Description

Catalogue:
Introduction to fundamental concepts in phonological theory and their relation to
issues in philosophy and cognitive psychology. Articulatory and acoustic
phonetics, distinctive features and the structure of feature systems, underlying
representations and underspecification, phonological rules and derivations,
syllable structure, accentual systems, and the morphology-phonology interface.
Examples and exercises from a variety of languages.

What’s phonology?
The study of how languages organize sounds into patterns.

What to expect
- Phonetics will be covered on an as-needed basis.
- One of the most interesting things about languages is how different they can be
  from each other. To give you a sense of the range of phonologies out there, we’ll
  see a lot of data from familiar and unfamiliar languages.
- Class sessions will be a mix of lecturing, problem solving, and discussion.

Prerequisite
24.900J/21F.237J (Intro to Linguistics) is a prerequisite for this course.
We will only briefly review material you saw there.

Course goals
This course is intended to stimulate an interest in and appreciation for the richness and logic of a
human behavior that you experience every day—phonology. Linguists and non-linguists alike
should expect intellectual stimulation. The linguists among you will begin to acquire the
background necessary for (i) reading and understanding current and past published work, and (ii)
carrying out your own research. On the practical side, knowing some phonetics and phonology
will be very useful to you if you’re interested in language learning, language teaching, acting,
singing, speech technology, or speech therapy.
The skills to be developed in this course include the ability to…

- read phonological literature (with help)
- understand phonological argumentation
- evaluate phonological proposals
- work collaboratively with peers
- discuss phonological ideas
- collect and analyze phonological data
- formulate and argue for a phonological proposal
- write up a clear presentation of an analysis
- write an abstract
- give a talk with handout
- write a short paper

Note that many of these skills are highly transferable to other fields and endeavors!

Requirements

- Homework assignments (9) 40%
- Project (see below) 30%
  select topic and meet with me by March 18
  abstract due April 17
  class presentation w/ handout May 1 (if necessary), 6, or 8
  paper due May 15
- Midterm exams (2) 20%
  two—like the homeworks, mostly phonology problems
- Class participation 10%
  understanding of readings, quality of contributions to discussion

There is no final exam.

Policies

- Homework
  Homeworks will be mostly classical phonology problems, but some will involve reading and responding to part of a phonology article.

  Homework assignments will be passed out on Mondays and due the following Monday at the beginning of class (except when Monday’s a holiday).

  You are strongly encouraged to work together. Some weeks I may even make collaboration a requirement. Solutions must be written up individually, though.

  I cannot accept late homeworks. This is partly for your own good, to help you avoid falling behind, and partly for fairness: we will discuss the homeworks right after they’re turned in.
• **Attendance**
  Because class discussions are essential, attendance is required. Please talk with me if you must miss/have missed a class for a legitimate reason (illness, emergency, religious holiday).

**Readings**

*Required textbooks*


*Additional required readings*

…will occasionally be given as part of a homework assignment.

Readings are meant to serve as background and reinforcement for what we do in class. Lectures won’t review the readings, but we will talk about anything in the reading that you want to. So, if you have questions or comments about something in the reading, write them down and bring them up in class.

**Approximate course outline** (topic outline subject to change!)

Ladefoged readings will be announced as appropriate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>topics</th>
<th>reading</th>
<th>assignment</th>
<th>project</th>
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<td>REGISTRATION DAY</td>
<td></td>
<td>GJ 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 6</td>
<td>introduction; why is there phonology?</td>
<td>GJ 3</td>
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<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>rules and constraints</td>
<td>GJ 4</td>
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<td>Feb 13</td>
<td>contrast &amp; distribution; phonemes &amp; allophones</td>
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<td>GJ 7</td>
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<td>#4 due</td>
<td>topic due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 18</td>
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<td>Mar 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 3</td>
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PATRIOTS DAY

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<td>intonation—or talks, if there are &gt;8 of you</td>
<td>L 91-111</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>reduplication</td>
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**Final project**

The purpose of the project is to give you hands on experience being a phonologist. You’ll collect phonological data—and perhaps find that phonological behavior isn’t as neat and tidy as it looks in textbooks—analyze it, and present your findings in both oral and written form.

Because discovering a phonological phenomenon takes time and luck, you will be *replicating* a previously documented phenomenon.

The format of the project is based on that used by Bruce Hayes in his undergraduate phonology class at UCLA (http://www.linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/120a/).

1. Find someone who is willing to be your source of data (“speaker”). It can be a friend, a roommate, a relative, even another student in this class.

2. Find a documented phonological phenomenon in your speaker’s native language (see the list of suggestions). Make sure you understand the data as they’re laid out in the original article or book, but don’t worry about understanding the analysis given there.

Steps 1 and 2 should be done by March 18.

3. Elicit the data in the article from your speaker, making careful transcriptions. Does it all match up?

4. Develop an analysis of the data from your speaker, comparing and contrasting your speaker’s behavior with the behavior reported in the article.

5. If the data are ambiguous anywhere, elicit additional data from your speaker. You may want to use a dictionary for help, or make up nonsense words (we will discuss how to do this in class).

6. Refine your analysis in light of the new data. Repeat steps 4-6 as necessary.
You will present your findings to the class in a 15-minute talk at the end of the course, and in a paper to be turned in on the last day of class. We will discuss how to do the presentations and papers in class later, and you’ll be given a sample paper.

Secrets of success

• Come to class
  There’s nothing like missing a class to make you feel lost, confused, and out of it. Plus it’s a requirement for this course.

• Talk to me
  …if you don’t understand something, you have an idea, you disagree with something you’ve read, you’re intrigued by something you’ve read, etc.

• Talk to your classmates
  Discuss your readings, assignments, projects, ideas. Study together.

• Don’t fall behind
  This one’s easy—because homeworks must be turned in on time, you’ll automatically stay up to date.