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ENG 3901-001: Language and Linguistics

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ENGLISH 3901--Language and Linguistics

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: 10:00-10:50 MWF and by appointment

Required textbooks at TRS: Language: Its Structure and Use by Edward Finegan (6th edition) and Discovering English Grammar by Richard Veit (2nd edition) and items on Reserve in Booth Library. If you cannot spend extended time in our university library, you should not take this course.

My job is not to replace your textbooks; it is, rather, to help guide you through your textbooks. I will expect you to read all the assigned readings for the course by the designated days.

Please note that you may not use Internet sources or other sources to do homework assignments or to study for exams. All terms, terminology, and theoretical concepts must come from your textbooks or the handouts I give you or from the books on reserve.

Course Objective
English 3901 is a course in grammar and language theory. It offers a brief survey and introduction to the field of linguistics: the structural, social, and psychological aspects of language. We will be studying grammar from a cognitive perspective, so our aim of the course will be to examine how the study of grammar reveals much about the workings of the human mind. The purpose of the course is to provide you with the research and 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 Evaluation
Grade for the course will be based on a midterm exam, a final exam, a research-paper and presentation project, and homework assignments (including oral work). Daily home assignments will be required (language problem exercises). You will need to complete these home exercises before each class meeting, as we will be discussing them in class. All exams will be based on these home assignments. The home assignments and study sheets are an integral part of this course. Periodically, I will collect home assignments (unannounced) and grade them. An unexcused absence will count as a zero for that day.

Midterm Exam 30%
Final Exam 30%
Paper Project 20% (includes all components)
Homework and oral work 20%

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

In order to pass this course, you must complete all the work required.

Active Attendance
The university states in its attendance policy that you are expected to attend every class as scheduled because teaching/learning requires dialogue and when you are not there you do not engage in scholarship with others and you miss out on the logic presented in class (learning that cannot be adequately made up outside of class). University policy also states that you are expected to participate actively in the learning process: this expectation means that it is your responsibility to read assignments, take careful notes on the
reading, do homework exercises as assigned and provide those answers in class, volunteer responses in class, and ask questions about the material. Students who come to class do a lot of work, both oral and written, and so those who choose not to engage in that process merit taking the consequences.

There are consequences to not being in class.

1. 3 or 4 absences in the course results in lowering of the final grade by one letter grade. With three absences, the final grade will be lowered by one-third. That means that if the final grade is a B on exams and papers, it will be lowered to a B-; if the final grade is a B-, it will be lowered to a C+. With four absences, the final grade will be lowered by one letter grade. If your average is a C in the course on exams and papers, your final grade in the course will be a D.

2. More than four absences in this course will result in failure of the course, regardless of grades received on papers or exams.

3. Because the university considers class time essential to a student’s learning, students who have excessive absences (more than 4, excused or unexcused) will be advised to withdraw from the class in order to facilitate their success when they take the class over again at a later date.

4. 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. Papers and other assignments are due on the designated dates in person in print version. No late work will be accepted unless for excused reasons. No electronic versions will be accepted. Failure to complete all work required will result in failure of the class.

5. I will always 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.

6. Please do not tell me your reasons for not coming to class unless they are excusable according to university policy and please do not ask me what documentation you need. I do not grant permissions, in other words, for any absence. It is your responsibility to make your own decisions and to supply the best documentation you can.

7. According to university policy, there are reasons why you may be excused from class. They are listed below. However, they will be excused only if you follow the procedures outlined here in the syllabus.

--For any excused reason, you must notify me by leaving a message on my voice mail at 581-5012 (not email) before class begins on the day of your absence.

--When you return to class at the next class meeting, you must bring me a sheet of paper with the following information: your name, the date of your absence, the reason for your absence, and attached documentation that documents proof of why you weren’t in class. Any absence without appropriate documentation will not be excused.

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

1. University obligation, in which case you will need to present me with a letter at the beginning of the semester explaining the purpose and date of your upcoming absence.

2. Your medical illness or emergency, 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. Routine medical appointments or non-emergency medical appointments should not be scheduled during class time; the health services on campus are here so that you will not have to leave town for medical reasons. In addition,
students experiencing personal problems should seek help immediately through the counseling services provided on campus so that personal problems don't interfere with the responsibility of being in class.

**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; I will not remind you that you were late. 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.

**Electronic Devices**

No electronic devices of any kind, including laptops, may be used at any time during class; they will be counted as a disruption in class and as an unethical use of information during oral work conducted in class. After three occasions, the student will be reported to the Judicial Affairs Office. Anyone with an electronic device not stowed away and out of use during an exam, bags zipped up, will receive an automatic F on the exam--no questions asked, no discussion. Anyone who leaves class to use a phone at any time during the semester may not reenter class--you must wait until class has ended to get your belongings.

**Classroom Behavior**

According to EIU policy established by the Judicial Affairs Office concerning classroom behavior, you are expected to remain seated at all times while class is in session, unless you have an emergency, because leaving and reentering class distracts other students from their learning and concentration. If you must leave class, you may not reenter until the class session is over to obtain your belongings.

**Where to Go For Help with this Course**

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 research assignment, daily work and progress in this course. If you would like additional help with the writing process of your research assignment, go to the Writing Center, CH 301, where graduate students can help you with planning, drafting, revising your papers. Their phone number is 581-5929.

**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.

**Research Paper Project and Readings**

Please see attached a description of the research project. Your research will supplement the course for us in interesting ways, as you will be pursuing your own topic in depth and then teaching the class what you learned. All students in class will be responsible for reading selected assigned readings from the reserve list and should take careful notes on the presentations, as this material will be covered in the final exam Test #3.

You will be asked to read your papers to the class on the designated dates. Students who arrive on their presentation days without a paper fully completed will receive no better than a grade of D on the project.

The total scope of the paper is 12 typed pages (Parts I, II and III combined) (you may always write more). You may use only the books and scholarly published journal articles indicated on the project description handout. Your three sources must be whole chapters from books or articles of substantial
length. In your papers, I expect a well-developed thesis, points organized thoughtfully around your argument, and a proofread, technically sound paper.

Some things to keep in mind when documenting articles you find on the internet. Be sure to always include web addresses and appropriate documentation of the web site in MLA format. You may not abbreviate the titles of journals. You must be critical in your commentary, sorting out unscholarly and elementary sites from scholarly ones. (A web site that does not include documentation about where the information comes from is not a credible source and should not be used.) Page or paragraph numbers are always required. Papers not properly documented in MLA format will receive no better than a grade of D.

Your final paper should be documented according to the current guidelines of The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (you can request a copy that is kept behind the desk in the reference room of the library or go to the Writing Center).

Cheating and Plagiarism
1. No one (not even the Writing Center, nor parents, nor tutors, nor friends) may read, proofread, or edit your writing over the course of the semester; you may read sections of the paper out loud to someone for feedback but you must always keep your paper in your own hands so that you have complete control and responsibility over your own work.
2. The assignments in this class require analytical and critical thinking; I am not interested in the information you find on the internet. I am interested in evaluating you on your own critical thinking on the readings; if you do consult the internet, you must ALWAYS document individually each idea that you read and used.

The English Department requires that instructors quote to all students the university's policy on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the assignment and a grade of N/C for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

Use or reproduction of any material or ideas off the internet without proper documentation is considered plagiarism and will be penalized as above. Respect for the work of others, in other words, encompasses all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.
3. As you are aware, a summary paper requires that you take careful notes on an article you read, put the article aside, look over and study your notes and take inventory of the thesis and argument and how they get developed, and then, in your own words, articulate what you understand the article is saying.
**This schedule should be used as a guideline, but we are likely to make changes as we go along depending on the needs of the class.**

Course Readings for English 3901

UNIT I

Weeks One and Two
Introduction to the course; What is Language?
Language, Chapter 1, "Languages and Linguistics, pp. 1-35 and "Language Families," pp. 418-422 and pp. 433-456
Written assignment: pp. 458-459, #12-5 and 12-6
Jan 20 Holiday

Week Three
First and Second Language Acquisition
Language, Chapter 14, "Acquiring First and Second Languages," pp. 499-530
Oral assignment, p. 527, #14-8 and 14-10

Weeks Four and Five
Phonetics
Language, Chapter 3, "Phonetics" (and phonemes and allophones), pp. 81-110 and 111-119
Exercises to be assigned.
Feb 14 Holiday
PAPER PROJECT PART I DUE: SUMMARY OF ARTICLE

Weeks Six and Seven
Types of Grammars, Language Variation, and Language Attitudes
Language, Chapter 11, "Language Variation among Social Groups: Dialects," pp. 369-416
"Prescriptive Versus Descriptive Rules of Grammar" (handout)
"Social Variation," (handout)
Hudson, "Sociolinguistic Analysis of Dialogues and First-Person Narratives in Fiction," Language, pp. 740-747 (handout)
Written assignment, p. 406, #11-1 and p. 409, #11-9, 11-10, 11-11
PAPER PROJECT PART II DUE: PROPOSAL, RESEARCH QUESTION, AND PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

TEST #1 Midterm Exam

UNIT II

Weeks Eight and Ten
Morphology
Written assignment: pp. 69-70, #A-G; p. 70, #2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4
Oral Assignment, p. 72, #2-12a (chart only); p.74, #2-15

Week Nine: Spring Break

Week Eleven
Syntax
Veit, Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-50, and Chapter 6 Lexical and Structural Ambiguity
Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Prepositions, and Personal Pronouns
Phrase Structure Rules
Types of Verbs

Weeks Twelve and Thirteen
Syntax
Veit, Chapter 5 and Chapter 10, Coordinate and Subordinate Structures
Language, Chapter 5, pp. 151-186, Syntactic Operations

Weeks Fourteen, Fifteen, and Sixteen
Semantics Language, pp. 187-195, Types of Meaning, Analysis at the Level of the Word
Language, Chapter 10, Registers, Styles, Slang
Sara Mills, Language and Gender, handout
AND
PAPER PROJECT PARTS III AND IV DUE (READING OF FINAL PAPER TO THE CLASS)
Readings for the class to be assigned around paper projects.
FINAL PAPER DUE APRIL 28
Prepare for final exam

TEST #2 Final Exam
(Finals Week)
The discipline of English has many facets. Being an English major does not just mean liking to read. English majors are expected to become expert at analyzing literature, but they are also expected to receive training in critical theory, literary history and theory, pedagogical theory, composition and rhetoric, creative writing, and grammar and language theory.

WHY STUDY GRAMMAR AND LANGUAGE THEORY?

1. So that you are able to articulate the rules of your grammar.

2. So that you are able to explain what you do when you produce/understand your language, rather than simply trying to rely on your intuitions.

3. So that you have the terminology (vocabulary and logic) to talk about what you do.

4. So that you have the tools to independently and critically analyze your own and other people's writing.

5. So that you can explain to others why a particular form violates the rules of the grammar.

6. So that you can edit and proofread your own writing, without having to delegate this to someone else, and so that you understand completely why you are making the changes you do.

7. So that you can teach others.

8. So that you can read, explain, understand, and analyze poetry better.

9. So that you can read, explain, understand, and analyze complicated prose structure better.

10. So that you know how the whole language system works, the name and function of all its intricate parts, and the relationship of all those parts to each other, so that you can fix it when things go wrong. (Like being able to fix your own car)
Today’s Date__________________

ABSENCE SHEET

Your Name_______________________________________

Course Number____________________________________

Date of Absence____________________________________

Did you call 581-5012 before class on date of your absence?  □  Yes  □  No

Is this an excused absence?  □  Yes  □  No

If yes, please attach documentation.