

COURSE INFORMATION
Formal Foundations of Linguistics
(Linguistics 680)
Autumn 2008
5 credits

TIME: MW 1:30-3:18

PLACE: Jennings Hall 164

COURSE WEB SITE: <http://www.ling.ohio-state.edu/~plummer/ling680/>

INSTRUCTOR: Carl Pollard

Office: Oxley Hall TBA

Office hours TBA and by appointment

E-mail: pollard@ling.ohio-state.edu

Office phone: (614) 292-7590 (office)

Cell: (614) 975-9789 (for emergencies only)

TA: Andy Plummer

Office: Oxley Hall 204

Office hours TBA and by appointment

E-mail: plummer@ling.osu.edu

Office phone: (614) 688-3108

Prerequisite: satisfaction of the GEC Requirement in Mathematical and Logical Analysis (or the equivalent). It would be good to have taken a linguistics course, but this is not required.

Please note: Linguistics 680 or its equivalent is a prerequisite for Linguistics 683.01 (Semantics 1), 684.01 (Computational Linguistics 1), Linguistics 602.02 (Syntax 2), and Linguistics 681 (Algebraic Linguistics).

Content: Linguistics 680 introduces fundamental mathematical concepts and techniques used in formalizing theories in linguistics. But these concepts and techniques are also applicable in areas such as logic, artificial intelligence, programming languages, philosophy (of language, science, or mathematics), etc. The chief goal is to acquire technical facility through practice in solving problems, primarily in the form of informal (but rigorous) proofs. There are no exams or term papers. The course covers selected topics in set theory, abstract algebra, logic, and formal language theory. A tentative syllabus will be announced soon.

Text: *Formal Foundations for Linguistic Theory*. This is a textbook that I hope to finish writing this year.

Format: Lecture, preferably interrupted as often as possible by questions and constructive comments!

Grading: Based on percentage of total points on (roughly) weekly problem sets, as follows:

A: 90-100	A-: 87-89	B+: 84-86	B: 81-83
B-: 78-80	C+: 75-77	C: 72-74	C-: 69-71
D+: 66-68	D: 63-65	E: 60-61	

There is also a fudge factor of one or two points, so it is possible to raise your grade through regular attendance and constructive participation.

Written work: Preferably double-spaced computer formatted, but *very* neat hand printing in black ball-point pen is also acceptable. E-mailed written work will be accepted *only* in the form of .ps or .pdf attachments.

It is *very* important to leave ample margins (at least one inch all around) for written comments. And because – as with all math classes – the material builds cumulatively on what came before, it is *very* important to stay on track, including turning problem sets in when they are due.

Problem solutions and proofs must be written in easy-to-follow English prose, so that the structure of your reasoning is clear. Of course there will be equations and other formulas consisting of math symbols, but there must be enough prose to make clear what role the formulas are playing in your argumentation. Don't be alarmed if you are uncertain at the outset what counts as acceptable mathematical argumentation: this is one of the skills you will learn.

Study groups: Encouraged. But you must work alone when you write up your problem sets, using your own words.

Attendance: Very strongly recommended. Much material covered will be in the text, but not necessarily all. If you miss a class, you are responsible for reconstructing what you missed from classmates' notes. I do not have time to reteach missed material during office hours!

Readings and problem sets will be posted on the course website, but there is always the possibility of concepts or techniques being introduced in class that are not covered in the readings.

Academic Misconduct: Academic misconduct, such as cheating or plagiarism, will not be tolerated. If you are unclear what constitutes academic misconduct, see pages 2-3 of the Code of Student Conduct:

http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf

University policy requires faculty to report any case of academic misconduct to the appropriate university committee.

Disability services: Students who feel they may need an accommodation for a disability should contact me privately at the beginning of the course to discuss their specific needs. Faculty rely on the Office of Disability Services for assistance in assessing needs and developing accommodations for disabilities. Students with such needs are encouraged to contact that Office (614-292-3307, TDD 614-292-0901, <http://ods.osu.edu>).