English 370: Nature and Structure of the English Language
Fall, 2014   Dr. Connie Phillips   Office: A. F. Gray 307
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Office Hours: MW 10:00-11:30; TH 1:00-3:00; other hours by appointment

TEXTS:

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
A general introduction to the principles of modern language study, including linguistic concepts and methodology. Special emphasis on the study of English structure and modern grammars. Required of English majors. Prerequisite: Junior class standing

COURSE OUTLINE:
Aug 27-Sept 19   Nature of language; language acquisition
Sept 19-Oct 1   Morphology, phonetics, and phonology
Oct 3-27   Syntax, semantics, and language processing
Oct 29-Nov 7   Pragmatics; discourse analysis
Nov 10-19   Orthography and the history of writing
Nov 21-Dec 5   Language variation; dialects and bilingualism
Dec 8   Presentations during final exam time

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:
1. Lectures and videos on course topics.
2. Class discussion of readings.
3. Class participation: For each course topic, students will be asked to bring language samples to class and spend class time analyzing those examples.
4. Comprehensive exercises from the Fromkin et al. text. Not accepted late.
5. Five out of the six analysis essays (6+ pages)--see schedule starting 9/19. The first three essays—as well as the last assigned essay--are mandatory.
6. Final presentations on texts chosen from course bibliography.

EVALUATION:
Unit essays (1 @ 30 points; 5 @ 50)  280
Language samples (5 @ 15 points; 3 @ 25)   150
Comprehensive exercises (14 @ 25 points)   350
Final presentation/book report  50
Total points  830
A = 90% of points; at least 46/50 on 4 out of 5 analysis essays.
B = 84% of points; completion of all exercises; at least 41/50 on 4 out of 5 essays.
C = 72% of points; all essays 37/50 or above; complete final presentation.

**COURSE OUTCOMES:**
Through course activities, the student will be able to:
1. Analyze the phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of specific texts.
2. Use spoken and written utterances as data: be able to find and construct scripts, texts, and language samples for analysis.
3. Develop and write analyses that weave together linguistic ideas and concepts with the student’s own analysis of language samples.
4. Pose and respond to key questions in the discipline about the nature of language, first language acquisition, and “native speaker competence,” those skills and processes native speakers use to interpret spoken and written texts.
5. Apply linguistic concepts and methodology to specific issues, i.e., literacy and the principles of writing systems; the nature of dialects and bilingualism.
6. Identify and analyze linguistic concepts into materials chosen according to the student’s personal/professional interests: books on education, literary analysis, cultural ethnographies, text translation, second language acquisition, etc.

**En 370 fulfills the following Humanities Department objectives:**
#1: Development of interpretative/formal frameworks for analysis.
#3: Constructing analysis through comparison, generating examples, collecting data.
#6: Synthesis of materials into comprehensive writing projects.
#7: Application beyond the classroom to public roles.

**Out of class time requirement for course assignments:**
Most students have little background in linguistics, so the most time intensive activity is reading of handouts and text chapters as well as exercises to develop understanding of new concepts. See course schedule for days readings are to be completed and exercises are due. Constructing language samples—nonsense poetry, two person scripts, etc.—is also time consuming, but crucial for the development of the analysis essays. Once language samples are constructed and analyzed, essays can be completed. Sample papers are provided for each of the five analysis essays. Below is a breakdown of time required by course assignments.
Reading--handouts, text chapters, anthology selections 15 weeks x 2 hours = 30
Comprehensive exercises at end of text chapters 14 weeks x 1.5 hours = 21
Language sample construction/analysis 8 x 1.5 hours = 12
Completing analysis essays and book report 6 essays x 4 hours = 24

*The semester total of 87 hours averages out to 5.8 hours each week.*

**Accommodation for Disability & Emergency Information:** Any student who has a documented disability that may require accommodation to fully participate in this class should contact the Director of the Counseling Center, Denise Haugen, at (503) 517-1119. Please contact your professor to discuss an existing accommodation plan or to share important emergency medical information.

*The provisions of this syllabus may be changed if the professor deems it necessary to meet course objectives. Students will be notified in advance of any such changes.*
EN 370 – WHAT IS LANGUAGE?

Aug 27  Course introduction
Readings: (in order of priority)
   Terrace, “The Nim Chimpsky Experiment” – handout
   Kemp & Smith, 591-612 in anthology
   Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, Ch. 1

Aug 29  Class participation: Choose two examples of primate communication from the Terrace reading and generate several explanations for these “utterances.”
   In small groups, share your explanations and prepare a group report.

Due Sept 8, 4+ page write-up + bibliography page: Why didn’t the chimps take language and run with it? Complete all of the readings and compile several different explanations: Why did these attempts to teach language to the chimps “stall out”?

Sept 1  Labor Day – No class

Sept 3  Discussion of readings

Sept 5  View “Ape Genius”
EN 370 – LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Sept 8  Video on language acquisition

Sept 10  Discussion of readings: Bring a concept list to class for Moskowitz. Moskowitz, “The acquisition of language,” 613-639  
Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, Ch. 8, 324-355; Ch. 2, 62-68  
Bruner, “Child’s talk: Learning to use language” – handout

Sept 12  Discuss Bruner; distribute scripts for 9/15 class participation

Sept 15  Class participation: Choose two scripts of child/adult interaction from 9/12 handout OR create your own script, then apply as many explanatory concepts from the readings as you can, using developmental processes from Moskowitz as well as Bruner’s social interactionist concepts. Work in pairs or groups of three, then report to the larger class.

Sept 17  Demonstration—parent/child interaction

Sept 19  Essay #1 due: Using samples of child/adult interaction from class handouts/readings or from scripts of children you have closely observed, analyze the language behavior, applying concepts from Moskowitz, Bruner, and the Fromkin text. Include a full transcript of the data you have chosen. Be sure to answer the following questions in your analysis: What kinds of adult interaction are useful for a young child acquiring language? What kinds of adult monitoring are not helpful for the child? Why? (In class, we will do peer reading of your papers and follow-up discussion.)
**EN 370 – MORPHOLOGY, PHONETICS, AND PHONOLOGY**

**Sept 19**  
Lecture: What does it mean to KNOW a language?  
Readings: Fromkin text, Ch. 3 (76-103), Ch. 6 (229-234, 255-257), Ch. 7 (266-275, 300-304), Ch. 9, (391-396).

**Sept 22**  
Identifying morphemes  
Fromkin exercises due today: pp. 108-112, # 2, 3, 4, 5;  
Swahili exercise in anthology: Gleason, pp. 164-165.

**Sept 24**  
Phonetics and Phonology  
Fromkin exercises due today: pp. 261-263, # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8

**Sept 26**  
Jabberwocky: Making sense and making nonsense  
Fromkin exercises due: pp. 310-315, #1, 2, 13.

**Sept 29**  
Class participation: Bring a nonsense paragraph to class which could be English, as well as a paragraph in which you construct a language that is clearly not English, a language which violates the phonological and morphological constraints of English. For your English nonsense, be prepared to defend the pronunciation and derivation of your words – if not their meaning. For your non-English nonsense, provide a translation for key morphemes and demonstrate the non-English phonology. **Bring enough copies for everyone in class.**

**Oct 1**  
Essay # 2 due: Analyze some of the nonsense paragraphs from class participation, locating phonemes, morphemes, and processes of word formation. What rules apply to the language systems of the paragraphs? (In class we will do peer reading of your papers and follow-up discussion.)
EN 370 – SYNTAX

Oct 3  Lecture: Intuitive skills of native speakers
Readings: Jacobs and Rosenbaum-handout; Fromkin, Ch. 4.

Oct 6  Exercises due today: Read Fromkin to p. 133; complete 170-171, #3, 5, 7.

Oct 8  Exercises due today: Read the rest of Ch 4, complete pp. 172-176, #8, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21.

Oct 10 Midterm Break—No class

Oct 13 Class participation: Construct and bring to class eight sentences, two examples for each of the four intuitive skills/knowledge possessed by native speakers of English. (See summary at the end of Jacobs and Rosenbaum.) Provide enough copies for everyone. In class, select examples from the sentences provided by your classmates, and draw several “trees” to present to the whole class. We will do some editing and tweaking of these sentences before you turn them in.

Oct 15 In-class: Lecture on grammar and the processes of reading/writing.

What Else Do You Know About Syntax?

TUMBLEWEEDS

EN 370 – SEMANTICS/LANGUAGE PROCESSING

Oct 17   Readings: Fromkin text, Ch. 5, 179-206; Ch. 2, 46-49
          Handout on semantic analysis from Traugott & Pratt.

          In class, develop your own examples of sentences which illustrate semantic
          ambiguity, anomaly, and synonymy (2 examples each = 6 sentences). For
          text examples, see especially pp. 179-192, 196-199.

Oct 20   Fromkin exercises due today: pp. 220-222, #5 (a-d only); 6, 9.

Oct 22   Exercises due today: pp. 219-224, #2, 11, 12, 14.
          Complete reading on semantic analysis from Traugott & Pratt.
          Lecture: Applying semantic principles to poetic analysis.

Oct 24   Class participation: Bring a poem of your choice to class. Provide enough
          copies for everyone in class.

Oct 27   Essay #3 due: Using one or two appropriate poems, show how the poet
          uses semantic ambiguity, anomaly, and synonymy to manipulate the
          reader’s “semantic representation.” Also, what syntactic knowledge—
          complements, transformations, allowable deletions—do you bring to your
          reading of the poem?
EN 370 – PRAGMATICS/DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Exercises due today: Heatherington, #3, 5, 7.

Oct 31  Exercises due today: Fromkin, 224-227, #17, 21, 22, 23
Lecture: Discourse routines, shared world knowledge, status and roles of speakers.

Nov 3   Lecture: Keys of discourse

Nov 5   Class participation: Develop a two person conversation and provide copies of your typed script for class members. In groups, perform these scripts, then analyze the conversation according to speech-act principles.

Nov 7   Lecture: Discourse routines in classrooms

Essay #4 due: Analyze conversation scripts, noting especially how and when conversational principles are violated, presuppositions are misjudged, illocutionary force misunderstood, and discourse routines manipulated.
EN 370 – ORTHOGRAPHY AND LITERACY

Nov 10  Lecture: Kinds of writing systems
        Readings: Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, Chs. 11 & 12, reread 232-234, table on 256-257.
        Fromkin exercises due: Read Ch 12 to p. 553, complete pp. 563-564, #1,2,3,4

Nov 12  Complete Ch. 12; Fromkin exercises due: pp. 564-565, # 5, 6.

Nov 14  Class participation: Using the lists on p. 557 and 232-233, create additional examples for each kind of sight/sound gap in English orthography. What rationales do you see for these gaps?

Nov 17  Lecture on language change. Read Fromkin, Ch 11 to 508; Roberts, 330-340.

Nov 19  Essay #5 due: Compiling examples and rationales from class participation, write a detailed analysis and critique of the gaps in English orthography. What would happen if we tried to narrow those gaps? In class: Peer reading; recommendations for further reading.
EN 370 – DIALECTS AND BILINGUALISM

Nov 21  Video: “American Tongues”
Readings: Fromkin, Ch. 10, 430-469; Ch 7, 284-300.
Smitherman, “It Bees Dat Way Sometime” – Handout;
Macaulay, “Regional Dialects & Social Class,” 383-397;
Hudson, “Sociolinguistic Analysis of Dialogues” – Handout

Nov 24  Exercises due: Fromkin, 480-482, #1, 2, 5.

Nov 26  Exercises due: Smitherman, #3 (end of handout); phonology exercises in
anthology, #4, 5, pp. 136-137

Nov 28  Thanksgiving Break

Dec 1   Class participation: Select the work of an author whose characters speak a
social or regional variety of English. Read your passage to the class and
discuss the patterns you find in the dialect.

Dec 3   Lecture: Sociolinguistic research/linguistic variables

Dec 5   Essay #6 due: Analyze the phonological and syntactic patterns found in the
dialect sample of your choice, as well as vocabulary differences from other
dialects of English.
In class: preparing your book report presentation

Dec 8   Final exam time (8-9:45 a.m.) will be devoted to book report presentations.
EN 370 BIBLIOGRAPHY: Choose one of the following book-length applications of linguistic principles for your book report. Many of these books are on special reserve in Linn Library.

LANGUAGE STUDY/PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

LANGUAGE AND BRAIN/LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

DISCOURSE ROUTINES/ACQUISITION OF LITERACY

LANGUAGE CHANGE/LANGUAGE VARIATIONS/LANGUAGES IN CONTACT


**LINGUISTICS AND THE TEACHING OF WRITING**


**LINGUISTICS AND LITERARY STUDY**


EN 370 – EVALUATION OF ESSAYS

CONCEPTS/THEORIES (15 points) Have you included as many linguistic concepts in your discussion as possible, weaving together key terms and ideas from the readings with explanation in your own words? Does your discussion reveal misunderstanding of concepts and theories?

DEVELOPMENT/APPLICATION (15 points) Are specific examples thoroughly analyzed? Are multiple frameworks of analysis brought into the discussion? Does some discussion or analysis seem irrelevant or in the wrong section?

PRESENTATION (10 points) Is the paper carefully edited and revised on the sentence and paragraph level to weave together concepts and ideas from the readings and your own analysis? Is the paper consistently documented in MLA or APA?

TOTAL EVALUATION/DISCIPLINARY AWARENESS (10 points) Does the paper build a cumulative analysis, or is it piecemeal? Does the paper show an awareness of the science of linguistics, of how the kind of analysis developed in the paper is central to the discipline?
En 370: Class participation—Aug 28
Choose at least two specific examples of chimp utterances from the Terrace reading—see page numbers below. In pairs or small groups, develop explicit connections between your two examples and the properties of human language outlined by Bolton (pp. 22-24 in our anthology). What properties of human language are the researchers reading into the chimps’ behavior? In your report to the class on the examples you have chosen, apply all four properties discussed by Bolton.

Report on at least two of the following examples:
- Sarah’s sequence building, pp. 243-246
- Lana’s “editing” of ungrammatical sequences, p. 247
- Washoe’s sign sequences, pp. 241-243
- Washoe’s creative combinations like “water bird,” p. 242
- Nim’s “sentences,” pp. 254-256
- Nim’s longest utterance, p. 254
- Nim’s use of expletives, p. 253
- Nim’s spontaneous signing on his reunion with Terrace, pp. 259-260

Apply all four of Bolton’s properties of human language:
- Arbitrary/dual nature: Meaning is attached to arbitrary clusters of sounds; those sounds can be separated from meaning and “performed”—a kind of language play.
- Discreteness/Productivity: Discrete linguistic units can be broken down and recombined to productively create new meanings.
En 370: Chimps and language
Due Sept 4: Why didn’t the chimps in the early experiments (“Nim Chimpsky”) take the American Sign Language taught to them and run with it? How do later experiments (Kemp & Smith) show the chimps beginning to use ASL for their own purposes? What are the boundaries between animal communication and a truly human use of language (Ape Genius video)? Papers less than four pages or missing citations/bibliography will be returned ungraded.

Specific **analysis of chimp utterances**, applying the properties of human language (Bolton, 22-24) to chimp “talk.”

**Speculation on assumptions** about language learning that underlie the research—speculation that goes beyond explanations given in the texts.

**Connections between sources** (readings/video); use of at least four sources, with appropriate citations and bibliography.

**Qualified and nuanced conclusions** about why efforts to teach the chimps stalled out—conclusions that don’t explain away the research or the cognitive capacities of chimps.
Works Cited


