

Mon & Wed 10:05-11:25
1085 Penfield, Room 117

INSTRUCTOR: Heather Goad [she/her]

E-MAIL: heather.goad@mcgill.ca

OFFICE: 1085 Penfield, Room 113

OFFICE HOURS: Tues 9:30-11:00 or by appointment

GOALS OF COURSE:

This course is concerned with the basic units of phonological structure (feature, segment, syllable, foot, prosodic word). The primary focus is on understanding the kind of evidence that is cited as support for or against these units and their organization into constituents. To this end, considerable emphasis is placed on critically evaluating and comparing alternative theoretically-grounded solutions to empirical phenomena, placing each theory in its historical context.

EVALUATION:

Assignment 1	10%	Posted: Wed Sep 16	Due: Wed Sep 23
Assignment 2	25%	Posted: Wed Sep 30	Due: Mon Oct 19
Assignment 3	30%	Posted: Wed Oct 28	Due: Wed Nov 18
Critical Review (or Final Paper)	35%		Due: Fri Dec 4

READINGS:

- Available on myCourses.
- In keeping with the overarching goal of the course, which is to critically evaluate and compare alternative theories, many of the readings have been selected because they present the state of the art on a particular topic.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Each assignment will take the form of a problem set for which you are required to provide an analysis. Beyond providing an analysis, you must include some argumentation that justifies the analysis you have arrived at. The analysis should be written up in squib (short paper) format.
- Each assignment must be submitted by 11:59pm on the due date. Assignments must be submitted electronically (in pdf format) on myCourses. An assignment folder will be created for this.
- Collaboration on assignments is strongly encouraged: you can discuss the assignment with other students enrolled in the course, but not with others (e.g., with more senior students in the department, on web-based fora, etc.). If you choose to collaborate, you must still write up your analysis on your own. Please indicate who you worked with and cite the contributions of your classmates (e.g., in footnotes) when they helped advance your analysis.

CRITICAL REVIEW (OR FINAL PAPER):

- In keeping with the overarching goal of the course, the final assessment will involve a critical review of a published article on phonology.
- A list of papers for the critical review will be posted on myCourses. You can also select a paper that is not on the list, as long as you check with me first. The critical review should be 7-10 pages long.
- Any student who prefers to write a final paper (i.e., on their own research) is encouraged, but not required, to do so.

Goals of CR:

- The goal of the review is to provide a brief synthesis of the main points of the article and a critical evaluation of the issues discussed, with particular attention paid to the presentation of arguments and the nature of supporting evidence.
- You should try to influence the judgement of the reader as to whether or not the article contributes significantly to the development of theory and/or the illumination of data. The following are rough guidelines:

Content of CR:

- Give a brief summary of the issues that are addressed in the paper, pointing out whether the focus is on a theoretical problem, or a problem associated with the analysis of a particular body of data, or both. Try to indicate as clearly as possible what hypothesis or hypotheses the author is testing or defending.
- Summarize the principal arguments and evidence presented in support of the position defended by the author. Provide some examples of relevant data.
- Most important: Evaluate the strength of the evidence and arguments. Does the paper contribute either to the clarification or elaboration of a particular theoretical issue? Does it contribute to the explanation of some data? Are the conclusions justified? Are there any interesting predictions? Is the paper (the analysis) internally consistent?

POLICY STATEMENTS:

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/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

Language of Submission:

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. / Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté.

Copyright:

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Use of AI:

GPS has created a document entitled 'Using artificial intelligence (AI) in research writing – guidelines for graduate students', available here:

https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/files/gps/using_generative_ai_in_research_gps_guidelines_november_2024.pdf

This document outlines three categories of risk. The following uses, adapted from this document, are acceptable for this course as long as you document (in your first footnote) how you used AI in your written submissions:

Low-to-moderate risk: using generative AI as a tool:

- Proofreading: Spell check, grammar check
- Editing: Lightly rephrasing objectives in scholarly writing or tightening language in a draft paragraph, while remaining cautious of not losing one's voice
- Translation: translation of existing text from another language into English or French
- References: Formatting the reference list
- No other acceptable uses

Moderate-to-high risk: using generative AI to generate content for one's own use:

- Learning: Using generative AI to break down complex topics or processes, for one's learning purposes
- Literature review: Producing summaries of published research on a given topic for one's own consumption
- No other acceptable uses

Very high risk: using generative AI to generate content and presenting it as one's own work:

- Not an acceptable use, specifically:
- Analysis: It is *not* acceptable to upload data for which you are required to provide an analysis into generative AI

COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS (dates are approximate):

Week	Date	Topics	Readings
1	Aug 31, Sep 2	Why phonology?	Berent, I. (2013) The phonological mind. <i>Trends in Cognitive Sciences</i> 17: 319-327.
2-3	Sep 7 (Labour Day-classes cancelled), Sep 9, 14, 16	A brief history of phonology over the last 50 years	Baloghne-Berces, K. & P. Honeybone (2020) Representation-based models in the current landscape of phonological theory. <i>Acta Linguistica Academica. An International Journal of Linguistics</i> 1: 3-27.
			Oostendorp, M. van (2022) Optimality theory. In B. Elan Dresher, B. E. & H. van der Hulst (eds) <i>The Oxford history of phonology</i> . OUP, pp. 551-568.
			(If you have no background in OT, for the first and last assignments, you might want to consult: McCarthy, J. (2008) <i>Doing Optimality Theory: Applying theory to data</i> . Blackwell.)

		Features & Segments	
4	Sep 21, 23	Feature function, feature substance	Mielke, J. (2008) <i>The emergence of distinctive features</i> . OUP, Ch 1: Natural classes and distinctive features in phonology.
5	Sep 28, 30	Internal structure of segments	McCarthy, J. (1988) Feature geometry and dependency: A review. <i>Phonetica</i> 43: 84-108. Padgett, J. (2002) Feature classes in phonology. <i>Language</i> 78: 81-110. (skim)
6	Oct 5 (Election Day-classes cancelled), Oct 7	Feature activity and inactivity	Archangeli, D. (2011) Feature specification and underspecification. In M. van Oostendorp, C. Ewen, E. Hume & K. Rice (eds) <i>The Blackwell companion to phonology</i> . Wiley-Blackwell. Itô, J., R.A. Mester & J. Padgett (1995) Licensing and underspecification in Optimality Theory. <i>LI</i> 26: 571-613. Pater, J. (2014) Austronesian nasal substitution revisited: What's wrong with *NC̥ (and what's not). In L. Lombardi (ed) <i>Segmental phonology in Optimality Theory</i> . CUP, pp. 159-182. (skim)
	F Oct 9-W Oct 14	READING WEEK	
		Harmony	
7	Oct 19, 21	Long-distance segmental interaction	Rose, S. & R. Walker (2011) Harmony systems. In J. Goldsmith, J. Riggle & A.C.L. Yu (eds) <i>The handbook of phonological theory</i> , 2nd ed. Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 240-290.
8	Oct 26, 28	Vowel harmony in OT	Beckman, J. (1997) Positional faithfulness, positional neutralisation and Shona vowel harmony. <i>Phonology</i> 14: 1-46.
		Syllables	
9	Nov 2, 4	Why syllables	Goldsmith, J. (2011) The syllable. In J. Goldsmith, J. Riggle & A.C.L. Yu (eds) <i>The handbook of phonological theory</i> , 2nd ed. Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 164-196.
10	Nov 9, 11	Alternative views on the internal structure of syllables	Hayes, B. (1989) Compensatory lengthening in moraic phonology. <i>Linguistic Inquiry</i> 20: 253-306. Youngberg, C., Y. Yoshida & F. Breit (2023) Principles and parameters in phonology: An introduction and overview. In F. Breit, Y. Yushida & C. Youngberg (eds) <i>Elements, government, and licensing</i> . UCL Press, pp. 1-9. Kaye, J.D. (1990) 'Coda' licensing. <i>Phonology</i> 7: 301-330. (skim)
11	Nov16	Syllable structure in OT	Kager, R. (1999) <i>Optimality Theory</i> . CUP. Ch 3: Syllable structure and economy.
11	Nov 18	Licensing by prosody vs. licensing by cue: Focus on coda position	Lombardi, L. (1999) Positional faithfulness and voicing assimilation in Optimality Theory. <i>Natural Language & Linguistic Theory</i> 17: 267-302. Steriade, D. (1997) Phonetics in phonology: The case of laryngeal neutralization. Published 1999 in <i>UCLA Working Papers in Linguistics</i> 2: 25-146. (skim)
12	Nov 23	Perception vs. structure: Focus on sC clusters	Wright, R. (2004) A review of perceptual cues and cue robustness. In B. Hayes, R. Kirchner & D. Steriade (eds) <i>Phonetically based phonology</i> . CUP, pp. 34-57. Goad, H. (2026) The representation of sC clusters: A comparative approach. In K. Nasukawa, B. Samuels, G. Schwartz & M. Törkenczy (eds) <i>The Wiley companion to phonology</i> (2 nd edition). Wiley-Blackwell. (skim)

		Stress	
12	Nov 25	Typology of stress	Gordon, M. (2011) Stress systems. In J. Goldsmith, J. Riggle & A.C.L. Yu (eds) <i>The handbook of phonological theory</i> , 2nd ed. Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 141-163.
13	Nov 30	Gradient effects	Ryan, K.M. (2014) Onsets contribute to syllable weight: Statistical evidence from stress and meter. <i>Language</i> 90: 309-341.
		Variation	
13	Dec 2, 3 (Mon schedule)	Capturing variation and pattern exceptions	Coetzee, A. & J. Pater (2011) The place of variation in phonological theory. In J. Goldsmith, J. Riggle & A.C.L. Yu (eds) <i>The handbook of phonological theory</i> , 2nd ed. Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 401-431.
			Pater, J. (2009) Weighted constraints in generative linguistics. <i>Cognitive Science</i> 33: 999-1035. (skim)
			Zuraw, K. (2010) A model of lexical variation and the grammar with application to Tagalog nasal substitution. <i>NLLT</i> 28: 417-472. (skim)

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 and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.