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ENG 2901-001: The Structure of English

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Eastern Illinois University

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ENGLISH 2901--The Structure of English

Dr. Buck, Associate Professor

Office: Coleman Hall 339E (New # is 3040)

Telephone: Office: 581-5012 (Please leave voice mail if I'm not there)

Mailbox: English Dept Office, Room 308 Coleman

Office Hours: 9:00-9:30 MWF and by appointment

Required textbook: *Understanding English Grammar* by Martha Kolln, 1994, 5th edition
(at TRS).

Please always bring your textbook and worksheets to class.

Course Objective

In this course, we will describe and examine the grammatical system that allows speakers of English to generate well-formed sentences in Standard American English. We will discuss the different approaches used to study the grammar of speech and the grammar of writing. In our discussion, we will integrate the effect of language attitudes on understanding grammatical systems.

Course Evaluation

Grade for the course will be based on an average of 5 equally-weighted exams (see the attached sheet for approximate scheduling).. In addition, daily home assignments will be required. You will need to complete these home assignments by each class meeting, as we will be discussing them in class. All exams will be based on these home assignments. The home assignments are an integral part of this course. A student's final grade for the course will be lowered if the student comes to class four times unprepared with home assignments.

Please always feel free to meet with me during office hours (and by appointment) or call me if you would like more individualized discussion of your work and progress.

Tardiness

Please be on time for class; habitual tardiness is disruptive and disrespectful of other class members. I will be taking roll each morning as soon as class begins. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to notify me after class so that I take your name off the absence sheet. If you fail to notify me, you will be recorded as absent.

Active Attendance

You are expected to attend every class as scheduled because teaching/learning requires dialogue and without you we can have no dialogue. Our class work on the analysis of linguistic utterances is a crucial part of this course; occasionally, too, you will be doing some

group problem-solving in class. Come to class ready to articulate your knowledge and formulate your questions for the class. Challenge yourself by attempting to answer the questions of the other students.

Please note that more than five unexcused absences in this course is grounds for failing this course.

Definition, according to university policy, of an excused absence:

1. University obligation, in which case you will need to present me in advance with a letter explaining the purpose and date of your upcoming absence.
2. Emergency or medical illness, in which case you will need to notify me by leaving a message on my voice mail at 581-5012 before class begins on the day of your absence.

Only students with an excused absence on the day of any scheduled exam may take an alternative exam, of different format, within the week of the scheduled exam.

I will expect you to find out from someone in the class what you've missed so that you'll be prepared for the next class meeting. Worksheets will only be distributed once; it is your responsibility to photocopy assignments from another student if you are absent.

An absence policy is important so that I can be equitable to all members of the class and so that you will be successful in this class. I'm looking forward to working with you on our study of English syntax.

Information for Students with Disabilities

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

Grading Scale

Grading Scale in this course is always 100-90% = A; 89-80% = B; 79-70% = C; 69-60% = D; below 60% = F.

Course readings attached: Please note that the schedule should be used as a guideline, but we are very likely to make changes as we go along depending on the needs of the class.

Course Readings for English 2901

Week One: Introduction to the class. Discussion: What is grammar? What is language?

Kolln, pp. 1-15.

Week Two: How do we represent the internal structure of words and what does that representation tell us about the way words mean?

"Words and Word Classes," Kolln, pp. 255-257

"Morphemes," Kolln, pp. 258-269

Week Three: What does the notion of word class contribute to our understanding of the form, function, and meaning of words?

"The Form Classes," Kolln, pp. 270-296

Jan 21 Holiday

EXAM #1

Weeks Four, Five, and Six: Why are structure class words differentiated from form class words?

"The Structure Classes," Kolln, pp. 297-323

"Expanding the Main Verb," Kolln, pp. 55-72

"Pronouns," Kolln, pp. 324-340

Feb 8 Holiday

EXAM #2

Weeks Seven and Eight: What does the grammar of basic sentences reveal about the creativity and constraints of language? What grammatical subtleties suggest that the verb phrase is the powerhorse of the English sentence?

"The Grammar of Basic Sentences," Kolln, pp. 17-18

"Sentence Patterns," Kolln, pp. 19-54

Week Nine: How does the notion of transformations explain the feature of economy in our internal grammar?

"Transforming the Basic Patterns," Kolln, pp. 112-131

EXAM #3

Week Ten: Spring Break

Weeks Eleven and Twelve: What behavioral characteristics of adverbials make them troublesome to account for adequately?

"Modifiers of the Verb: Adverbials," Kolln, pp. 136-162

Weeks Thirteen and Fourteen: What variety of grammatical functions are performed by the English noun phrase?

"The Noun Phrase Functions: Nominals," Kolln, pp. 87-111

EXAM #4

Weeks Fifteen and Sixteen: How can knowledge of the different functions of adjectival phrases help us in our writing of more powerful sentences?

"Modifiers of the Noun: Adjectivals," Kolln, pp. 163-210

EXAM #5 (final exam to be given during finals week)