ENG 219 Introduction to Linguistic Science

ENG 219-1 Fall 2026

Instructor: Dr. Mary Lou Vercellotti

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Student Hours: RB 378 Mon 4:30 - 5:30pm & by appt

This hour is set aside for YOU, to chat about course concepts, assignments, linguistics, etc.

Ball State University

Class Meetings: MWF 11:00-11:50 am

Location: RB 109

Teaching assistant: Micah Gaston

Study sessions: BL 201 Wed 12:30-1:30 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What are the possible structures of words and phrases in the world's languages? What processes are used to create new words? How do we articulate speech sounds? What patterns exist in the sound systems of the world's languages? How do word meanings combine to produce the meanings of larger phrases? This course introduces the basic terms, concepts, and methodology of linguistic science. We will analyze and describe aspects of language in objective, precise terms to gain an understanding of how human language works and how complex and diverse it is.

COURSE RATIONALE

This course provides background information about how language operates as a system and provides fundamental background for all other courses in linguistics, applied linguistics, and language teaching.

Learning Objectives Students will be able to:

1. Identify and categorize language parts in English and other languages at various linguistic levels (e.g., sound, word, sentence, discourse), subsystems of organized, interrelated system.
2. Describe and analyze data and patterns at various linguistic levels (e.g., phonemes, morphemes, grammatical constructions, discourse patterns).
3. Interpret and evaluate linguistic analysis using linguistic reasoning and course content knowledge.
4. Explain linguistic patterns and linguistic phenomena.
5. Identify and interpret differences across speech communities (languages and cultures) in the social conventions of language use, including politeness and cross-cultural communications.
6. Identify and explain applications of linguistics to your education/career goal.
7. Successfully use technologies which support clear communication of linguistic concepts

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOME	NACE Workplace Competencies
Identify and categorize language parts	Critical Thinking
Describe and analyze data and patterns	Communication, Critical Thinking
Interpret and evaluate linguistic analysis	Critical Thinking, Teamwork
Explain linguistic patterns and linguistic phenomena	Communication, Technology, Professionalism
Identify and interpret differences across speech communities	Critical Thinking, Equity & Inclusion
Identify and describe applications of linguistics	Communication, Career & Self Development
Use technologies which support clear communication	Communication, Technology

REQUIRED TEXT

We will use Open Educational Resources (OER) readings and videos. Most will be available via **Reading Lists**, which can be accessed in Canvas (along the left navigation panel) and inside the **Canvas** module. Additional (optional) readings are available to check out from Course Reserves in Bracken Library.

Questions?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Active participation and intellectual engagement in course concepts are vital to success. Attendance will be taken, but there are no points for attendance.

Course members can demonstrate what they know through a variety of assessments.

Quizzes We will prepare by completing short readings/videos that introduce the topic **BEFORE** class. There is a low-stakes, open-book Canvas quiz covering the assigned reading EVERY DAY. The lowest 3 quizzes will be dropped. *Learning tip: Active engagement with course materials leads to more robust learning.*

Assignments Course members will complete assignments to practice using the relevant skills and knowledge needed to be successful on the exam. These assignments serve mainly as **formative, process-oriented assessments**, assessment *for* learning.

- You will learn by doing the assignment, which means you may feel like you aren't sure of your answers. It takes time to build these skills! *Keep going! You can do it!*
- The assignments take time to complete. Start the assignments before the due date.

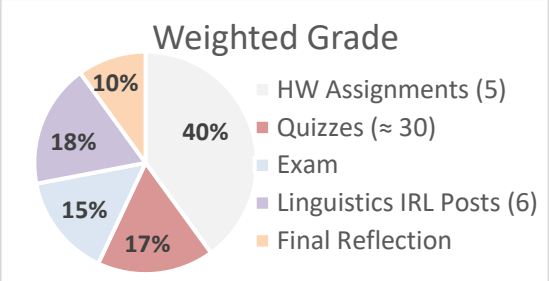
See assignments for details and grading criteria. **HW Assignments** are due by **10 pm** on the (**Satur)day** listed on the schedule. *Learning tip: Reviewing the results and the feedback leads to more robust learning.*

Linguistics IRL We will apply what we are learning and discuss our findings using course terms and concepts. See description for grading criteria. The **Linguistics IRL** posts are due by the **END** of the class meeting time on the due date. *Learning tip: Creating your own examples or concepts boosts learning.*

Exam Course members will demonstrate knowledge of course terms and concepts in a closed-book exam. The exam includes declarative knowledge and application of linguistic methodologies to new data to solve linguistic problems. The quizzes and the assignments are excellent preparation for the exam.
Learning tip: Testing what you know is a more effective strategy than re-reading the material.

Final Reflection Course members connect course knowledge with future educational and career goals.

EVALUATION



Scores within categories will be averaged.

Final letter grades			
92.5-100%	A	72.5-76%	C
89.5-92%	A-	69.5-72%	C-
86.5-89%	B+	66.5-69%	D+
82.5-86%	B	62.5-66%	D
79.5-82%	B-	59.5-62%	D-
76.5-79%	C+	Below 59.5%	E

I strive to lead this course with transparency. Grades and a weighted overall grade will be posted to Canvas. If you think there is an error, please email me as soon as you notice it.

Learning Strategies: 1)Become familiar with our Canvas Course. 2) Take notes when reading/watching, specifically *explain concepts in your own words* and *create your own examples* for concept/term.

Time Commitment In college, it is expected that students spend approximately 2 hours of study time outside of class for every one hour in class. Since this is a 3-credit course, you should expect to average about 6 hours per week. Preparing for our class meetings may only take 30-45 minutes (x 3 days), but some weeks you will need to allocate an additional 2-3 hours to review and complete the assignments.

When will you prepare for class?

LATE WORK

Working through activities and getting feedback are important to your learning, so it is important to submit assignments on time. I may accept late assignments; late assignments will be docked points (but it's better than a zero). If any assignment solution is reviewed, credit cannot be given for that answer submitted after the review because the submitted work would not be solely your own. (See academic Integrity.)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

We cannot participate in, condone, or ignore intellectual fraud. Ball State University's Section VII.B of the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities defines academic dishonesty as using unauthorized aids during exams and other assessments as well as submitting someone else's work as your own. The instructor is required to discuss possible incidents of academic ethics violations. The instructor retains the right to penalize (e.g., give a score of zero) any student who engages in any form of academic dishonesty so that other members of the learning community are not put at a disadvantage.

Course Materials: All course materials (PPT slides, activities, assignments, etc.) are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of copyright for materials that I create. You may not distribute them on the internet. You may not submit any course materials to any AI program for any purpose. Read more about why generative AI is not appropriate to use in this course on the GenAI Policy in Canvas.

Learning is social. I encourage you to talk about linguistic concepts with others. The assignments can also be discussed with course members, but this collaboration must follow the guidelines of academic honesty. If you collaborate, you must acknowledge it. ***Collaboration vs. cheating***. In a collaboration, each member contributes and understands the solution. Fake collaboration is where one person does the work, and someone else copies it; fake collaboration is cheating. If you cannot fully explain the response you submit, the submission does not reflect your work, and points will not be awarded. If overwhelmed; please reach out to me before taking a short cut.

COURSE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. See our Beneficence Pledge and university resources found at http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter.

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State's **Disability Services** office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

We acknowledge and honor the Indigenous communities with ties to this region, particularly the Myaamiaki (Miami) and Lenape (Delaware) peoples. We urge everyone to engage with contemporary communities, to learn the complex histories of this land, to look at who has and does not have access to its resources, and to examine your own obligations within this reparative work, which is key to enacting Ball State's commitment to Inclusive Excellence. We recognize that a land acknowledgment statement is not enough; it must be coupled with action. In this course, we will:

- intentionally study languages and language use of Indigenous communities.
- recognize diversity and avoid judgements and linguistic discrimination
- welcome use of different language varieties (dialects) in this classroom
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Both the reader/listener and the speaker must be committed to the communication process, working to understand one another, seeking clarification when necessary. We are not focused on language "errors." The instructor may need to draw our attention to differences in language use to clarify meaning.

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

Course Communication: Set your Canvas notifications to alert you when a course announcement is made; information about changing Canvas notifications is in the Course Technology module.

Best ways to reach me:

1. Join me during student hours. A quick conversation is an efficient way to clarify concepts.
2. Post to our Canvas course. If you have any challenges with the course material or assigned reading or navigating Canvas, which you cannot resolve on your own, post a question in a Discussion. These questions should be:
    - focused on course concepts (not "*what is the answer to X?*")
    - specific, indicating what the confusion is about (not "*what is X?*).

If you have a question, it is likely someone else has it, too. My teaching philosophy is student-centered. **I encourage everyone to respond to questions** posted to our Canvas course. Peers are often very helpful because they are on the same journey! Subscribe to our course discussions and check them often to create a supportive learning community.

3. Email me. I generally check my email a few times a day during the week, but less frequently on the weekend. I respond to email within 48 hours, unless notified.

For tech issues: contact the HelpDesk www.bsu.edu/helpdesk.

Social Policy: By remaining in this course, you accept the following social contract.

The instructor agrees to:

- Be available and responsive to questions, posts, and emails.
- Act in good faith to help each student learn the material and to get the highest grade possible within the parameters of academic respectability.
- Conduct the course with transparency with an explicit grading policy with current grade posted.
- Treat students with fairness and respect.
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The student agrees to:

- Be an engaged learner by reading the assigned texts and watching video lessons and taking notes.
- Be an active learner by staying focused and engaged during class.
- Be an interactive learner by:
    - asking for clarification when you have trouble understanding a concept or assignment.
    - posting questions and answers to the relevant Discussion so that everyone has the same information.
- Be a socially responsible learner by:
    - taking responsibility for the quality of the discussion.
    - treating others with respect; critique ideas, not people.
    - if offended by a discussion, acknowledging it so that the discourse can be repaired.
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