

## **Linguistics 515 -- Field Methods**

**Fall 2004, Friday 9:00 - 12:00, AH 4-51**

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Just as experimental methods are the backbone of psycholinguistics and phonetics, Field Methods is the empirical basis of the core theoretical areas of morphosyntax and phonology. In this class, students will learn inductive methods for eliciting linguistic data from a native-speaker of an unfamiliar language and gain first-hand experience gathering and analyzing the primary data on which linguists base their theoretical claims. Attention will be paid to methodological issues such as the reliability grammaticality judgments, variability of language across speakers and genre, and the use of texts versus isolated token utterances. Students will also be introduced to subsidiary issues such as researcher ethics, language attitudes, language use, and language endangerment and revitalization.

Students should finish the course with a working knowledge of field methodology and elicitation techniques, as well as familiarity with techniques and equipment for audio-recording, data-archiving, database management, and instrumental analysis of phonetic data.

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Prerequisites: Ling 205, Ling 309, Ling 310, or consent of the Department

*NOTE: The Department may cancel your registration if you have not taken prerequisite courses.*

Readings: Payne, Thomas. *Describing Morphosyntax*. (recommended)  
Additional readings will be made available in the Department Office.

Materials: notebook (hardbound, lined, numbered pages), ZIP disk, DAT or cassette tape; students will also be responsible for the cost of photocopying certain materials.

### Class procedure:

Class will meet regularly on Fridays from 9 to 12. During the first session, students will divide themselves into working groups of 3 - 4 people who are able to meet together with the consultant outside of class once a week at a mutually acceptable time. Subsequent classes will be dedicated to discussion of readings and of the previous week's elicitations, which will have been typed up by each group and distributed to the class. From time to time, the consultant may be invited to attend class so that we can check points that came up in elicitation and follow up on questions raised by the class during group presentations.

The first month will be dedicated to the phonological system of the language with an eye towards establishing a standardized writing system for class; each group will be assigned a particular subtopic, such as the consonantal system, vowels, or phonotactic/prosodic patterns. The second month will be dedicated to the study of the language's morphosyntax, which again will be divided up among the groups. During the remainder of the course, groups will be expected to specialize -- either collectively or on an individual basis -- on morphosyntax or phonology to allow students to pursue individual research topics.

All data collected in group must be made available to the rest of the class. The vehicle for this will be both the weekly elicitation summaries and the entry of data in the field database, which will be located on the computer in the Field Linguistics Lab, Assiniboia 4-

43. Electronically recorded data must also be digitized and made available for listening/instrumental analysis in the Field Lab. Students will be expected to make themselves familiar with techniques for doing this under the tutelage of one or more of the graduate students.

<u>Evaluation:</u>	Group work/participation	20%	(on-going)
	Phonological squib	25%	(due October 1)
	Grammatical squib	25%	(due November 5)
	Final essay	30%	(due Dec 8)

Group work will be presented weekly to the class in the form of photocopied sheets of data collected during the previous week's elicitation; the work will be evaluated on the basis of timeliness, organization, accessibility (to others), and overall quality. Participation will be judged on the quantity and quality of the student's contribution to class. The Phonological and Grammatical Squibs will be short summaries (5 - 10 pages) of the theoretical results of the particular sub-topic the group has been working on. Students will write up their own assignments and will be expected to show some originality in argumentation and analysis. The Final Essay will be an original piece of research on a topic of the student's choosing.

Note on style: Students are expected to become familiar with and make use of a standard style for bibliography, citations, presentation of data, and formatting acceptable for professional linguistic publications. Recommended styles are found in the LSA Style Sheet and the APA Manual -- many common practices are outlined on the Resources page of the Department Website.

Grades: Final course grades are determined according to the *University Calendar* [§23.4(4)]: "Grades reflect judgments of student achievement made by instructors. These judgments are based on a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class."

Papers and assignments will be assessed in terms of absolute achievement, ranked by merit against the work of peers, and --with due attention to the verbal descriptions of the various grades--will be assigned appropriate marks.

Grading In Undergraduate Courses		
Descriptor	Letter Grade	Point Value
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Poor	D+	1.3
Minimal Pass	D	1.0
Failure	F	0

*Note that graduate and undergraduate grades are calculated separately and are not directly comparable across the board.*

#### Fine print

Late assignments: Assignments handed in late without prior arrangement with the professor will not be accepted. Barring unforeseeable circumstances, such arrangements must be made and acknowledged by the professor not later than the day before the assigned due date. Generally extensions will not be granted except for documented acceptable excuses (as described in the *University Calendar*) and extensions granted for other extenuating circumstances may be liable to a penalty of 10% for each day the assignment is overdue (including weekend days). Under no circumstances will extensions be granted beyond the date of return of the graded assignment to the rest of the class.

Students with special needs: Students with disabilities or special needs that might interfere with their performance should contact the professor at the beginning of the course with the appropriate documentation. Every effort will be made to accommodate such students, but in all cases prior arrangements must be made to ensure that any special needs can be met in a timely fashion and in such a way that the rest of the class is not put at an unfair disadvantage.