ENG 2901-002-004: The Structures of English

Buck
Eastern Illinois University

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ENGLISH 2901--The Structure of English

Dr. Buck, Professor
Office: Coleman Hall 3040
Telephone: Office: 581-5012 (Please leave voice mail if I'm not there)
Mailbox: English Dept Office, Room 3155 Coleman
Office Hours: 8:00-8:30 and 10:00-10:30 MWF and by appointment
Please always bring your textbook and worksheets to class.

My office is on a busy hallway. If my office door is closed, please knock. My students always come first--if there is another faculty member in my office, please interrupt us.

Course Objective
This course offers a description and analysis of the Standard American English grammatical system. We will describe the difference between the grammar of speech and the grammar of writing from a cognitive perspective, so the class will focus on how the study of grammar reveals much about the workings of the human mind. In our discussion, we will integrate the effect of language attitudes on our understanding of grammatical systems. The main purpose of the course is to provide you with analytical tools that will allow you to think critically and independently about language and linguistic structures, and to help dispel myths about language and the study of grammar. Course readings are attached. Please note that we will go faster or slower depending on the needs of the class.

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 must 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. Periodically, I will collect homework assignments (unannounced) 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
You are expected to 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 on the day you are late, you will be recorded as absent. Please do not ask me for a letter of recommendation if you are habitually tardy or
absent from class or are unprepared with home assignments.

**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 forms and structures 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 and volunteering at least one response at every class meeting.

Please note that more than four unexcused absences in this course will result in failure of the course. Any student who misses three excused or unexcused absences must make an appointment with me to discuss whether withdrawal from the course is advised.

**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 (not email) 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. If you require extra time on timed in-class exams, you must present a documented letter from the Disability Office.

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

**What to do in Case of Emergency**
If we have an emergency in class, go promptly to inform Jean Toothman, Department Secretary (Room 3135) and Dana Ringuette, Chair (Room 3341). If they are unavailable, use phone in the English Department office (Room 3135) to dial 911.
Course Readings for English 2901

**Week One:** Introduction to the class. What is grammar? What is language? Kolln, pp. 3-14.

**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. 239-241
"Morphemes," Kolln, pp. 242-253

**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. 254-279

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**EXAM #1**

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

"The Structure Classes," Kolln, pp. 280-304
"Expanding the Main Verb," Kolln, pp. 60-69; 73-75
"Pronouns," Kolln, pp. 305-322
"Coordination," Kolln, pp. 223-237

**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 powerhouse of the English sentence?

"The Grammar of Basic Sentences," Kolln, pp. 15-16
"Sentence Patterns," Kolln, pp. 17-59

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

"Transforming the Basic Patterns," Kolln, pp. 92-110 and 75-86

**EXAM #3**

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


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


**EXAM #4**

**Week Fourteen:** Thanksgiving Break

**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. 136-175

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