

LIN 210: Introduction to Historical and Comparative Linguistics

Fall 2019

Instructor: Sam Zukoff

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Lecture: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00am–12:20pm; Green Hall 0-N-2

Office hour: Tuesdays, 2:00pm–3:00pm, Green Hall 1-S-4G; *also by appointment*

Course description: This course provides an introduction to the study of language change and language families. We will examine different types of language change (sound change, syntactic change, meaning change), and look at the explanations of such change. We will learn the core methodologies of Historical Linguistics, especially the Comparative Method, and apply it to a wide variety of languages. We will also examine a number of case studies of language change due to contact with other languages, and the many different kinds of outcomes that can result from it (language shift, linguistic convergence, pidginization/creolization, etc.).

Evaluations: There will be four problem sets throughout the semester, one in-class midterm exam, and a (comprehensive) take-home final exam [grading information below].

Readings: You do not need to purchase any books for this course; all readings will be posted on BlackBoard, where there will be a regularly updated reading list. You are expected to complete the assigned reading *before the class it is assigned for*. Most of our readings will be chapters from the following sources:

Campbell, Lyle. 2013. *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction*. 3rd ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Fox, Anthony. 1995. *Linguistic Reconstruction: An Introduction to Theory and Method*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Crowley, Terry, and Claire Bovern. 2010. *An Introduction to Historical Linguistics*. 4th ed. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.

Fromkin, Victoria A. (ed.) 2000. *Linguistics: An Introduction to Linguistic Theory*. Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.

Course website: Lecture notes, slides, readings, assignments, and general announcements will all be posted on BlackBoard—you are encouraged to visit it frequently.

Class time: We have two class meetings per week. Classes will mainly consist of lecture (based on handouts or slides), discussion, and in-class group exercises. Your participation is encouraged and expected.

Laptop policy: You are not permitted to use laptops, cell phones, tablets, etc. during class time. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis (see me or email me to discuss this).

Absences: You are expected to attend all lectures. All unexcused absences will result in 1 point off your final grade. Absences must be substantiated with sick notes (e.g., a slip from University Health Services) or other appropriate documentation. If you anticipate needing to miss a certain lecture, contact the professor well ahead of time to make accommodations. It is your responsibility to make up any material that you miss.

Lateness policy: For every (unexcused) day an assignment is late, you will lose half a letter grade on that assignment (so e.g. a B+ would become a B–). By University policy, when extensions are sought on medical grounds, a slip (easily obtained) from University Health Services must be presented. Extensions for foreseeable reasons (such as scheduled extra-curricular activities) should be sought in advance.

Disabilities: Students who need special accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ods@princeton.edu; 609-258-8840) for disability verification and determination of eligibility for reasonable academic accommodations. Requests for academic accommodations for this course need to be made at the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible for newly approved students, and again at least two weeks in advance of any needed accommodations in order to make arrangements to

implement the accommodations. Please make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to maintain confidentiality in addressing your needs.

Academic honesty: Before submitting the first evaluation (the take-home midterm), students should review the section in the University publication “Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities” pertaining to proper acknowledgment of sources (<http://www.princeton.edu/pub/rrr/index.xml>). Note that the principles involved apply equally to electronic and to print sources. Each submission should contain, at the end, the words “This paper represents my own work in accordance with University regulations” followed by the student’s signature. Work found by the University discipline committee to involve an academic infraction of any kind is graded zero.

Mental health resources: Undergraduate students may experience a range of emotional and psychological challenges that can interfere with their learning. Strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance or alcohol abuse, depression, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation are frequently responses to significant stress. Mental health concerns caused by stressful circumstances that influence your life out of class might affect the quality your academic work and otherwise impede your happiness on campus. Princeton makes available numerous services to help support you through difficult moments. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on campus at <https://uhs.princeton.edu/counseling-psychological-services>. Support is available 24-hours-a-day from Counseling and Psychological Services; if your concern is urgent, this link will take you to appropriate care: <https://uhs.princeton.edu/counseling-psychological-services/urgent-mental-health-concerns> or you can call the Department of Public Safety at 609-258-3333.

Grading: Course grades will be determined by the rubric below, and specific grading guidelines will be distributed for all assignments/evaluations.

- *Participation:* 10%
- *Take-home midterm:* 20%
- *Take-home final:* 30%
- *Problem sets:* 40% (4 × 10% each)

A+	≥97	<i>Exceptional</i>	Significantly exceeds the highest expectations for undergraduate work
A	93–96.99	<i>Outstanding</i>	Meets the highest standards for the assignment or course
A-	90–92.99	<i>Excellent</i>	Meets very high standards for the assignment or course
B+	87–89.99	<i>Very good</i>	Meets high standards for the assignment or course
B	83–86.99	<i>Good</i>	Meets most of the assignment or course
B-	80–82.99	<i>More than adequate</i>	More than adequate; shows some reasonable command of the material
C+	77–79.99	<i>Acceptable</i>	Meets basic standards for the assignment or course
C	73–76.99	<i>Acceptable</i>	Meets some of the basic standards for the assignment or course
C-	70–72.99	<i>Acceptable</i>	While acceptable, falls short of meeting basic standards in several ways
D	60–69.99	<i>Minimally Acceptable</i>	Lowest passing grade
F	<60	<i>Failing</i>	Very poor performance

Semester Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	[Assignments]
Week One		
Thurs, Sept 12	What is language change?	[complete questionnaire on BlackBoard]
Week Two		
Tues, Sept 17	Phonetics and the IPA	
Thurs, Sept 19	Phonological Features and Syllables	
Week Three		
Tues, Sept 24	Phonemes, Allophones, and Phonological Rules	
Thurs, Sept 26	Types of sound changes and phonological processes	
Week Four		
Tues, Oct 1	Types of sound changes and phonological processes (continued)	
Thurs, Oct 3	Splits, Mergers, and Relative Chronology	
Week Five		
Tues, Oct 8	Relative Chronology, Rule Ordering, and Chain Shifts	
Thurs, Oct 10	Sound change and analogy	[Problem Set #1 due]
Week Six		
Tues Oct 15	The Comparative Method	
Thurs, Oct 17	The Comparative Method (continued)	
Week Seven		
Tues, Oct 22	Internal reconstruction	
Thurs, Oct 24	<i>In-class Midterm</i>	
Fall Recess		
Week Eight		
Tues, Nov 5	Phonetic naturalness and sound change	[Problem Set #2 due]
Thurs, Nov 7	Sociolinguistic approaches to sound change	
Week Nine		
Tues, Nov 12	Morphological change	
Thurs, Nov 14	Grammaticalization	
Week Ten		
Tues, Nov 19	Syntactic change	
Thurs, Nov 21	Semantic change	
Week Eleven		
Tues, Nov 26	Language contact	[Problem Set #3 due]
Thanksgiving Recess		
Week Twelve		
Tues, Dec 3	Language families	
Thurs, Dec 5	Models of language change	
Week Thirteen		
Tues, Dec 10	Phylogenetics and distant genetic relationships?	
Thurs, Dec 12	Wrap-up	[Problem Set #4 due]
Winter Recess		
Exam Week		
Tues, Jan 20	<i>Take-home Final due at 5pm</i>	