

# Linguistics 221A: Field Methods

Fall 2004

Language of Research: **Sinhala**

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Office hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:30 and by appointment

## **Goals of the Course**

- To teach students how to collect and analyze data on the phonetics and phonology of a language about which they know nothing initially
- To teach students how to prepare for sessions with the language consultant
- To give students instruction in academic writing, including both descriptive linguistic and theoretical genres
- To teach students how to organize and keep track of data using an electronic database program
- To teach students how to use modern technology to record, back up, and analyze field data
- To discuss non-academic issues in fieldwork, especially how to present yourself to the community, payment of consultants, coping with feelings of alienation and isolation, cross-cultural communication and interactions, relations with the consultants, and maintaining physical and mental health

## **Course Requirements**

- Attend all class meetings and weekly meetings with the consultant
- Input all data into the class database
- Double-check data of others as assigned
- Produce (at least) one high-quality recording in digitized format
- Be in charge of class elicitation sessions on a rotating basis
- Transcribe class materials on a rotating basis
- Contribute to class discussions and analysis
- (Throughout the year), read one chapter of *Linguistic Fieldwork* and present it to the class, giving an overview of the author's main points and leading an in-depth discussion of points of personal interest
- Read all materials given in class
- Produce a written description of the consonants of the language, their allophones, and their phonemic status
- Produce a term paper (see below)

## **Papers**

There are two genres of academic writing which I would like you to practice during our year of field methods: clear descriptive writing based on basic linguistic theory (i.e., not written within a formalized theoretical framework); and the presentation of analyses contextualized in the broader theoretical literature (i.e., journal-article type writing).

This quarter, all students will be required to write a full description of the phonetics and phonology of Sinhala consonants.

In addition, students will be required to write a term paper. In the interest of giving students as much flexibility as possible in their choice of topic, there are two options. Students may write either a complete description of the phonetics and phonology (including syllable structure, stress, etc.), or a paper on one aspect of the phonetics and phonology (topic to be okayed by me in advance!) which makes substantial reference to the typological or theoretical literature.

Papers due December 7th: Tuesday of finals week