

Spanish, Portuguese, and the Nature of Language

Professor: Victoria Mateu [vɪk'tɔː.ji.ə mə.'tew]

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Office hours (OH): Wednesday 9:30AM - 11:30AM or by appointment*

Lectures: Tuesday and Thursday, 10:00AM – 11:50AM in Kaplan Hall 169

Sections:

Jack Carter

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1A – F 9:00AM-9:50AM (Public Affairs 1329)

1B – F 10:00AM-10:50AM (Public Affairs 1278)

OH – T/Th 1:00PM-2:00PM (Rolfe 4314 or by
appt on Zoom:

<https://ucla.zoom.us/my/jackcarter1868>)

Jenny Choi

choijen@g.ucla.edu

1C – F 11:00AM -11:50AM (Public Affairs 1264)

1D – F 12:00PM-12:50PM (Public Affairs 1264)

OH – W 1:00PM-3:00PM (Rolfe 4318 or Zoom:

<https://ucla.zoom.us/my/choijen>)

*We politely ask that you try your best to attend one of the available, non-overlapping office hours that we offer. If you cannot attend any of our times due to conflicting schedules, please, email one of us and request a time (with as much advance notice as possible). We will do our best to accommodate you, and be more than happy to help you!

Course Description:

Introduction to what is known about the Human Language with an emphasis on Spanish and Portuguese data. We will explore the nature of Language –what it means to know a language, how it differs from other animal systems of communication, and common misconceptions about Language and the field of Linguistics. We will critically examine the different features of language structure –phonology, morphology, and syntax; as well as various psycholinguistic aspects of language, including first and second language acquisition, bilingualism, language loss, language and the brain, and how language interacts with other cognitive domains.

Course Objectives:

The main objective of the course is to help students develop analytical and critical thinking skills and to understand arguments based on linguistic evidence. We will discuss findings about language structure, and how they bear on issues related to language acquisition, language representation, and the biological basis for language.

Course Materials: Lecture slides, assignments, and any extra materials will be posted on the course website: <https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/173177>

Additionally, we will make use of the following books (see note below on **Inclusive Access**):

- Required book:
An Introduction to Language (11th edition) by Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams
- Optional (but highly recommended) book:
The Language Instinct (any edition) by Steven Pinker

Course Requirements:

All students are expected to do the assigned readings, attend and participate in lecture and section, and return the assigned work by the due dates and times.

- **Exams:** There are 2 timed, open-book, *non-cumulative* exams that cover material from lectures and readings. You will be given a window of 18h to complete each exam, but 2h from the moment you start until you finish it (unless your CAE letter indicates otherwise).
Exam dates: #1: Friday, November 3 (week 5)
#2: Tuesday, December 12 (Finals Week)
- **Assignments:**
 - (i) There are 6 assignments, each is worth between 5-10% of your final grade.
 - (ii) Assignments must be completed through Gradescope.
 - Your Gradescope login is your university email, and your password can be changed: https://www.gradescope.com/reset_password
 - Class code: G2YW8X
 - You may revise and resubmit your assignments (and exams) as many times as you like until the deadline.
 - (iii) Late assignments will not be accepted except for legitimate reasons (e.g., sickness, injury, loss of relative), in which case an extension may be given if asked *in advance*. Evidence of your excuse may be requested.
 - (iv) If a question requires technical notation (e.g., syntactic tree analyses), that portion may be hand-written, photographed, and uploaded as a file. Alternatively, you may use the software [TreeForm](#) and upload the image under the corresponding question.
 - (v) While I encourage you to discuss class material with one another, you must do your homework *on your own*. This will help you gauge how well you understand the lectures and readings, and also prepare you for the exams. If we suspect you have copied an assignment from anywhere, you will receive a zero for that assignment and you may be reported to the Dean of Student Affairs.
- **Participation:** Attendance *and* participation in lecture *and* section constitute 5% of your final grade. If there is a reasonable excuse for missing lecture, please, let us know *before* lecture/section.
 - **Note on laptops and other electronic devices:** You may bring a laptop/tablet to class, but please **do not** engage in non-class related activities during lectures. It is distracting to the students sitting next to you or behind you (and we can tell!).
- **Extra credit:** You may earn up to 2% of extra credit by participating in Linguistic experiments (if you qualify) or by completing the alternative assignments available here: <https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/148954>
 - To access the course, first self-enroll here: <https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/enroll/B8NMLW>
 - Each 60min-long experiment / alternative assignment = +1%
- **Languages:** Knowledge of Spanish and/or Portuguese is not required, but illustrative examples will tend to be drawn from these languages.

- **Grades:** Your assignment and exam numerical scores will be available on Gradescope. Your (curved) letter grades will be posted directly on Gradebook (my.ucla.edu).

Final grade breakdown:

- Exam 1 25%
- Exam 2 25%
- Homework 45%
- Participation 5%

COVID-19 Policies

Campus policies may be modified. For current information visit: covid-19.ucla.edu.

For recommendations and requirements – including information vaccines and boosters, isolation and quarantine, and entry to campus events – please see: [COVID protocols at a glance](#).

If you are **experiencing symptoms** of COVID-19 or have been **in contact** with someone confirmed to have been infected, immediately **call the Ashe Center's COVID-19 Hotline** at 310-206-6217. I will do my best to support students who are complying with the requirement to stay home due to COVID-19 symptoms and/or a positive COVID-19 test. **Contact me *in advance*** if you need to stay home, and we will make alternative arrangements for you.

Inclusive Access

This course is part of the UCLA Inclusive Access program. Your course materials are being automatically provided to you, digitally, through Bruin Learn by the first day of class or upon enrollment. The materials are being provided at a reduced and competitive price. You will receive e-mail from the UCLA Store (UCLA Store <no-reply>@verbasoftware.com) with program details and cost sent directly to your email address on file with the Registrar. Please, read all communication coming from the bookstore. Check your spam folder if not received.

Everyone enrolled in this course is automatically a participant to start and will have access to the materials through 2nd week of class. Those remaining in the program after 2nd week will be billed for the materials directly to their BruinBill account and will continue to have access to the course materials. **If you do not wish to participate in Inclusive Access, you must opt-out by the Friday of 2nd week deadline or you will be billed.** Those who opt-out will lose access to the digital materials and will be responsible for obtaining the materials on their own.

Do not purchase these books unless you are opting out of Inclusive Access. All Inclusive Access course materials will be billed to your BruinBill account.

Any questions regarding the Inclusive Access program can be directed to inclusiveaccess@asucla.ucla.edu

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the [Center for Accessible Education](#) (CAE) at (310) 825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255 within the first two weeks of the quarter, as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations.

Copyright of Course Materials:

My lectures and course materials, including videos, lecture materials, assignments, exams, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials I create.

You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own use. You may not and may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly whether or not a fee is charged without my express written consent.

Persons who publicly distribute or display, or help others publicly distribute or display copies or modified copies of an instructor's Course Materials may be considered in violation of the [UCLA Student Conduct Code](#), Part 102.23, and will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Class syllabus:

NB: Dates and coverage are subject to change. | *Mandatory readings

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments
0	Th 9/28 F 9/29	No lecture No section	
1	T 10/3 Th 10/5 F 10/6	Course Introduction What is the Nature of Language? Readings: *Intro - Ch. 1; Pinker - Ch. 1, 3, & 11 Cont'd Section	
2	T 10/10 Th 10/12 F 10/13	Morphology: Morphemes and word formation rules Readings: *Intro - Ch. 2; Pinker - Ch. 5 Cont'd Section (not in person, conference conflict, coverage mode TBD)	HW1 - Nature of Language (5%), due <u>F</u> 10/13 by 9am
3	T 10/17 Th 10/19 F 10/20	Syntax: Constituency, Phrase Structure, Movement Readings: *Intro - Ch. 3; Pinker - Ch. 4 & 7 Cont'd Section	HW2 - Morphology (5%), due <u>F</u> 10/20 by 9am
4	T 10/24 Th 10/26 F 10/27	Cont'd Cont'd Section	
5	T 10/31 Th 11/2 F 11/3	Semantics & Pragmatics Readings: *Intro - Ch. 4 REVIEW for Exam 1 (pre-recorded video) Exam 1 (online, open-book, timed); No section	HW3 - Syntax (10%) due <u>T</u> 10/31 by 9am
6	T 11/7 Th 11/9 F 11/10	Phonetics Readings: *Intro - Ch. 5; Pinker - Ch. 6 Cont'd No section - Veteran's Day	
7	T 11/14 Th 11/16 F 11/17	Phonology Readings: *Intro - Ch. 6 Cont'd Section	HW4 - Phonetics (5%) due <u>F</u> 11/17 by 9am

8	T 11/21	Language acquisition: Theories of language acquisition and stages in L1 acquisition <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 9; Pinker - Ch. 2 & 9</i> <i>Viewing: The Human Language II</i> http://thehumanlanguage.com/films/two/	HW 5 – Phonology (10%) due <u>T</u> 11/28 by 9am
	Th 11/23	No lecture – Thanksgiving Day	
	F 11/24	No section – Native American Heritage Day	
9	T 11/28	Cont'd	
	Th 11/30	L2 acquisition, Bilingualism, Heritage Languages <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 7 (Section: Bilingualism), Ch. 9 (Section: Knowing more than one language)</i>	
	F 12/1	Section	
10	T 12/5	Biological Bases of Language: The Critical Period, Pidgins and Creoles, Language Disorders and the Brain <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 7 (Section: Contact Languages, Creoles and Creolization); *Intro - Ch. 10; Pinker - Ch. 10</i>	HW 6 – Language Acquisition (10%) due <u>Th</u> 12/7 by 9am
	Th 12/7	Cont'd	
	F 12/8	Section REVIEW for Exam 2 (pre-recorded video)	
Finals	T 12/12	Exam 2 (online, open-book, timed)	

Course Outcomes:

After successfully completing this course you should have acquired mastery of the following concepts and skills:

- 1) Explain the concept of Language as a system of knowledge present in the mind of the individual speakers.
- 2) Describe the difference between the knowledge that the speaker has of his language (competence) and the use that he makes of this knowledge in daily life (performance).
- 3) Distinguish between Human Language and communication systems of other species.
- 4) Ability to segment different morphemes and identify word-formation processes.
- 5) Ability to construct syntactic representations for Spanish/Portuguese/English declarative sentences.
- 6) Understand the difference between the more abstract underlying representation of a sentence (D-structure) and the closer-to-surface representation of a sentence (S-structure).
- 7) Ability to derive at least two movements (head movement, and phrasal movement) to derive the S-structure of Spanish/Portuguese/English sentences from their corresponding D-structures.
- 8) Be able to transcribe in IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet).
- 9) Describe vowels and consonants in terms of articulatory phonetics.
- 10) Distinguish between basic sounds (phonemes) and derived sounds (allophones) by applying tests (Minimal Pair and Complementary Distribution).
- 11) Construct phonological derivations in which underlying phonemic representations are mapped onto phonetic representations by application of ordered phonological rules.

- 12) Be familiar with different hypotheses of language acquisition (e.g., nativist vs. cognitivist).
- 13) Describe at least three important stages of language acquisition.
- 14) Describe the concept of the Critical Period for language acquisition and be familiar with case studies that provide evidence for it.
- 15) Ability to describe the evidence for the idea that language represents a module in the brain.
- 16) Describe areas of the brain specialized for language, and types of aphasia resulting from damage to these areas.