

LING 411/611: The Northern Iroquoian language family

Fall 2024

Wednesdays, 1:05–3:55

Linguistics Building, 1085 Ave Dr Penfield, room 002

Instructors

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

Content of the course

This course explores linguistic topics in the Northern Iroquoian (also Rotinonhsión:ni/Haudenosaunee) language family, particularly the languages of the Six Nations Confederacy: Kanien'kéha, Oneida, Onondaga, Tuscarora, Cayuga, and Seneca. Topics addressed include historical and comparative research, phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, as well as community-led work on language revitalization and the cultural importance of language. While we will look at specific topics and puzzles found within Northern Iroquoian language family, we will do so with an eye toward their relevance to linguistic theory and language typology more generally. Students will investigate and report on patterns and phenomena found in languages of the family, and will gain practice presenting their findings and supporting proposals with linguistic data.

Given that this particular iteration of course involves learning about the languages on whose land McGill University is located, and languages which are being actively revitalized by local communities, this course will also focus on communicating the results of linguistic research in a way that is accessible to language-learners and community-based language practitioners, with a goal of making findings available outside of academia.

Requirements and evaluation

We will investigate the above topics through a combination of readings, short-assignments, in-class discussion, and independent research. The evaluation break-down is as follows:

	LING 411	LING 611
short assignments	50%	30%
presentation of readings	10%	10%
participation	10%	10%
final project & presentation	30%	50%

Short assignments: You will have 5 short assignments to turn in. These assignments are due on MyCourses in PDF format **at 5pm on Thursday of the week it is listed as due on the timeline below**. You have one free late-pass which you may use to turn in one of your assignments 24 hours late. In order to use your late pass, let me know you are using it by the original deadline. Students who add the course late will be granted an automatic extension on the first assignment. Details about evaluation criteria will be provided on MyCourses.

Presentation of readings: Each student will present or co-present one of the assigned readings in class. Presentations should include a brief summary of the background, goals, and motivations for the paper, a sketch of the proposal and critical discussion of the arguments, connections to any relevant material and topics already discussed in class, and questions about terminology or other issues that are unclear to the student. Details about

evaluation criteria will be provided on MyCourses.

Participation: This is a seminar class so participation is an essential component of the course. Students are expected to have completed the readings and to be prepared to contribute to the discussion of them in class. Complete understanding of the readings is not expected, and contributing to the discussion does not mean being “right” or “wrong”. Instead, contributing to the discussion is about joining the conversation in a meaningful way. One effective way to contribute is to ask informed questions about the material, and another is to suggest connections between the material and related topics.

Final project & presentation: Students will select a topic to further investigate during the course of the semester, will present on the topic during the last weeks of class, and submit a final project. Additional details about the final project, presentation, and relevant evaluation criteria will be provided on MyCourses.

Readings

There is no required textbook for this class. Readings will be made available as PDFs on the MyCourses site. A useful resource is Martin (2022), *Tekawennahsonterónnion: Kanien'kéha Morphology*, available for purchase at the Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitíóhkwa Language and Cultural Center website.

Class policies and university regulations

Land and people 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.

General respect: Classroom dynamics affect all of us. While discussions and conflicting opinions are welcome, personal attacks, disrespectful comments, or sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, or other discriminatory remarks are not tolerated. Since disruptive behaviours are not always explicit and immediately apparent, everyone is encouraged to think critically and self-reflexively about listening and communication strategies and to take responsibility for group dynamics, in order to create an environment conducive to respectful dialogue.

Late work: Academic considerations for assessments that are missed or late for valid reasons will be provided at the instructor's discretion. As per Quebec guidelines, medical notes are not required for absences of less than 5 days.

Electronics: Electronic devices may be used for taking notes and accessing information directly related to class content. Out of respect for the group, electronic devices should not be used for any other purposes.

Use of generative AI: The written work you submit in this class should represent your own research, thinking, and writing. Using AI tools to produce written work limits your learning as a student and misrepresents the skills and achievements that are being assessed in this course. While you may use AI to check your grammar, you may not use it to create prose.


Extraordinary circumstances: In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of McGill University, assessment tasks in a course are subject to change, provided students are sent adequate and timely communications regarding the change.

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 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 any written work that is to be graded.

Course outline (readings subject to modification)

date	<input type="checkbox"/> = required, ☆ = student presentation, ☑ = 611 req./411 optional; * – optional	due
Week 1 8/28	Introduction, history, context <input type="checkbox"/> - Stacey (2016, chs. 1–2 + skim further) – <i>Language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - DeCaire (2023, chs. 1–2 + skim further) – <i>Kanien'kéha language revitalization</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Leonard (2017) – <i>Decolonising 'language'</i>	(assn. 1 posted)
Week 2 9/4	Linguistic introduction, typological properties <input type="checkbox"/> - DeCaire and Mithun (2023) – <i>Iroquoian</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Michelson (2016) – <i>Iroquoian languages</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Mithun (2005b) – <i>Mohawk and Iroquoian</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Baker (1996), ch. 1 (and skim TOC for topics) – <i>Polysynthesis Parameter</i>	📁1 – pset 1
Week 3 9/11	Phonetics, phonology, orthography, stress — guest: Karin Michelson <input type="checkbox"/> - Mithun (1979) – <i>Consciousness of phonological structure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Melinger (2002) – <i>Foot structure and accent in Seneca</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Michelson (1989) – <i>Invisibility: Vowels without a timing slot in Mohawk</i>	(assn. 2 posted)
Week 4 9/18	Syllable structure, stress, tone — guest: Simon LiVolsi <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Mithun (1982) – <i>Plops, Squeaks, Croaks, Sighs, and Moans</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Harris (1994, ch. 2) – <i>Constituency</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Piggott (1995, skim/skip Arabic sections) – <i>Epenthesis and syllable weight</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Dyck (1997, skim) – <i>Cayuga accent: A synchronic analysis</i>	📁2 – pset 2 due
Week 5 9/25	Grammatical categories, kinship terms <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Michelson (2023b) – <i>Word classes in Iroquoian languages</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Mithun (2010) – <i>The search for regularity in irregularity</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Baker (2003), §1.1–1.2 – <i>Lexical categories</i> <i>guest presentation: Kanontienéntha' Brass</i>	(assn. 3 posted)
Week 6 10/2	Nouns and possession <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Mithun (2000) – <i>Noun and verb in Iroquoian languages</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Michelson and Price (2011, chs. 1–2; skim) – <i>Parts of speech; Nouns</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Mithun (1996) – <i>Multiple reflections of inalienability</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Baker (1999) – <i>External possession in Mohawk</i> <i>guest presentation: Chase Boles</i>	
Week 7 10/9	Pronominal prefixes, grammatical gender, thematic roles <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Michelson (2015) – <i>Gender in Oneida</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Michelson and Price (2011, chs. 4–5; skim) – <i>Pronouns; Verbs</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Mithun (1991) – <i>Active/agentive case marking</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Coon (2023) – <i>The syntax of pronominal prefixes</i>	📁3 – pset 3
— fall break —		
Week 8 10/23	Verbs: TAM, statives — guest: Terrance Gatchalian <input type="checkbox"/> - Chafe (1980) – <i>Consequential verbs in N. Iroquoian</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Cross et al. (to appear) – <i>Stative present in Kanien'kéha</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Baker (1997, §1–2) – <i>Mood as verbal definiteness</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Pancheva and Zubizarreta (2023, §1–3) – <i>No tense</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Foster (1985) – <i>Updating TAM in N. Iroquoian</i>	(assn. 4 posted)
Week 9 10/30	Verbs: voice and valence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Michelson (2023a) – <i>Reflexive prefixes in Oneida</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Michelson and Price (2011, ch. 8) – <i>Stem formation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Mithun (2006) – <i>Voice without subjects, objects, or obliques</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Mithun (2005a) – <i>Beyond the core</i>	📁4 – project proposal

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Week 10 11/6	Verbs: modality, pre-pronominal prefixes ☆ - Abbott (1981) – <i>Here and there in Oneida</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Mithun (2016) – <i>Modality and mood in Iroquoian</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Michelson and Price (2011, ch. 6) – <i>Pre-pronominal prefixes</i>	(assn. 5 posted)
Week 11 11/13	Incorporation; language revitalization — guest: Tahohtharátýe Joe Brant ☆ - Bonvillain (1989) – <i>Semantics of noun incorporation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - DeCaire et al. (2017) – <i>Noun incorporation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Michelson and Price (2011, ch. 7) – <i>Noun incorporation</i> guest presentation: <i>Sophia Flaim</i>	 5 – peer feedback
Week 12 11/20	Particles, discourse structure — guest: Charlotte Logan ☆ - Chafe (1985) – <i>Information flow in Seneca and English</i> <input type="checkbox"/> - Michelson and Price (2011, ch. 3) – <i>Particles</i> guest presentation: <i>Katya Morgunova</i>	
Week 13 11/27	Class presentations (schedule TBA) — <i>final presentations</i> —	Projects due Dec. 13

Readings

- Abbott, Clifford. 1981. Here and there in Oneida. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 47:50–57.
- Baker, Mark. 1997. Thematic roles and syntactic structure. In *Elements of grammar*, ed. Liliane Haegeman, 73–137. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Baker, Mark C. 1996. *The Polysynthesis Parameter*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baker, Mark C. 1999. External possession in Mohawk. In *External possession*, ed. Doris L. Payne and Immanuel Barshi, Typological Studies in Language, 39, 293–324. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Baker, Mark C. 2003. *Lexical categories: Verbs, nouns and adjectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bonvillain, Nancy. 1989. Body, mind, and idea: Semantics of noun incorporation in Akwesasne Mohawk. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 55:341–358.
- Chafe, Wallace. 1980. Consequential verbs in Northern Iroquoian languages. In *Trends in linguistics*, ed. K. Klar, M. Langdon, and S. Silver, 43–49. The Hague: Mouton.
- Chafe, Wallace. 1985. Information flow in Seneca and English. In *Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, 14–24. Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistics Society.
- Coon, Jessica. 2023. The syntax of Northern Iroquoian pronominal prefixes. Ms., McGill University.
- Cross, Tehokwiráthe, Terrance Gatchalian, Katya Morgunova, Willie Myers, and Ro’nikonhkátste Norton. to appear. Lexical aspect and the stative present in Kanien’kéha. In *Proceedings of the 2023 Workshop on Structure and Constituency of Languages of the Americas (WSCLA)*. UBC Working Papers in Linguistics. Paper presented the *Workshop on Structure and Constituency of Languages of the Americas*.
- DeCaire, Oheróhskon Ryan. 2023. The role of adult immersion in Kanien’kéha revitalization. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Hawa’i at Hilo.
- DeCaire, Ryan, Alana Johns, and Ivona Kučerová. 2017. On optionality in Mohawk noun incorporation. *Toronto Working Papers in Linguistics* 39.
- DeCaire, Ryan, and Marianne Mithun. 2023. Iroquoian. In *The languages and linguistics of Indigenous North America*, ed. Carmen Jany, Marianne Mithun, and Keren Rice. De Gruyter Mouton.
- Dyck, Carrie. 1997. Cayuga accent: A synchronic analysis. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 42:285–322.
- Foster, Michael. 1985. Updating the terminology of tense, mood, and aspect in Northern Iroquoian descriptions. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 51:403–405.
- Harris, John. 1994. *English sound structure*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Leonard, Wesley Y. 2017. Producing language reclamation by decolonising ‘language’. In *Language docu-*

- mentation and description, ed. Wesley Y. Leonard and Haley De Korne, volume 14, 15–36. London: EL Publishing.
- Martin, Akwiratékha'. 2022. *Tekawennahsonterónnion: Kanien'kéha morphology*. Kahnawà:ke: Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitíóhkwa Onkwawén:na Ionkwaio'ténion.
- Melinger, Alissa. 2002. Foot structure and accent in Seneca. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 68:287–315.
- Michelson, Karin. 1989. Invisibility: Vowels without a timing slot in Mohawk. In *Theoretical perspectives on Native American languages*, ed. Donna B. Gerdts and Karin Michelson, SUNY Series in Linguistics, 38–69. SUNY Press.
- Michelson, Karin. 2015. Gender in Oneida. In *Gender across languages*, ed. Marlis Hellinger and Heiko Motschenbacher, volume 4, 277–301. John Benjamins.
- Michelson, Karin. 2016. Iroquoian languages. In *Oxford research encyclopedia of linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Michelson, Karin. 2023a. Reflexive prefixes in Oneida. In *Reflexive constructions in the world's languages*, ed. Katarzyna Janic, Nicoletta Puddu, and Martin Haspelmath, *Research on Comparative Grammar* 3, 675–694. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- Michelson, Karin. 2023b. Word classes in Iroquoian languages. In *The Oxford Handbook of Word Classes*, ed. Eva van Lier. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Michelson, Karin, and Catherine Price. 2011. *Oneida, Cayuga, and Mohawk*. Native Languages: A Support Document for the Teaching of Language Patterns. Ontario Ministry of Education.
- Mithun, Marianne. 1979. The consciousness of levels of phonological structure. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 45:343–348.
- Mithun, Marianne. 1982. The synchronic and diachronic behavior of plops, squeaks, croaks, sighs, and moans. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 48:49–58.
- Mithun, Marianne. 1991. Active/agentive Case Marking and Its Motivations. *Language* 67:510–546.
- Mithun, Marianne. 1996. Multiple reflections of inalienability in Mohawk. In *The grammar of inalienability: A typological perspective on body part terms and the part-whole relation*, ed. Hilary Chappell and William McGregor, 633–650. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter Mouton.
- Mithun, Marianne. 2000. Noun and verb in Iroquoian languages: Multicategorisation from multiple criteria. In *Approaches to the typology of word classes*, ed. Petra M. Vogel and Bernard Comrie, 397–420. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter Mouton.
- Mithun, Marianne. 2005a. Beyond the core: Typological variation in the identification of participants. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 71:445–472.
- Mithun, Marianne. 2005b. Mohawk and the Iroquoian languages. In *Routledge encyclopedia of linguistics*, ed. Philipp Strazny. New York: Routledge.
- Mithun, Marianne. 2006. Voice without subjects, objects, or obliques: Manipulating argument structure in Agent/Patient systems (Mohawk). In *Voice and grammatical relations: In honour of Masayoshi Shibatani*, ed. Tasaku Tsunoda and Taro Kageyama, *Typological Studies in Language*, 195–216. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Mithun, Marianne. 2010. The search for regularity in irregularity: defectiveness and its implications for our knowledge of words. In *Defective paradigms: Missing forms and what they tell us*, ed. Matthew Baerman, Greville G. Corbett, and Dunstan Brown. Oxford University Press.
- Mithun, Marianne. 2016. Modality and mood in Iroquoian. In *The Oxford Handbook of Modality and Mood*, ed. Jan Nuyts and Johan van der Auwera. Oxford University Press.
- Pancheva, Roumyana, and Maria Luisa Zubizarreta. 2023. No tense: Temporality in the grammar of Paraguayan Guarani. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 46:1329–1391.
- Piggott, Glyne L. 1995. Epenthesis and syllable weight. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 13:283–326.
- Stacey, Kahtehrón:ni Iris. 2016. Ientsitewate'nikonhraie:ra'te tsi nonkwá:ti ne á:se tahatikonhsontóntie: We will turn our minds there once again, to the faces yet to come. Master's thesis, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia.