

## Spanish, Portuguese, and the Nature of Language

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**Office hours (OH):** Tuesday 12:30PM - 2:30PM or by appointment

### 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.

### Lecture:

Lectures are held on **Monday** and **Wednesday**, **10:00AM – 11:50AM** in **Haines Hall A18**.

### Section:

**Isabel Benvenuti**

[isabelben@g.ucla.edu](mailto:isabelben@g.ucla.edu)

1C – Th 9:00am-9:50am (BOELTER 5273)

1D – Th 10:00am-10:50am (MS 5117)

OH – W 9-10am | 12-1pm (Rolfe 4314 or Zoom:

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

**Erin Mauffray**

[emauffray@g.ucla.edu](mailto:emauffray@g.ucla.edu)

1A – F 9:00am-9:50am (GEOLOGY 3656)

1B – F 10:00am-10:50am (WGYOUNG 4216)

OH: W 2:00-4:00pm (Rolfe 4316 or Zoom:

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

**Course Materials:** Lecture slides, assignments, and any extra materials will be posted on the course website:

<https://ccl.e.ucla.edu/course/view/21F-PORTGSEM35-1>

- 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 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 24h 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, October 29 (week 5)  
#2: Wednesday, December 8 (Finals Week)
- **Homeworks:**
  - (i) Each assignment will be worth between 5-10% of your final grade.
  - (ii) Assignments must be completed through Gradescope (CCLE).
    - Your Gradescope login is your university email, and your password can be changed: [https://www.gradescope.com/reset\\_password](https://www.gradescope.com/reset_password)
    - Class code: 6PN4EW
  - (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 in the corresponding questions.
  - (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 I 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 (more below on COVID-19 instructions).
- **Extra credit:** You may earn up to 3% of extra credit by participating in Linguistic experiments (if you qualify) or by completing the alternative assignments available here: <https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/spanport-linguistics?section=1>
  - Each 30min-long experiment/ alternative assignment = +1%
  - Each 60min-long experiment = +2%
- **Spanish and/or Portuguese:** Knowledge of Spanish and/or Portuguese is not required, but illustrative examples will tend to be drawn from these languages.
- **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!).

### 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](https://covid-19.ucla.edu).

At present, each of us:

- Must wear an [approved mask](#) that fully covers our nose and mouth for the duration of class, office hours, or other course-related activity, regardless of vaccination status.
  - Disposable masks are freely available at the Wooden Center.
  - Appropriate masks include *two-ply* woven fabric masks, surgical masks, non-woven KN95 masks, and N95 respirators.
  - For those that have a disability-related reason not to wear a mask, you can contact the [Center for Accessible Education](#) (CAE) to obtain an approved accommodation and any appropriate alternative mitigation measures to be sent to instructors.
- Must be fully vaccinated or have submitted an exception request. Unvaccinated students with pending or approved exceptions must comply with [twice-weekly testing](#).
- Is required to complete [daily symptom checks prior to coming to campus](#), regardless of vaccination status, and must stay home if you are not cleared by the symptom survey and/or are advised by the Exposure Management Team to quarantine or isolate.
- Will refrain from eating in the classroom, except for those with approved accommodations. If you need to drink, please do so quickly and then put on your mask. If you need to eat something *for medical reasons*, please do so quickly and then put on your mask.

I will do my best to support students who are complying with the requirement to stay home. Contact me *in advance* if you need to stay home, and we will make alternative arrangements for you.

Be advised that refusal to comply with current campus directives related to COVID-19 mitigation may result in dismissal from the classroom and referral to the Office of Student Conduct. If you have any questions or concerns about UCLA's COVID-19 protocol, go to <https://covid-19.ucla.edu/information-for-students/>; Thank you for your cooperation!

### Students with Special Needs

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 term, 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
1	M 9/27 W 9/29	<b>Course Introduction</b> <b>What is the Nature of Language?</b> <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 1; Pinker - Ch. 1, 3, &amp; 11</i> <b>Cont'd</b>	
2	M 10/4 W 10/6	<b>Morphology: Morphemes and word formation rules</b> <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 2; Pinker - Ch. 5</i> <b>Cont'd</b>	HW1 - Nature of Language (5%), due Th 10/7 by 9am.
3	M 10/11 W 10/13	<b>Syntax: Constituency, Phrase Structure, Movement</b> <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 3; Pinker - Ch. 4 &amp; 7</i> <b>Cont'd</b>	HW2 - Morphology (5%), due Th 10/14 by 9am.
4	M 10/18 W 10/20	<b>Cont'd</b> <b>Semantics</b> <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 4 (Sections: Compositional Semantics, Lexical Semantics)</i>	HW3 - Syntax and Semantics (10%) due F 10/22 by 5pm
5	M 10/25 W 10/27 F 10/29	<b>Pragmatics</b> <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 4 (Section: Pragmatics)</i> <b>REVIEW for Exam 1</b> <b>Exam 1 (online, open-book, timed)</b>	
6	M 11/1 W 11/3	<b>Phonetics</b> <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 5; Pinker - Ch. 6</i> <b>Cont'd</b>	
7	M 11/8 W 11/10	<b>Phonology</b> <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 6</i> <b>Cont'd</b>	HW4 - Phonetics (5%) due Th 11/11 by 9am.
8	M 11/15 W 11/17	<b>Language acquisition: Theories of language acquisition and stages in L1 acquisition</b> <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 9; Pinker - Ch. 2 &amp; 9</i> <i>Viewing: The Human Language I</i> <b>Cont'd</b>	HW 5 - Phonology (10%) due F 11/19 by 10pm.
9	M 11/22 W 11/24	<b>L2 acquisition, Bilingualism, Heritage Languages</b> <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 7 (Section: Bilingualism), Ch. 9 (Section: Knowing more than one language)</i> <b>EARLY THANKSGIVING</b>	
10	M 11/29 W 12/1	<b>Biological Bases of Language: The Critical Period, Pidgins and Creoles, Language Disorders and the Brain</b> <i>Readings: *Intro - Ch. 7 (Section: Contact Languages, Creoles and Creolization); *Intro - Ch. 10; Pinker - Ch. 10</i> <b>Cont'd</b>	HW 6 - Language Acquisition (10%) due Th 12/2 by 9am.
Finals	TBD W 12/8	<b>REVIEW for Exam 2</b> <b>Exam 2 (online, open-book, timed)</b>	

## 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 apply (recursive) Phrase Structure Rules to construct different syntactic representations for Spanish/Portuguese/English 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 apply at least three transformational rules (V-to-T, T-to-C, and wh-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.