

Syllabus

Ling. 105: Sounds of Language
Fall 2016
Tue, Thu 10–11, Boylston Hall G07

Instructor

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Course description

What are the sounds of the world languages, and how are they organized to make words and sentences? Why are some sounds hard to hear or make? Is there a ‘universal inventory’ of sounds? This class introduces students to the sounds of the world’s languages, and provides tools for studying them systematically. We will study the setup to transfer thoughts from one brain to another.

Studying speech sounds is essential both to students of linguistics and students of languages. For instance, it allows one to achieve a more authentic pronunciation in various languages, both dead and alive. Speech technologists, speech therapists, language teachers, and vocal performers also all benefit from understanding speech from the inside. Finally, knowledge about speech sounds contributes to the general appreciation of human diversity, communication, verbal arts, and writing systems.

Course objectives

1. Knowledge of the range of speech sounds in human language, their features and classification, and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
 - Listening component required!
2. Competence in using software to analyze aspects of acoustic data
3. Command of the building blocks of phonological theory (e.g. segments, features, syllables, stress, rules, rule ordering, phonotactics)
4. Ability to identify phonological generalizations in data from unfamiliar languages

Required Materials

In addition to course slides and handouts, two textbooks are required:

1. Peter Ladefoged and Keith Johnson, *A Course in Phonetics*, current (6th or 7th) edition (available at the COOP and elsewhere; accompanying CD is optional)
2. Bruce Hayes, *Introductory Phonology*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009

Assessment

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| 1. Assignments (5) | 45% total (First four: 8%; Final assignment: 13%) |
| 2. Midterm Exam | 25% |
| 3. Final Exam | 30% |

Course Policies

Each of the five assignments will be distributed and uploaded at least one week before its due date (usually on a Tuesday cycle). The final assignment has somewhat more weight than the others and is also given somewhat more time to complete.

Assignments are to be turned in at the beginning of the class session in which they are due, and in hard copy. Late assignments will be accepted up until 10am one week after the deadline with a 50% penalty (which may be waived in cases of documented illness or emergency).

Assignments consist of problem sets or short-answer questions. One or two will involve using freely available software to analyze acoustic data. In working on the first four assignments, feel free to consult with your classmates in working on the first four assignments and the first part of the final assignment, though each of these must be written up independently in your own words. The final assignment will involve independent research on a language of your choice.

The midterm will be held in class on October 13. Materials for the midterm will include all that was covered in the first half of the course (phonetics).

The final exam will be cumulative, though weighted towards post-midterm material (e.g. phonological representations and analysis). Both the midterm and final will involve a short listening component (aural identification of sounds or their properties).

Academic Integrity

By taking this course, you agree to abide by the Academic Integrity Policy posted on the course's Canvas site.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term, September 9. Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.

Course Calendar (*subject to change*)

Week	Day		Lecture Theme	Readings/Special Announcements	Homework
1	Sep 1	Thurs	Introduction: the transmission of speech	Ladefoged & Johnson (LJ), Chapter 1	
2	Sep 6	Tues	Articulation and transcription in IPA	LJ, Chapter 2	
	Sep 8	Thurs	Consonant articulations in English and across languages	Study Card Day LJ, Chapter 3	
3	Sep 13	Tues		LJ, Chapter 7	(HW 1 out)
	Sep 15	Thurs	Vowel articulations in English and across languages	LJ, Chapter 4	
4	Sep 20	Tues	Acoustics of vowels; acoustic analysis in Praat	LJ, Chapter 9	HW 1 due
	Sep 22	Thurs		LJ, Chapter 8	
5	Sep 27	Tues	Vowel dispersion, acoustics of consonants		(HW 2 out)
	Sep 29	Thurs			
6	Oct 4	Tues	Phonation	LJ, Chapter 6	HW 2 due
	Oct 6	Thurs	Clicks		
7	Oct 11	Tues	Phonetics review		
	Oct 13	Thurs	Midterm		
8	Oct 18	Tues	Features and phonemics	Hayes, Chapter 2	
	Oct 20	Thurs	Features and rules	Hayes, Chapter 4	

9	Oct 25	Tues	Morphology and rules	Hayes, Chapter 6	(HW 3 out)
	Oct 27	Thurs	Rule ordering, opacity	Hayes, Chapters 7 & 8.4	
10	Nov 1	Tues	Phonotactics; syllables	Hayes, Chapter 13	HW 3 due
	Nov 3	Thurs	Stress rules: syllable weight	Hayes, Chapter 14	
11	Nov 8	Tues	Stress rules, cont'd		(HW 4 out)
	Nov 10	Thurs	Tone		
12	Nov 15	Tues	Naturalness of phonology; productivity	Hayes, Chapter 9	HW 4 due
	Nov 17	Thurs	Abstractness	Hayes, Chapter 12	(HW 5 out)
13	Nov 22	Tues	Interactions with morphology	Hayes, Chapter 10	
	Nov 24	Thurs	Thanksgiving, no class		
14	Nov 29	Tues	Diachrony	Hayes, Chapter 11	HW 5 due
	Dec 1	Thurs	Conclusion; Preparation for the final		