

LING 321 Phonology Spring 2010

M/W 15:10 – 16:30 pm LIB 387

Course Syllabus
Spring 2010

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PREREQUISITES

Successful completion of Linguistics 311 (or equivalent), or instructor consent.

CONTENT OF THE COURSE

Phonology is concerned with the grammar of *speech sounds*—specifically, with discovering the abstract mental principles which govern how speech sounds are arranged into systems of contrast, how they are organized into larger units such as syllables, and how their features are manipulated on the basis of their context of occurrence (‘sound change rules’). Phonology also deals with the principles governing prosodic aspects of the speech signal, such as stress and rhythm, tone, and intonation.

This course is divided roughly into three units:

(a) ***Segmental phonology***: This unit focuses on speech sounds, or *segments*. We begin by reviewing a little phonetics, focusing our attention on the production, transcription, and classification of segments. We then introduce the two fundamental insights underlying the phonological analysis of segments, namely *the phonemic principle* and *feature theory*. We explore various applications and elaborations of these insights, and practice techniques for analyzing data and representing generalizations in the form of *rules*. We introduce the notation for expressing rules within the traditional *Generative Phonology* framework, and introduce some important concepts within rule-based theories, such as *rule ordering* and *abstractness*. The readings for this portion of the course will mostly come from the Odden textbook, with one or two short supplementary readings added.

(b) ***Suprasegmental structure and non-linear phonology***: In this unit we consider the organization of segments into larger units, and the imposition of metrical and prosodic structure onto such units. We begin by talking about *syllables*, and then turn to the representation of *stress* and *tone*, enriching the theory developed in the first unit to deal with these new levels of organization. Here we introduce a more recent alternative framework to generative phonology, namely *Autosegmental Phonology*, which more insightfully captures phenomena such as assimilation and tone sandhi. In our discussion of stress, we also introduce *feet* and *metrical structure*. The readings for this unit include

the final chapter of the Odden textbook, and various supplementary readings.

(c) **Topics in phonological theory:** The final unit gives a partial overview of recent developments in phonological theory. *Optimality Theory* (or “OT”), which has become the dominant theoretical framework in phonology over the past 10 years, will be discussed in quite some detail. In addition to examining the basic mechanisms and insights of OT, we will try to determine how this theory compares—both conceptually and empirically—with the traditional rule-based phonology that we learned in the first part of the course. This unit will be based on the first half of the Kager textbook, with supplementary readings from various sources. Finally, if time permits, we will read about other phonological frameworks, in particular, Experimental Phonology and Evolutionary Phonology.

READINGS

Our textbooks are *Introducing Phonology* (2005), by David Odden, and *Optimality Theory* (1999), by René Kager. Both books are available at the Reed bookstore. We will be reading all of Odden and as much of Kager as we can get through (hopefully at least the first half). Supplementary readings will either be available directly from me (handed out in class) or posted on Moodle.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, GRADING, AND POLICIES

Participation: Students will be expected to attend class and participate in discussion on a regular basis. At various points in the course, students may also be asked to lead discussion or present supplementary material in class. Participation will count for up to 10% of the final grade.

Written work: Students will be required to complete

- (a) 8 problem sets (70 % of the final grade)
- (b) a comprehensive take-home final exam (20% of the final grade)

Problem set due dates

	Given out	Due in class
PS 1	Feb. 1	Feb. 8
PS 2	Feb. 8	Feb.15
PS 3	Feb. 22	Mar. 1
PS 4	Mar. 1	Mar.8
PS 5	Mar. 8	Mar. 15*
PS 6	Mar. 22	Mar. 29
PS 7	Apr. 5	Apr. 12
PS 8	Apr. 19	Apr. 26

***Please note that the due date of PS5 (March 15) falls on the first day of the Spring break. Hence I ask that you submit this problem set by email, by 5pm.**

You may submit your assignments in either hardcopy or electronic versions. Electronic versions should be submitted as email attachments, before the beginning of the class on the due date. Attachments *must* be in PDF, so as to avoid any font problems.

Written work must be turned in on time if you wish to receive full credit and comments. Late assignments will be penalized 10% of total possible points for each day that they are late, unless you receive an extension from me. Late assignments will not be accepted for credit if turned in after the problem set has been returned to students with comments, or discussed in class, whichever comes first (moreover, late assignments will probably receive minimal comments, and may not be returned in a timely fashion).

A final note on homework: You are encouraged to work on problem sets *together*, so long as you write up your answers *in your own words*. You should also feel free to come see me during office hours if you're having difficulty completing an assignment (preferably *before* the assignment is actually due). I am always willing to talk about any aspect of the course, and to give you whatever help you may need, so please take advantage of my services!

COURSE OUTLINE

The schedule/the list of the readings outlined below may change several times throughout the course of the semester based on the class' progression. The most recent, modified version of the syllabus will always be posted on the Moodle page for this course. You are responsible for monitoring these updates and keeping up with all the readings. **Your familiarity with the assigned material will be presupposed;** in class we will try to build on and go beyond what's been assigned as much as possible, though the actual pace of the class will be a function of your preparation for and participation in class discussions.

Specific dates for reading assignments are not included below on purpose; it makes more sense to me to set the pace of the course as we go along. Each unit is divided into sections, with the various topics to be discussed listed after each section heading, followed by the reading assignments for that section.

UNIT I – The Segment: Sounds, Features, and Rules

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|---------------------------|--|
| Week 1, Jan. 25 – Jan. 27 | Overview of the field
Odden, ch. 1 “What is Phonology?”
<i>The Handbook of Phonological Theory</i> , ch.1 “Phonological Theory” (by John Goldsmith)
Articulatory phonetics: Producing, transcribing, and classifying sounds
Odden, chapter 2 “Phonetic Transcriptions” |
| Week 2, Feb. 1 – Feb. 3 | Ladefoged, <i>A Course in Phonetics</i> , ch. 1 “Articulatory Phonetics” |

Ladefoged, *A Course in Phonetics*, ch. 2 “Phonology and Phonetic Transcription”

Week 3, Feb. 8 – Feb. 10 Ladefoged, *A Course in Phonetics*, chapter 6 “Airstream Mechanisms and Phonation Types”
Ladefoged, *A Course in Phonetics*, ch. 7 “Place and Manner of Articulation”

Week 4, Feb. 15 – Feb.17 **The phoneme as a unit of contrast**
Odden, ch. 3 “Allophonic Relations”
Hayes, *Introductory Phonology*, ch. 3 “More on Phonemes”

Week 5, Feb. 22 – Feb. 24 **Phonological derivations and alternations: Rules and rule ordering**
Odden, ch. 4 “Underlying Representations”
Odden, ch. 5 “Interacting Processes”

Week 6, Mar. 1 – Mar. 3 **Features and natural classes**
Odden, chapter 6 “Feature Theory”

More on derivations: Phonological naturalness and problems of abstraction
Odden, ch. 7 “Doing an Analysis”

Week 7, Mar. 8 – Mar. 10 Odden, ch. 8 “Phonological Typology and Naturalness”
Odden, ch. 9 “Abstractness and Psychological Reality”

UNIT II – Above the Segment: Syllables, Tiers, and Prosody

Week 8, Mar. 22 – Mar. 24 **Autosegmental phonology: The tonal and skeletal tiers**
Odden, ch. 10 “Nonlinear Representations”
Phonological Theory. The Essential readings. ch.8 “An Overview of Autosegmental Phonology” (by John Goldsmith).

Week 9, Mar. 29 – Mar. 31 Metrical structure: Moras, syllables, and feet
The Handbook of Phonological Theory, ch. 6 “The Syllable in Phonological Theory” (by Juliette Blevins)
Phonological Theory. The Essential readings. ch. 17 “The Syllable” (by Elisabeth Selkirk)

UNIT III – Recent Topics in Phonological Theory

Week 10, Apr. 5 – Apr. 7 **Optimality theory**
Kager, ch. 1 “Conflicts in Grammars”
Kager, ch. 2 “The Typology of Structural Changes”

Kager, ch. 3 “Syllable Structure and Economy”

Week 11, Apr. 12 – Apr. 14 Kager, ch. 4 “Metrical Structure”
Kager, ch. 5 “Correspondence in Reduplication”
Kager, ch. 6 “Output-to-Output Correspondence”

Week 12, Apr. 19 – Apr. 21 **Experimental Phonology: Sound Change**
Ladefoged, A Course in Phonetics, ch. 8 Acoustic Phonetics
The Handbook of Phonological Theory, ch. 24
“Experimental Phonology” (by John Ohala)
Experimental Approaches to Phonology, Ch.10
“Interpreting Misperception: Beauty is in the Ear of the Beholder” (by Juliet Blevins)
Phonetically Based Phonology, Ch. 2 “ A review of perceptual Cues and Cue Robustness” (optional)

Week 13, Apr. 26 – Apr. 28 **Evolutionary Phonology**
Juliet Blevins. *Evolutionary Phonology: The Emergence of Sound Patterns*, ch. 1 “ What is Evolutionary Phonology”,
ch. 3 “Explanations in Phonology: a Brief History of Ideas”,
ch. 7 “The Evolution of Geminates”.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Below are some reference works for you to peruse at your leisure.

Ladefoged, Peter & Ian Maddieson. (1996) *The Sounds of the World’s Languages*. Blackwell. <P221.L24 1996> [A technical but nevertheless readable overview of the phonetic properties of different sounds, both common and ‘exotic’, from around the world.]

McCarthy, John, ed. (2004) *Optimality Theory in Phonology: A Reader*. Blackwell. <P217.3.O67 2004> [An anthology of seminal and influential writings on OT.]

Pullum, Geoffrey & William Ladusaw. (1986) *Phonetic Symbol Guide*. University of Chicago Press. <P221.P85 1986> [A useful reference guide to symbols used in phonetic transcription—both official IPA symbols and others which are commonly used (such as those used by Odden).]

There are some useful on-line resources which you should take advantage of:

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/#>

This is the website for the University of Iowa’s Phonetics Flash Animation project. Here you can look at animated diagrams illustrating different places and manners of

articulation in English, Spanish, and German.

<http://www.phonetics.ucla.edu/>

The homepage for the UCLA Phonetics Lab. To listen to sound files of the different types of sounds discussed in the reading, along with cool sounds from other languages, click on “Index of Languages” (to search alphabetically by language), “Index of Sounds” (to search by natural class), or “Map Index” (to search for language by location). For a handy ‘self-pronouncing’ version of the IPA chart, click on “A Course in Phonetics”, and then click on “The IPA Chart”.

<http://www.sil.org/computing/fonts/encore-ipa.html>

If you have not already done so, you should equip your computer with an IPA font. IPA fonts for Windows and Macintosh are available for free download from the Summer Institute for Linguistics website at the address above. Free phonetic fonts are also available from other sites, but the SIL fonts are the most widely used.