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### ENG 2901-001: Structure of English

Melissa Caldwell

*Eastern Illinois University*

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# Structure of the English Language

## English 2901, Section 001/Fall 2019/11:00 – 11:50am, CH 3160

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Caldwell  
Email: [mcaldwell@eiu.edu](mailto:mcaldwell@eiu.edu)  
Office: CH 3050  
Office Hours: MF 10-11, 12-1 and by appointment

### Required Textbooks

Van Gelderen, *An Introduction to the Grammar of English*, revised edition (VG)  
Rickerson and Hilton (eds.), *The 5-Minute Linguist*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (SML)

### Course Description

In Structure of the English Language, we will closely examine the English language at the level of syntax—that is, how and why sentences are put together the way they are. In doing so, we will seek to better understand how English is constructed as a language. We will examine the so-called “rules” of grammar, but we will also think about why these rules exist, where they come from, and what it means when we don’t follow these rules in either written or oral expression. This course should be of interest to anyone interested in language, and should be particularly useful if you planning for a career in teaching, writing, or editing.

### Learning Objectives

In this course, you will learn to:

- Employ concepts and technical terms related to grammar and linguistics
- Learn how to recognize various parts of speech, determine their function in a sentence, and represent them in diagramming
- Think about the relationship between the rules of grammar and everyday usage
- Be better able to make language choices in their own speech and writing based on style, form, purpose, and audience and/or to improve your ability to teach oral or written English

### Course Requirements and Grade Distribution and Scale

#### **1. Attendance and participation (15%)**

Attendance is required for the course, and you should plan to attend every class meeting unless you are significantly ill and/or contagious and/or some other emergency comes up. Make-up privileges will be granted only for excused absences as defined by the University. Please read carefully the relevant passage from the Undergraduate Catalog: "Instructors will grant make-up privileges (when make-up is possible) to students for properly verified absences due to illness, emergency, or participation in an official University activity; and such absences will not militate against students in classes in which attendance is used directly in determining final grades. It is the student's responsibility to initiate plans for make-up work and to complete it promptly." If you have a planned unexcused absence (like those for weddings, out-of-town doctor appointments, court dates, etc.) on the date of a test, please contact me in order to take the test in advance.

You are allowed a total of 3 unexcused absences before your grade will be affected. After your third unexcused absence, your participation grade will go down by 1 point per each additional absence. I also reserve the right to withhold extra credit opportunities from students who have over 4 absences.

Your participation grade will be based not just on class attendance. To receive credit for participating, you actually have to participate in the course. This means taking part in the daily activities and discussions of the course, asking questions when you have them, putting away all electronics and other distractions during class, and otherwise being actively present in the classroom during class time.

## **2. Homework (10%)**

There will be regularly assigned homework each week. Homework assignments will be posted in D2L and will be timed and turned in via D2L Dropbox.

## **3. Practice quizzes (5%)**

You will be given the opportunity to test your mastery of course material through weekly practice quizzes. These quizzes will be given via D2L.

## **4. Exams (40%)**

There will be three exams in this class during the course of the semester in addition to a cumulative final exam. You will be given a practice exam via D2L and there will be an exam review day for each exam.

## **5. Group Presentation (10%)**

In groups, you will research a language “myth” or controversy. You will turn in a group report on your findings and present what you have learned to the class.

## **6. Final Project and Presentation (20%)**

You will choose a topic related to language that is of interest to you and/or is relevant to your future career plans to investigate. More information on this project will become available later in the semester.

### **Grading Scale**

A	90-100
B	80-89.9
C	70-79.9
D	60-69.9
F	Below 60

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

Plagiarism unequivocally will not be tolerated in this course. Plagiarism is defined as "The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language). The English Department's policy on plagiarism states that any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Office of Student Standards. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

## **Student Resources**

### Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581 -6583) as soon as possible.

### The Student Success Center and The Writing Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (<http://www.eiu.edu/-success>) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

The Writing Center: Students who would like assistance with writing assignments from this or any other course may go to the Writing Center. The Writing Center works with students from all disciplines, majors, and academic backgrounds at any stage of the writing process. To make an appointment, call (217) 581-5929, or go to Coleman Hall, Room 3110.

### English Teacher Education Majors

Students seeking Teacher Certification in English Language Arts should provide each of their English Department professors with a copy of the yellow form called "Application for English Department Approval to Student Teach" before the end of the semester. These forms are available in a rack outside the office of Dr. Melissa Ames (3821 Coleman Hall).

**Tentative Course Schedule\***

This is a general overview of the progress of the course. It is more important to me that you understand the concepts being taught than that we adhere to a schedule. Hence, I may—and likely will—make changes to the pace of the course, homework assignments, etc. throughout the semester as needed. These changes will be conveyed in class and/or via D2L.

Dates	Concepts	Reading	Homework
M 8/19	Course Introduction: Why study the structure of English?; Grammar vs. Linguistics; descriptive vs. prescriptive grammar	VG, ch. 1	HW as posted on D2L (introductions via Discussion Forum and email to me)
W 8/21	Lexical Categories: Nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs (VG 2.1.1-2.1.2)	VG, ch. 2	
F 8/23	Characteristics of Words: Morphology	Morphology reading on D2L (Kolln and Funk)	HW 1
M 8/26	Lexical Categories: Prepositions (VG 2.1.3)	5ML, ch. 1	HW 2
W 8/28	Grammatical Categories: Determiners, auxiliaries (VG 2.2.1)		HW 3 Practice quiz 1
F 8/30	Grammatical Categories: Coordinators, complementizers (VG 2.2.3)		Practice quiz 2
M 9/2	Labor Day—No Class		
W 9/4	Noun phrases and adjective phrases (VG 3.1 - 3.2.1)	VG, ch. 3	HW 4
F 9/6	Verb phrases and adverb phrases (VG 3.2.1 - 3.2.2)		Practice quiz 3
M 9/9	Prepositional phrases (VG 3.3). HW 5: Self-assessment (to be done in class).		
W 9/11	In class work on trees; coordination and apposition (VG 3.4)		Homework 6: diagram trees given in class.
F 9/13	In class work on trees		Take practice exam on D2L by Sunday at noon
M 9/16	Review for exam 1		
W 9/18	No class today—one-on-one appointments		

F 9/20	<b>Exam 1</b>		Read and write a response to at least 2 of the chapters in the 5ML listed on the Group Presentation assignment. Post your responses to the D2L discussion forum by 5pm on Sunday, 9/22.
M 9/23	Discussion of articles in 5ML. Begin group project work.		
W 9/25	Group project work: Library day		
F 9/27	Group project work		
M 9/30	Group project presentations in class		
W 10/2	Functions: Subject and predicate (VG 4.1); complements (direct object, indirect object, predicate complement, subject complement) (VG 4.2)	VG, ch. 4	HW 7
F 10/4	Complements continued (VG 4.2-4.4)		
M 10/7	Functions: Adverbials, prepositional and phrasal verbs (VG 5.1-5.3)	VG, ch. 5	HW 8 (Functions worksheet given in class) Practice quiz 4
W 10/9	The verb group	VG, ch. 6	HW 9 Practice quiz 5
F 10/11	The verb group		Take practice exam
M 10/14	Review for exam 2		Practice quiz 6
W 10/16	<b>Exam 2</b>		
F 10/18	Finite clauses	VG, ch. 7	

M 10/21	Finite clauses		HW 10
W 10/23	Non-finite clauses	VG, ch. 8	
F 10/25	Non-finite clauses		Practice quiz 7
M 10/28	Structure of the PP, AdjP, AdvP, and the NP	VG, ch. 9	Practice quiz 8
W 10/30	Clauses as Parts of NPs and AdjPs	VG, ch. 10	Submit 150-word abstract for final project to Dr. Caldwell by midnight via D2L Dropbox
F 11/1	Special Sentences	VG, ch. 11	Take practice exam
M 11/4	Exam Review		
W 11/6	Mandatory conferences about final project		
F 11/8	<b>Exam 3</b>		
M 11/11	Special Topics in Language, TBA	Reading TBD	
W 11/13	Special Topics in Language, TBA	TBD	
F 11/15	Preparation for Final Project Presentations		
M 11/18	Final Project Presentations		Final Project due
W 11/20	Final Project Presentations		
F 11/22	Final Project Presentations		
Thanksgiving Holiday November 25 – November 29			
M 12/2	Final Project Presentations		
W 12/4	Final Project Presentations		
F 12/6	Final Exam Review and Course Evaluations		

**Final Exam: Wednesday, December 11th, 10:15am-12:15pm**