar 10	Syntax 5		
Mar 12	Semantics 1	7.1	
Mar 14	<i>Conference</i>		LiW
Week 10			
Mar 17	Semantics 2	7.2–7.3	<b>Assignment 4</b>
Mar 19	Pragmatics 1	8.1, 8.4-8.7	
Mar 21	<i>Conference</i>		LiW
Week 11			
Mar 24	Pragmatics 2	8.9	
Mar 26	Syntax/pragmatics		
Mar 28	<i>Conference</i>		LiW
Week 12			
Mar 31	Sociolinguistics 1	Bailey (2013) pp.11–30	<b>Assignment 5</b>
Apr 2	Sociolinguistics 2		
Apr 4	<i>Conference</i>		LiW
Week 13			
Apr 7	Language diversity 1	Burge <i>et al.</i> (2021)	
Apr 9	Language diversity 2		
Apr 11	<i>Conference</i>		LiW

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#### CLASS POLICIES AND UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

##### Use of electronics electronic devices

Laptops and tablets can be useful learning tools, but they can also be extremely distracting, both to instructors and to your fellow students. If you opt to use a device for taking notes during class, we will begin by giving you the benefit of the doubt and assume that you are using the device for class-related activities only. If we suspect that you are not using the device for class purposes, or if you are causing a distraction to those around you, we will ask you to stop. If we have to ask more than once, we will ask you to leave the classroom. Cellphones should not be used, including for recording, without permission of the instructors.

##### 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](#)” (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (See [McGill’s guide to academic honesty](#) for more information).

##### 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 written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives. (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009.)

### **Inclusivity and equity**

Language is easily manipulated to empower or disenfranchise persons and groups of people. By extension, the way we study language (our methodologies, what languages we study, and how we represent different languages) can also empower and disenfranchise people. As an instructor and as a linguist, I am committed to providing an environment where linguistics can be used to empower people, especially those who are otherwise marginalized and disenfranchised. I invite you to join me in this commitment by being kind, respectful, and empathetic with your peers and the teaching team. If you experience prejudice of any kind in this course, you are strongly encouraged to reach out to the teaching team so that we can support you and address the harm you have suffered.

If you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with the teaching team and with Student Accessibility and Achievement (<https://www.mcgill.ca/access-achieve/>).

### **Copyright ©**

Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., slides, handouts, conference materials, assignments, quizzes, exam questions, answer keys, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

### **Privacy**

Lectures will be recorded unless mentioned otherwise. By remaining in classes that are recorded, you agree to the recording, and you understand that your image, voice, and name may be disclosed to classmates. You also understand that recordings will be made available in *myCourses* to students registered in the course. Please consult me if you have concerns about privacy and we can discuss measures that can be taken.

### **Wellness**

Many students may face mental health challenges that can impact not only their academic success but also their ability to thrive in our campus community. Please reach out for support when you need it; [wellness resources](#) are available on campus, off campus, and online.

### **Territory acknowledgement**

McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.