

10/4/05

## LINGUIST170 - BASICS OF LANGUAGE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNERS

### ANNOTATED SYLLABUS

#### **Course Rationale and Objectives:**

A key goal of Linguist170 is to provide students with important tools to help them become successful foreign language learners. Students will learn basic elements of language such as parts of speech and the pronunciation of new sounds as a means of enabling them to anticipate and effectively deal with problems in pronunciation, vocabulary building and sentence formation that often come up in foreign language study. They will also be exposed to the many differences and similarities in language as it is used cross-culturally. Students will also be given information on different language teaching styles, typical mistakes language learners make, and strategies for making learning more effective. This information will be presented in the context of the wide variety of languages taught at OSU.

An important component of the course will be the involvement of representatives from a range of OSU departments in the Colleges of Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Education, as well as the Office of International Education. Each week a representative will give a 15-30 minute presentation providing information useful to language learners, e.g. languages taught on campus (including American Sign Language), study abroad programs, teaching styles, learning styles and strategies, etc.

An additional aim of the course is to enhance interaction between students and faculty in the Department of Linguistics and other departments and programs across the university. We see the course as providing a vital service to OSU students by exposing them to the wide range of languages and cultural studies available on campus, as well as opportunities to study abroad. Further, the learning tips and strategies that are presented in the context of foreign language learning are naturally transferable to other subjects. Consequently, the course will not only make the students better language learners, but better learners in general.

The course was offered for the first time, as Ling294X, in Spring 2003, taught by Professor Peter Culicover, the chair of the Department of Linguistics. Although it was offered only as an experimental course and therefore not fulfilling any requirements, there was an enrollment of 17 students. We interpret this as suggesting that the course fulfills a definite need in Ohio State's course curriculum and we anticipate the enrollment increasing once the course is accorded official status. Starting with Fall 2003, the course will be offered three quarters a year.

#### **Relation to other Courses/Curricula**

While there are over 30 languages taught at OSU, at present there is no introductory course aimed at providing students with the specific tools needed to be successful language learners. The course is therefore aimed at providing foundational information for students who plan to study a foreign language, whether it be a spoken or sign language.

The course differs from Linguist201/202 in that the all topics covered in Linguist170 are geared specifically towards the language learner. Linguist201/202 present general overviews of the major topics in the field of linguistics, rather than language per se.

**Instruction and meetings:** Two weekly lectures (1 hr. 48 min. each) will be given by a faculty member. There will also be a weekly discussion section run by a teaching assistant.

**Credit hours:** 5 credit hours

**Grading:** Grading will be based on weekly quizzes managed by WebCT. This type of testing proved successful during the first quarter in which the course was offered and so will continue to be used in the future.

- o weekly quizzes (9) 90%
- o class and discussion section participation 10%

**Readings:** All Powerpoint slides used in class will be made available to students on the WebCT class website. Selected readings, as listed below, will also be included in a course packet.

*Course packet:*

Bauer, Laurie & Peter Trudgill. 1998. Language Myths. London, UK: Penguin. [selected chapters]

Culicover, Peter & Elizabeth Hume. 2003. A Practical Guide to Foreign Language Learning. manuscript. OSU.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor to arrange an appointment as soon as possible to discuss the course format, to anticipate needs, and to explore potential accommodations. The instructor relies on the Office of Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. Students who have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services are encouraged to do so (614-292-3307; [www.ods.ohio-state.edu](http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu)).

**Academic Misconduct:** To state the obvious, academic dishonesty is not allowed. Cheating on tests or on other assignments will be reported to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct. The most common form of misconduct is plagiarism. Remember that any time you use the ideas or the materials of another person or persons, you must acknowledge that you have done so in a citation. This includes material that you have found on the Web. The University provides guidelines for research on the Web at <http://gateway.lib.ohio-state.edu/tutor/>.

**Budget:**

No additional resources are required to teach this course. Faculty in the Department of Linguistics will teach the course as part of their regular teaching load. There are currently a sufficient number of faculty in the department to teach the course without having to increase teaching loads or alter the current system.

## **General Overview**

(see *Weekly Overview* for more detail)

### **Section I: Introduction and strategies for language learning**

- o Languages taught at OSU
- o Dimensions of language differences: why some languages are perceived as harder to learn than others.
- o Teaching styles
- o Tips and strategies for language learning
  - o brain training; how language is processed by the brain
  - o how to use a dictionary

### **Section II: How to think like a native speaker**

- o Students become familiar with the dimensions of language differences and similarities with respect to sentence structure, word meaning, word classes, etc. The topics include:
  - o words: what they are, what their functions are
    - o different parts of speech
  - o word form
    - o e.g. case systems, gender
  - o how words combine to form phrases and sentences
  - o how languages differ from English in terms of word structure, word function, meaning, sentence structure.

### **Section III: How to behave like a native speaker**

- o Students become familiar with the interlocking of language and culture viewed in the context of learning a foreign language.
- o Dimensions of language differences and similarities with respect to how language is used across cultures. The topics discussed include:
  - o how culture influences language and how languages differ in terms of, e.g., taboo topics, greetings, the bases for swearing, politeness, body language.
  - o the interweaving of language and social norms
  - o arbitrariness in language
  - o standard and non-standard languages; attitudes towards language varieties

### **Section IV: How to sound like a native speaker**

- o An introduction to the idea that familiarity with the sound system of the language that you speak and the language that you're learning is important.
- o Foreign accents: Understanding why people speak with a foreign accent. The parts of a language affected when speech sounds foreign. Identifying the strategies that non-native speakers use to deal with unfamiliar sounds and sound sequences.

- o Students become familiar with the typical ways in which languages differ from English in terms of how sounds are pronounced; students will be given the tools to learn 'exotic' sounds.
- o Dimensions of language differences and similarities with respect to sound systems. Students are exposed to the ways in which the pronunciation of words can differ within and across languages (different sounds, addition/deletion of a sound, stress, tone, different pronunciation rules)
- o Students will become familiar with typical errors in pronunciation made by speakers when learning a foreign language (and learn how to avoid them).