

# Syllabus

(as of January 20, 2014)

Where?	When?	What?	Who?	Contact
Stiteler Hall B6	M/W 12-1	Lecture	Florian Schwarz	florians. . .
DRL 2C6	R 9:30-10:30	Recitation 201	Mao-Hsu Chen	chenmao. . .
DRL 2C6	R 10:30-11:30	Recitation 202		
Williams Hall 216	R 10:30-11:30	Recitation 203	Sabriya Fisher	sabriya. . .
Williams Hall 319	F 12-1	Recitation 205		
Williams Hall 319	F 11-12	Recitation 204	Einar Sigurdsson	einarsig . . .
Williams Hall 5	F 12-1	Recitation 206		

@ling.upenn.edu

**Office hours:** Will be posted on Canvas Calendar

## 1 Course Description

LING001 is a general introduction to the scientific study of language structure, history, and use. Topics include the biological basis of human language, and analogous systems in other creatures; relations to cognition, communication, and social organization; sounds, forms and meanings in the world's languages; the reconstruction of linguistic history and the family tree of languages; dialect variation; language learning by children and adults; the neurology of language and language disorders; the nature and history of writing systems.

The course has no prerequisites, and satisfies the Natural Sciences and Mathematics Requirement (Sector VII). Although accessible to a general audience, Ling 001 is also recommended as an introduction for students considering a major or minor in linguistics.

## 2 Logistics & Requirements

**Resources** We will read various chapters from Steven Pinker's *The Language Instinct*. I will make the first chapter available electronically, but you need to buy the book for the others (it's currently available for under \$15 on Amazon). Lecture notes and further readings will be made available throughout the course. We will use [Canvas](#) to post class materials and grades. (→ <https://upenn.instructure.com/>)

**Homework** There will be frequent homework assignments, which are designed to make sure that you actively engage with the materials as you learn them. Linguistic analysis requires a good bit of continuous practice, so we want to make sure you get the opportunity of learning by doing. Therefore, the **homework assignments** make up a relatively large part of your grade (**50%**).

**Late Work** Late work will not be accepted. Homework has to be turned in by the beginning of class on the day it is due. If you have to miss a class when homework is due, it is your responsibility to ensure that you're TA receives your homework by the deadline. You need to inform us ASAP about medical or personal emergencies that prevent you from turning in work on time and request a make-up assignment.

**Exams** The midterm and the final exam will test knowledge of basic facts and concepts covered in the class, and will include multiple choice and short answer questions.

**Experiment Participation / Research Report** One great way of learning about how scientific research on language is conducted is to be a participant in an experiment. You can sign up for up to 3 hours of experiment participation through the Psychology subject pool to gain extra credit (each hour of participation is worth 1 percentage point of your final grade). Experiments through the subject pool can be in any area of cognitive psychology, but we encourage you to look out for language or communication related studies so that you get an experience that you can relate directly to the course.

For details on signing up, see <http://www.psych.upenn.edu/participate/subjectpool>

Alternatively, you can gain extra credit by writing a one page summary of an experimental research paper on a linguistic topic (equivalent to 1 hour of experiment participation / 1 percentage point of your final grade). To pursue this option, start by sending an article suggestion to the instructor, and we'll take it from there.

**Grading & Attendance** The grades will be calculated as follows:

Homework	50%
Midterm	20%
Final	30%

You are expected to attend both lectures and recitations, and attendance will be taken in recitation. **Up to two recitations can be missed without any excuses.** Missed recitations beyond that will each **take 1 % of your grade.** If you know you will be missing recitations for excusable reasons (e.g., athletics, holidays, etc.), you need to let your TA know about this by the 2nd recitation, or immediately if you're enrolling in the class after that. Absences for medical reasons can also be excused. However, any such excused absence counts against the two 'freebies' - i.e., if you have one athletic absence and one medical one, any further absences need to be excused or the grade penalty will apply. If you have special circumstances that require an exception to this policy, you need to talk to Florian.

**Academic Honesty** You may **discuss homework assignments with other students** in a general manner, but you have to **list the names of the people you talked to** on each assignment. You have to write up and hand in your answers **individually.** Otherwise, neither you nor we can reliably gauge your understanding of the material. **DO NOT** simply copy each others work - if we suspect that this is happening and you listed the relevant people on your assignment, we will point this out to you first and only inform the Office of Student Conduct in case of repeat offenses. If we have evidence for copying and no one was listed on your homework, we reserve the right to report you right away without a second chance.

On the exams, you should work independently in accordance with Penn's Code of Academic Integrity. If we have reason to believe that your behavior is violating this code, we will contact the Office of Student Conduct to initiate an investigation. For further information, see the [University's Code of Academic Integrity](#) and The Office of Student Conduct's [Frequently Asked Questions page](#)

### 3 Topics & Readings

#### Topics

- Language as an Instinct
- Language Acquisition
- Universal Features of Human Languages
- Animal Communication
- Language Evolution
- Morphology
- Syntax
- Language Typology
- American Sign Language
- Writing Systems
- Phonetics
- Phonology
- Dialects and Variation
- Sociolinguistics
- Language Change
- Semantics
- Pragmatics
- Language, Mind & Brain
- Language in Society