

## LING 211: Introduction to Indigenous Languages of North America

McGill University  
Winter 2023  
Mon. & Wed. 08:30–10:00 EST (UTC -5)  
Rutherford 115

Instructor: James A. Crippen  
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### Course requirements

The work for this course includes of a mix of reading, writing, discussion, and analysis of linguistic data. In particular, this course involves: (i) class participation, (ii) essay responses, (iii) reading and lecture quizzes, (iv) language data tasks, and (v) a final exam. The final grade will be calculated according to the following percentages:

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Participation               | 10% |
| Essay responses             | 15% |
| Reading and lecture quizzes | 25% |
| Language data tasks         | 25% |
| Final exam                  | 25% |

**Attendance:** Attendance will not be graded. But material will be presented in class that is not addressed in the readings. Students are responsible for all in class material as well as readings. Class sessions will not be recorded. If you miss a class please contact fellow classmates for their notes. And please don't come to class if you're sick!

**Participation:** Participation includes both online discussion and in-class discussion. As part of the online discussion, each student must post one discussion question each week on *myCourses* about one of the readings or about one of topics presented during the lectures. Other students can reply to these questions and discuss the issues or suggest answers. This helps the instructor learn what information needs more explanation and what students find interesting. Discussion questions posted on *myCourses* will usually be answered during lectures, but other students may also suggest answers to questions online.

**Essay responses:** Essay responses are short (1 or 2 pages) accounts of your personal reflections on topics discussed in class. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' for these, only a statement of your thoughts about a topic. Some essays may include citations; appropriate citation and bibliography style will be detailed in class. Essays will be graded by quality: addressing the topic, appropriate length, coherent organization, consistent style, etc.

**Quizzes:** Quizzes are short sets of questions which assess your reading and listening. Each question is based on the lectures and readings, including material presented in class. Quizzes are mostly multiple choice with some true/false and short answer questions.

**Tasks:** Language data tasks are based on small sets of data from various languages. Each task presents some data and asks for a linguistic analysis of that data following some procedures given in class. The format of each task differs depending on the kinds of analyses and data. The problems presented in the tasks are designed to assume as little background as possible.

**Final exam:** The final exam will be take-home, due at the scheduled final exam time. Exam questions will be similar to those for the quizzes and tasks. It is essentially a larger version of the quizzes and tasks and like them will be done through *myCourses*. Content of the final exam is comprehensive, covering all of the topics throughout the term.

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### Late policy and extra credit

Late work will not be accepted. Making up missed work is generally not possible, except for special circumstances (e.g. natural disaster, being admitted to hospital) which must be discussed with the instructor on a case-by-case basis. There is no extra credit.

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### Statement on 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 <https://www.mcgill.ca/integrity>.

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### 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.

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### People and land 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 and thank the diverse indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

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### About the instructor

James A. Crippen [ˈkɹɪ.pɪn] is an assistant professor of linguistics at McGill. He earned his PhD at the University of British Columbia in 2019, studying syntactic structures in the Tlingit [ˈkɹɪŋ.kɪt] language. James's research focuses primarily on the Tlingit language and its relatives in the Na-Dene family, but he has also worked on Haida, Chinook Jargon, Ktunaxa, Polynesian languages, and Micronesian languages.

James is a citizen of the *Lingít* [ʕɪn.ˈkɪt] nation that spans the USA–Canada border of southeastern Alaska, southcentral Yukon Territory and northwestern British Columbia. In Tlingit, *Dzéiwsh* [tsé:wʃ] is a member of the *Kak'weidí Deisheetaan* [qʰà.kʷè:ú tèt:ʃi:ˈtʰà:n] clan (Raven moiety) from the *Kakáak'w* [kʰà.qʰá:kʷ] house group and is a child of the *S'iknax.ádi* [s'ik.nàχ.ˈʔá.tì] clan in the Wolf/Eagle moiety. He comes from the *Shtax'héen Kwáan* [ʃtəx'.ˈhí:n

q<sup>hw</sup>á:n] ‘Stikine people’ at *Kaachxan.áak’w* [q<sup>h</sup>à:tʃ.χàn.ʔá:k<sup>w</sup>] ‘Wrangell, Alaska’ by the mouth of *Shtax’héen* [ʃtəx’.hí:n] ‘Stikine River’.

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### Textbooks

- M: Mithun, Marianne. 1999. *The languages of Native North America*. (Cambridge language surveys). Cambridge UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- SM: Silver, Shirley & Wick R. Miller. 1997. *American Indian languages: Cultural and social contexts*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press.
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### Other materials

- Afable, Patricia O. & Madison S. Beeler. 1996. Place-names. Pp. 185–199 in Goddard & Sturtevant 1996.
- Austin, Peter & Julia Sallabank. 2011. Introduction. Pp. 1–23 in *Cambridge handbook of endangered languages*, Austin & Sallabank (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- BigEagle, Louise. 2017. *To Wake Up the Nakota Language*. Ottawa: National Film Board. [https://www.nfb.ca/film/to\\_wake\\_up\\_the\\_nakota\\_language/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/to_wake_up_the_nakota_language/) (2021-12-22).
- Bohnemeyer, Jürgen. 2001. Deixis. Pp. 3371–3375 in *International encyclopedia of the social and behavioural sciences*, Neil J. Smelser & Paul B. Baltes (eds.). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Chen, Sihwei & Lisa Matthewson. 2023. A sense of time and world. Ch. 25, pp. 577–598 in Dagostino, Mithun, & Rice 2023.
- Compton, Richard. 2020. Agreement and related phenomena in North American languages. Ch. 7, pp. 167–192 in Siddiqi, Barrie, Gillon, Haugen, & Mathieu 2020.
- Dauenhauer, Nora Marks & Richard Dauenhauer. 1998. Technical, emotional, and ideological issues in reversing language shift: Examples from Southeast Alaska. Pp. 57–98 in *Endangered languages: Language loss and community response*, Lenore A. Grenoble & Lindsay J. Whaley (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dagostino, Carmen; Marianne Mithun, & Keren Rice. 2023. *The languages and linguistics of Indigenous North America: A comprehensive guide, volume 1*. (The world of linguistics vol. 13 no. 1). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Équipe du Wapikoni mobile. 2017. *Learning Dene and the Tale of the Raven*. Ottawa: National Film Board. <https://www.nfb.ca/film/learning-dene-and-the-tale-of-the-raven/> (2021-12-22).
- French, David H. and Kathrine S. French. 1996. Personal names. Pp. 200–213 in Goddard & Sturtevant 1996.
- Goddard, Ives & William C. Sturtevant. 1996. *Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 17: Languages*. Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Gaffney, Dennis. 2006. American Indian or Native American? *Antiques Roadshow: Follow the stories*. [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/fts/bismarck\\_200504A16.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/fts/bismarck_200504A16.html) (2018-11-26).

- Gibbons, Rosemary & Dax Thomas. 2002. *A century of genocide in the Americas: The residential school experience*. Film, 18 min. Seattle: Univ. of Washington, Native Voices Program. Vimeo [36847324](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36847324), [72918476](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72918476).
- Gillon, Carrie. 2020. The expanded NP: Number, possessors, gender, animacy, and classifiers. Ch. 5, pp. 114–148 in Siddiqi, Barrie, Gillon, Haugen, & Mathieu 2020.
- Gosselin, Bernard. 1971. *César's Bark Canoe / César et son canot d'écorce*. Ottawa: National Film Board. [https://www.nfb.ca/film/cesars\\_bark\\_canoe/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/cesars_bark_canoe/).
- Hinton, Leanne. 2018. Approaches to and strategies for language revitalization. In *The Oxford handbook of endangered languages*, Kenneth L. Rehg & Lyle Campbell (eds.), ch. 19, pp. 443–465.
- Hinton, Leanne & Barbra A. Meek. 2018. Language revitalization in indigenous North America. In *The Routledge handbook of language revitalization*, Leanne Hinton et al. (eds.), ch. 36, pp. 375–383. New York: Routledge. DOI [10.4324/9781315561271](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315561271).
- Holton, Gary & Andrea L. Berez-Kroeker. 2023. Sense of place: Space, landscape, and orientation. Ch. 24, pp. 547–576 in Dagostino, Mithun, & Rice 2023.
- Krauss, Michael E. 1992. The world's languages in crisis. *Language* 68.1: 4–10. DOI [10.1353/lan.1992.0052](https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.1992.0052).
- Leon, Aaron. 2017. *Tsm7aksaltn: To Teach and To Learn*. <https://www.nfb.ca/film/tsm7aksaltn-to-teach-and-to-learn/> (2021-12-22).
- Levinson, Stephen C. 2006. Deixis. Ch. 5, pp. 97–121 in *The handbook of pragmatics*, Laurence R. Horn & Gregory Ward (eds.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Maddieson, Ian, Caroline Smith, & Nicola Bessell. 2001. Aspects of the phonetics of Tlingit. *Anthropological Linguistics* 43.2: 135–176. JSTOR [30028779](https://www.jstor.org/stable/30028779).
- Martin, Laura. 1986. “Eskimo words for snow”: A case study in the genesis and decay of an anthropological example. *American Anthropologist* 88.1: 418–423. DOI [10.1525/aa.1986.88.2.02a00080](https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1986.88.2.02a00080).
- Nettle, Daniel & Suzanne Romaine. 2000. *Vanishing voices: The extinction of the world's languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pullum, Geoffrey K. 1989. Topic ... comment: The great Eskimo vocabulary hoax. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 7.2: 275–281. DOI [10.1007/BF00138079](https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00138079).
- Siddiqi, Daniel, Michael Barrie, Carrie Gillon, Jason Haugen, & Éric Mathieu. 2020. *The Routledge handbook of North American languages*. (Routledge handbooks in linguistics.) New York: Routledge.
- Thomason, Sarah. 2023. Language contact and linguistic areas. Ch. 28, pp. 647–668 in Dagostino, Mithun, & Rice 2023.
- Thompson, Laurence C. and M. Dale Kinkade. 1990. Languages. Pp. 30–51 in *Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 7: Northwest Coast*, Wayne Suttles (ed.). Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Wilhelm, Andrea. 2023. Mass and count nouns. Ch. 23, pp. 527–546 in Dagostino, Mithun, & Rice 2023.
- Zúñiga, Fernando. 2023. What is a word? Ch. 8, pp. 183–204 in Dagostino, Mithun, & Rice 2023.

## Schedule

| <i>Week</i> | <i>Dates</i>      | <i>Topic</i>                    | <i>Readings</i>  | <i>Assignments</i>                                  |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| 1           | Jan 6<br>Jan 8    | Introduction                    | SM 3–13; M 1–12; Martin 1986; Pullum 1989  | essay: language background                          |
| 2           | Jan 13<br>Jan 15  | Names and culture               | Gaffney 2006; Afable & Beeler 1996; French & French 1996                           | quiz: introduction                                  |
| 3           | Jan 20<br>Jan 22  | Language endangerment           | Gibbons & Thomas 2002; Krauss 1992; Austin & Sallabank 2011; Nettle & Romaine 2000 | quiz: names and culture                             |
| 4           | Jan 27<br>Jan 29  | Language revitalization         | Hinton 2018; Hinton & Meek 2018; Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer 1998                      | quiz: lg. endangerment<br>essay: lg. endangerment   |
| 5           | Feb 3<br>Feb 5    | Families and language areas     | SM 269–299; M 297–301; Thompson & Kinkade 1990: 30, 42–49                          | quiz: lg. revitalization                            |
| 6           | Feb 10<br>Feb 12  | Sounds: Phonetics and phonology | SM 351–358, 17–19, 38–40; M 15–33; Maddieson et al. 2001: 135–145                  | quiz: lang. families<br>task: Dene comparison       |
| 7           | Feb 17<br>Feb 19  | Intro to grammar; possession    | SM 17–24; M 249–259; Zúñiga 2023; Gillon 2020: 128–133                             | quiz: phonetics<br>task: Tlingit min. pairs         |
| 8           | Feb 24<br>Feb 26  | Number and quantity             | SM 27–28; M 79–94; Wilhelm 2023; Gillon 2020: 123–128                              | quiz: possession<br>task: Tlingit possession        |
|             | Mar 3–7           | . . . . .                       | . . . . Reading break . . . . .  |   |
| 9           | Mar 10<br>Mar 12  | Gender and classification       | SM 32–34; M 95–117; Gillon 2020: 114–123   | quiz: number<br>task: [TBA]                         |
| 10          | Mar 17<br>Mar 19  | Verbs and participants          | SM 28–32; M 69–78, 204–229; Compton 2020   | quiz: gender & classif'n<br>task: Tlingit cl. verbs |
| 11          | Mar 24<br>Mar 26  | Verbs and time                  | SM 41, 34–38; M 152–186; Chen & Matthewson 2023                                    | quiz: person and alignment<br>task: [TBA]           |
| 12          | Mar 31<br>Apr 2   | Space and direction             | SM 60–62; M 132–151; Bohne-meyer 2001; Levinson 2006; Holton & Berez-Kroeker 2023  | quiz: tense and aspect<br>task: [TBA]               |
| 13          | Apr 7<br>Apr 9    | Language contact                | SM 236–266; M 311–313, 322–325; Thomason 2023                                      | quiz: space and direction<br>task: [TBA]            |
|             | Apr 14–<br>Apr 30 | . . . . .                       | . . . . Exam period . . . . .  |   |

Key: SM = Silver & Miller 1997; M = Mithun 1999 (see Textbooks on page 3 for references).