

# Ling 107 — Introductory Linguistics (Honors)

## University of Kansas

**Instructor :** Dr. Andrew McKenzie— [andrew.mckenzie@ku.edu](mailto:andrew.mckenzie@ku.edu)  
**Meetings :** Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 AM to 10:45 AM  
**Classroom :** Robinson Hall 159  
**Office Hours :** Tuesday from 1 pm to 2:30 pm  
Friday from 10 am to 11:30 am  
**Office Location :** Blake Hall 409 (see map)

## COURSE OVERVIEW

### Description of Course Content

Welcome to Ling 107! This course will introduce students to linguistics, the scientific study of language. It will trace the development of linguistics from its origins, following the changes in research direction that led the field from the humanities to the sciences. It will also expose students to the inner workings of linguistic structures and processes. Having done so, the course will discuss different facets of the human side of natural language, and the major questions that concern its acquisition, knowledge, and use. This course will involve an array of analytical content and exercises, exposing students to different subfields of linguistics as well as different methodologies.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, a student should be capable of independently doing the following:

- Understand the origins and nature of natural language and the grammar
- Describe and employ the systems, structures, and processes that form the grammar
- Apply analytic techniques and scientific reasoning to linguistic phenomena.
- Trace the development of inquiry in, and major questions of, the field of linguistics
- Appreciate the diversity of natural languages and the commonality of their underlying structures
- Share a sense of the breadth and depth of linguistics and its applications to the wider world

### KU Core satisfaction

1. Goal 1 (Critical Thinking), Learning Outcome 1
2. Goal 3 (Breadth of Knowledge), Social Sciences
3. Goal 4 (Culture and Diversity), Learning Outcome 2 (Global)

## OFFICE HOURS

I will be hosting office hours on a regular basis throughout the semester. During office hours, I keep an open door for students who would like to speak with me, and you can count on me being present (unless warned to my absence). No appointment is necessary.

Office hours are a great time to gain one-on-one facetime with an instructor to discuss what's on your mind. If you feel confused or lost, or if you are curious about questions that come up but which we cannot address properly during class time, feel free to drop by. If you have questions or concerns about assignments or course material, or just want to geek out about linguistics, you're welcome to visit.

What if you can't make it to the scheduled hours? In that case, you can make an appointment with me, and we can meet then. Please try to avoid making unannounced visits, for if I'm around, I shall be in the midst of some mind-consuming task and may have to shoo you away.

My office is located on the 4th floor of Blake Hall, which is next to Fraser Hall. If you turn right off the elevator and head rightwards down that hallway a ways, you'll find my name by 409.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Course Materials

1. No textbooks will be required
2. Readings and other materials will be posted on Blackboard and or distributed in class

### Printing Fees

Each student must pay a fee of \$10 to help defray printing costs of handouts and such. Either pay the instructor directly or bring your fee to the Linguistics main office (Blake Hall 427) during business hours.

### Assignments

#### Homeworks: 42%

1. **Concepts and Problems : 21%** These two are more traditional homeworks, requiring written responses to questions about course material.
2. **Lab at Home : 21%** These three homeworks will involve conducting particular elements of linguistic analysis.
3. **Bonus Lab at Home** Over Thanksgiving Break you can do an additional Lab at Home for half the value of a Lab at Home assignment.

## Participation: 19.5%

1. **Scavenger Hunt : 12%** You will be tasked with finding 8 media pieces pertaining to linguistics or language, and reporting upon them to the forum, at the rate of about one every 2 weeks.
2. **Daily Double : 7.5%** Each class session, you will need to bring two questions to class, based on the class material. They can be about the reading, previous class sessions, or even questions about language that you thought might be interesting to ask about. I will read some of these out loud in class, and may answer others online. If you ask what's going to be on the test, I will tell you now: I won't know until I make the test. On the first day of class and day the midterm is due, you'll be granted the points for this assignment.

## Exams: 38.5%

There will be two exams: A take-home midterm, and a final exam.

1. **Midterm : 19%** This will be a take-home exam, covering all subjects covered up to then.
2. **Final exam : 19.5%** This exam will be taken in the classroom during the final exam period. It will be 'comprehensive', covering all subjects covered in the course, though weighted towards the latter half.

**Final exam period!** The final exam is scheduled for Thursday, December 19, from 7:30 am to 10:00 am. Yes, seven thirty in the morning.

**Rubrics** for these assignments will be posted during the semester.

## GRADING POLICY

Grades will be assigned according to a 20-point scale. There will be no curve or rounding: The grade you receive is the one you earn. I grade sharply, but this 20-point scale allows more room for the mistakes of learning than the standard 100-point scale.

The points can be converted to a letter grade via the table below. Pursuant to University of Kansas policy, the grades show the following attributes in the left-hand column, translated in the right-hand column to what I consider to meet those attributes.

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. A = outstanding quality               | [ fully masters material ]            |
| 2. B = high quality                      | [ much mastery, with a few slips ]    |
| 3. C = acceptable quality                | [ gets it, but hasn't mastered it ]   |
| 4. D = quality less than acceptable      | [ doesn't really get it ]             |
| 5. F = quality too low to receive credit | [ fails to show basic understanding ] |

<b>A</b> 20.0 – 16.0	<b>B</b> 15.9 – 13.0	<b>C</b> 12.9 – 8.0	<b>D</b> 7.9 – 5.0	<b>F</b> 4.9 – 0.0
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If this system confuses you, let me know. I advise you now not to fret when your first homework comes back with a 16.5, thinking that's the percentage, or that it's an 82. 16.5 would be a low A, closer to 93 if you want to think of 100-point scales.

## Keeping track

I will return assignments with grades on them. At least once every two weeks, barring unforeseen interruptions, I will update your scores on blackboard. However, blackboard does weird things when I follow its ostensibly simple instructions, so it might be easier for you to keep track of your grade on your own.

You can add up your score as we go along, weighted according to the scale above. The total of possible points throughout the semester is 2000, which you can easily convert to the 20-point scale.

*Example:* If you get 20 on a daily double, multiply that by its weight (to get 5 points), and add that to your score. If you get 15 on a Lab at Home, multiply by its weight to get 105 points, which you add to your score.  $5 + 105 = 110$ . To calculate your course grade, simply divide your total points by the possible grade, and multiply by 20. The possible grade is the sum of each assignment's Weight  $\times$  20 (third column). In this example, that's 145, so  $(110 \div 145) \times 20 \simeq 15.17$ , which earns a B.

Assignment	Number	Weight	$Wt \times 20$	$Num \times Wt \times 20$
Daily Double	30	0.25	5	150
Scavenger Hunt	8	1.5	30	240
Lab at Home	3	7	140	420
Concepts & Problems	3	7	140	420
Mid-term	1	19	380	380
Final	1	19.5	390	390

## Grade Contestation

If you feel that the grade you received was not the one you earned, please let me know as soon as possible so we can discuss it.

## Late work

I will not accept late work without grounds for excuse. These grounds are identical to those for excused absences (see the [Attendance policy](#)), with one addendum:

**N.B:** Last-minute technical difficulties frequently hamper the timely submission of assignments. Therefore, I will not consider such circumstances as unforeseen for the purposes of proper excuse.

It is up to you to ensure that your printer is working, your files are not corrupted, that you have made external back-ups of your work, and so forth. I am in no position to cast the first stone about [finishing seconds before a deadline](#). However, with the thrill of triumphant rush comes the threat of utter disaster. In fairness to everyone else in the class, the deadlines must be respected.

Also, note that I do give 'partial' credit. That is, any work turned in will earn some points, so half-done work turned in on time is better for your grade than something complete that is late, which will get zero points even if it is breathtakingly perfect in every other way.

## OTHER ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

### **Working together**

Collaboration is allowed on homeworks, lab reports, and in-class exercises (unless specified), but be sure to list the names of your collaborators, lest I grow suspicious. Collaboration is **not** allowed on the exams.

### **Outside research**

You may conduct outside research for your homeworks. Treat it as you would if you were collaborating with a classmate— cite your sources. Failure to do so will be interpreted as plagiarism, which mainly boils down to passing off other people's work as your own. Plagiarism is an egregious form of academic dishonesty. Copy-and-paste jobs are not only easy to spot versions of plagiarism, but they are just plain lazy. If you can't at least paraphrase, you're better off not doing anything.

### **Daily doubles**

If you know you are going to miss class, or even if you'll be late for class, you can e-mail me your daily double questions before class. If you're going to be there, bring them to class.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### **Taking attendance**

I will not take attendance. However, absence will ensure your missing of a substantial amount of course material and practice with analysis. These cannot be made up without proper excuse (see below), and I will not teach the whole course over during **office hours**.

## **Grounds for proper excuse**

Grounds for proper excuse include illness, medical treatment, urgent issues concerning your dependents or very close friends/family, unforeseen circumstances (flat tire, jury duty, zombie apocalypse, etc.), funerals and other tragic major life events, births and other joyous major life events, major religious holidays, or university-related activities. Foreknowledge engenders sympathy in such matters, so even if you expect to be excused, be sure to let me know as soon as you know you will miss a course. With any absence, I may ask for verifiable documentation.

Note that foreseeable technical difficulties are not grounds for proper excuse (see [Late work](#)).

## **IMPORTANT NOTIFICATIONS**

### **Disability Accommodations**

The Academic Achievement & Access Center (AAAC) coordinates accommodations and services for all KU students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted the AAAC, please do so as soon as possible. Their office is located in 22 Strong Hall; their phone number is 785-864-4064 (V/TTY).

Information about their services can be found at [disability.ku.edu](http://disability.ku.edu). Please contact me privately in regard to your needs in this course; office hours are a great time to discuss these. Many students struggle immensely for a long time, only to find that they've been hindered the entire time by an academic disability.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the [College of Liberal Arts & Sciences policy on academic misconduct](#), which may result in failure of the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

### **Electronic communication**

I will send all e-mail concerning this course to your ku.edu address. If you want to use a different e-mail address, set your ku.edu address to forward e-mail from me or from Blackboard to the address you use to ensure that you don't miss important e-mails.

### **Amendment Disclaimer**

This syllabus is subject to change depending on extenuating circumstances or class interest.

# LIKELY CALENDAR

## ASSIGNMENT CALENDAR

WEEK	TUESDAY	THURSDAY
1 Aug 27, 29	Syllabus, Methods, History	<b>Phonetics:</b> Speech Sounds
<b>LANGUAGE AS A SYSTEM · STRUCTURALISM</b>		
2 Sep 3, 5	Saussure's groundbreaking	<b>Phonology:</b> Features, phonotactics
3 Sep 10, 12	Phonemes	Allophones
4 Sep 17, 19	More allophony; typology	Stress
5 Sep 24, 26	<b>Morphology:</b> Inflection (& the Americanists)	Allomorphy
6 Oct 1, 3	Derivation	Compounding
<b>LANGUAGE AS A COGNITIVE OBJECT · GENERATIVE GRAMMAR</b>		
7 Oct 8, 10	Chomsky's revolution	<b>Syntax:</b> Phrase structure, transformations
8 Oct 15, 17	Fall break	Universal Grammar
9 Oct 22, 24	Universal sentence-building structures	
10 Oct 29, 31	Universal processes, linguistic universals, typology	
11 Nov 5, 7	<b>Semantics:</b> Truth-conditions & contexts	Implicature & Presupposition
12 Nov 12, 14	Tense & Aspect	Mood & Modality
13 Nov 19, 22	Quantifiers	Binding
<b>LANGUAGE AS A SOCIAL BEHAVIOR · SOCIOLINGUISTICS</b>		
14 Nov 26, 28	<b>Sociolinguistics:</b> Register, prescriptivism	Thanksgiving break
15 Dec 3, 5	Dialect, prescription and social identity	
16 Dec 10, 12	Language policy and revitalization	
<b>FINAL EXAM - THURSDAY DEC 19, 7:30 AM</b>		

Some of these topics may be refined as we go along, but the assignment dates will not change without prior notice.

assigned	assignment	due	pts	total course points to date
Thurs, Aug 29	Lab at Home 1	<b>Tues, Sep 3</b>	140	140
	Scavenger Hunt 1	<b>Fri, Sep 6</b>	30	170
	Daily Doubles 1-6	<b>Thurs, Sep 12</b>	30	200
	Scavenger Hunt 2	<b>Fri Sep 20</b>	30	230
Thurs Sep 19	Lab at Home 2	<b>Tues Sep 24</b>	140	370
Thurs, Sep 19	Concepts & Problems 1	<b>Thurs, Sep 26</b>	140	510
	Daily Doubles 7-12	<b>Thurs Oct 3</b>	30	540
	Scavenger Hunt 3	<b>Fri Oct 4</b>	30	570
	Scavenger Hunt 4	<b>Fri Oct 18</b>	30	600
Wed, Oct 16	Midterm 1	<b>Tues, Oct 22</b>	380	980
	Daily Doubles 13-18	<b>Tues, Oct 29</b>	30	1010
	Scavenger Hunt 5	<b>Fri Nov 1</b>	30	1040
Thurs Oct 31	Concepts & Problems 2	<b>Thurs, Nov 7</b>	140	1180
Thurs Nov 7	Lab at Home 3	<b>Tues, Nov 12</b>	140	1320
	Scavenger Hunt 6	<b>Fri Nov 15</b>	30	1350
	Daily Doubles 19-24	<b>Tues, Nov 19</b>	30	1380
Tues, Nov 19	Concepts & Problems 3	<b>Tues, Nov 26</b>	140	1520
	Scavenger Hunt 7	<b>Tues, Nov 26</b>	30	1550
	Daily Doubles 25-30	<b>Thurs, Dec 12</b>	30	1580
	Scavenger Hunt 8	<b>Fri, Dec 13</b>	30	1610
	Final Exam	<b>Thurs, Dec 19</b>	390	2000