Syllabus

Linguistics 420: Linguistics and English (Fall 2011)

Instructor: Paul Justice

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Office Hours: **Tuesday 2:30–3:30pm
** Wednesday 2:30–3:30pm

The best way to reach me is via email, but if you need to call me, please do so during my office hours, rather than calling at some other time and expecting me to call you back and try to track you down; I find playing phone tag very frustrating, and, as a result, rarely return phone calls. However, I almost always respond to emails within 48 hours if a response is required [please include “LING 420” in the subject line or I might not read it]. Also, check Blackboard frequently (at least twice a week) for class announcements.

No appointment is necessary during advertised office hours, nor do you need to email or call to ask if I’ll be there. However, because, like many of you, I have other obligations outside of this class, it’s very difficult for me to schedule appointments outside of my office hours.

LING 420 Tutors: Name(s): (check Blackboard for information)
Office: check Blackboard Hours: (check Blackboard for information)

This tutoring service is free to all registered 420 students. No appointment is necessary.***

But A) PLEASE COME PREPARED WITH SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR THE TUTOR, and B) PLEASE DON’T EXPECT THE TUTOR TO DO YOUR WORK FOR YOU.

EOPS and DSS tutor: If you are an EOP or DSS student, you have access to linguistics tutors that work for these departments. Please consult a, EOPS or DSS counselor for more details.

Linguistics Department: BA 334 (tel: 594-5268, FAX: 594-4877) open 8:00 - 4:30, M-F

Class Texts (required):

Justice, P. (2007). LING 420 Lectures. CD available only at Cal Copy (5131 College Ave)

Blackboard will be used extensively for a variety of purposes, including class announcements, materials, quizzes and exams. You must be prepared to use Blackboard to pass this class. To access Blackboard, log on to http://blackboard.sdsu.edu and use your web portal account information to gain access. The site has a very useful help link to guide you. ATTENTION OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: you will not have access to Blackboard until about 24 hours after you register and pay your fees, so don’t wait – no exceptions will be made for you if you fail to register in a timely manner.

Policies:

Attendance will not be formally taken, there is no specific attendance grade and there will be no graded in-class exercises other than those announced in the schedule of assignments. Translation: attendance is your choice. You will have plenty of resources available to you outside of class, including the textbook and audio/video lectures on CD, and if you feel that these are sufficient for you to understand and apply the material, then you can choose not to attend class. Please be aware,
however, that most students have tremendous difficulty learning this material on their own. I will evaluate the graded assignments according to a high standard – there will be no gift grades – and your chances of meeting that standard are far higher if you attend class. You have a teacher and weekly class meetings as resources, and you are encouraged to use them (get your money’s worth!). ALSO, this is NOT an on-line class, so please don’t expect me to be available for extended on-line discussions of the class material. While I respond to nearly all Blackboard postings and email queries in a timely fashion, I can’t always provide adequate answers to all questions using this medium.

Punctuality is always appreciated. Each week of class will be divided into two parts, and each part will commence and conclude as scheduled (or as closely as possible). You’re free to decide which parts you do and don’t want to attend, but please don’t come and go freely – it’s a distraction to everyone else. The syllabus contains a schedule indicating the timing of each class period.

Office hour visitation: You are encouraged, but not required, to visit with me and/or the LING 420 tutors during the semester. Don’t wait until it’s too late to ask for help. BUT PLEASE COME PREPARED WITH SPECIFIC QUESTIONS SO I/WE CAN BE MORE HELPFUL.

PLEASE NOTE: While you’re always welcome to approach me before class or during breaks, these are not the best times to get thoughtful responses from me, as I’m generally focused on other matters. So if you need a definitive answer to a question, or if you’re trying to make an arrangement of some kind with me, your best bet is to use office hours or email. I can’t be held responsible for any arrangements that you think we made before class or during a break. Sorry, but we need to be careful.

Academic honesty is required of all students. Students must not share answers on in-class tests. This is considered cheating, and any student caught cheating will receive an “F” for the course.

Required Assignments:
Syllabus/Blackboard quiz: to get you started on the right foot, there will be a 25 point syllabus and Blackboard quiz (it will be posted to Blackboard at the beginning of the semester). The idea of this is to encourage you to familiarize yourself THOROUGHLY with the course requirements and resources available to you. This quiz will be multiple choice, so you must use the appropriate ParSCORE form (ParSCORE forms are red, not green, and are available at the campus bookstore and convenience stores). For this quiz, you must use form F-288-PAR. NOTE: ParSCORE has produced some forms with different letters after the number (e.g., F-288-ERI), so be sure it’s a PAR form and look for 288. NO OTHER FORM of submission will be accepted.

Reading assignments in the textbook - Relevant Linguistics - appear on the course schedule according to the date by which they should be completed. In each chapter there are a number of Quick Exercises and Data Analyses that should be completed as you read, BEFORE class. These exercises are important for assessing your level of understanding. Also, most of the reading quiz questions (see below) are based on these exercises. All solutions to the Quick Exercises and Data Analyses are posted on Blackboard for you to consult (preferably after you complete them).

Reading quizzes will accompany each reading assignment in the textbook (Relevant Linguistics). These quizzes will be posted on Blackboard and completed by you on-line – no other form of submission will be accepted. There will be no need to hand any paper in. They will be available until 5 minutes before class on their due dates. These quizzes will be based on the content of the chapters and the Quick Exercises and Data Analyses contained within the assigned pages. You would be wise to read the entire assignment and complete all the exercises and consult the solutions before you take each quiz. Please be aware that students have reported technical problems while taking quizzes on Blackboard. Find a combination of computer/browser/server that works and stick with it. I can’t make changes to scores for any reason, including, but not limited to, technical problems. See Blackboard for specific suggestions to avoid problems. The final quiz will cover all of the chapters.
Practice homework exercises: In the textbook - Relevant Linguistics - and on Blackboard you’ll find many exercises that have been designed to help you assess your level of understanding and prepare yourself for the graded assignments. The dates by which they should be completed are given on the schedule in the syllabus. These assignments will not be handed in or graded, but for your own benefit they should be completed as if they were to be graded. The solutions to all of these exercises will be posted on Blackboard as pdf files and should be consulted after you have completed each exercise. We will not go over every part of every exercise in class, but if you have specific questions about the exercises you should post them to the Blackboard discussion board and bring them to class so we can discuss them (class time will be scheduled for this purpose). In general, students who decide not to do the practice exercises do poorly on the graded assignments and exams. I know this because I have seen the blank pages that failing students have in their textbooks.

Weekly lectures: lectures will be available as Quicktime .mov files on CD (available at Cal Copy) for each week and can be viewed at your convenience, though a suggested schedule for viewing them is provided in the syllabus. To view these files, you must use Quicktime, which is available for free. The presentations will cover the assigned reading for that week. Each lecture will be accompanied by pdf lecture documents that should be used to help follow the lecture.

Graded weekly homework exercises: each week you will have one homework exercise to complete and hand in for a grade. These assignments, posted to Blackboard 5-7 days before they’re due, will be due at the beginning of class on the day they’re due (see the schedule for exact dates). Any papers handed in after class has begun will be considered late; this includes papers handed in one minute after class has begun. Please see below for late penalties. You are responsible for submitting a complete, legible paper by the deadline. Hard copies, rather than electronic submissions, are strongly encouraged. Students who plan on attending the beginning of class should hand their papers in then. If you choose not to attend the beginning of class, suggested submission options are the instructor’s office during office hours or the LING Department office during business hours. If you submit your work to the LING Dept. office, you should ask for a date and time stamp to record the exact time of submission. Papers left in the department or instructor’s office without a date/time stamp will be considered handed in when the instructor finds them (which could be days later). Electronic submissions that are incomplete, illegible or unopenable for any reason will be graded as is (or not at all if they’re unopenable).

In-class midterm exams: You will be given two in-class midterm exams that will be worth 100 points each. These exams will be in two parts, one of which will be multiple choice, and one of which will be written, so you must use the appropriate ParSCORE form each time for the multiple choice section (ParSCORE forms are red, not green, and are available at the campus bookstore and convenience stores). For both of these exams, you can use either form F-289-PAR or form F-288-PAR. The written part of each exam will be identical in format to the weekly homework exercises (both practice and graded). Be sure to consult the study guides and practice exams that are posted on Blackboard to prepare. Also, the questions on these exams are identical in format to the questions you’ll see on the cumulative final exam, so you should use these exams to prepare for the final. No discussion will be allowed between students on any exam.

Papers: You will be given two paper assignments that will be worth 50 and 100 points, respectively. Both paper prompts will be posted on Blackboard about four weeks before their due dates. More details will be provided with the paper prompts when they are available.

In-class final exam: A significant portion of your grade—300 points—will come from the cumulative in-class final exam given during the final exam period. Because this exam will be given at the very end of the semester, there will be no opportunity for make-up exams, so please consult the schedule and make sure you’re here. This exam will be entirely multiple choice, so you must bring the
appropriate ParSCORE form with you (ParSCORE forms are red, not green). For the final, you can bring either form F-289-PAR or F-288-PAR. I will not have extra forms on the day of the test. Be sure to use the study guide and practice exam posted to Blackboard, as well as the completed in-class midterm exams, to prepare. No discussion will be allowed between students on any exam.

Late work will always be penalized, regardless of the excuse. For weekly HW assignments, late papers can never receive a higher score than the lowest scoring on-time paper, regardless of their quality. For papers, the exact penalty will vary from assignment to assignment and will always be clearly displayed on each individual assignment. There will be no exceptions to the stated lateness penalties for any reason. Please be aware of the no exception policy. Frequently, students think that their individual circumstances will exempt them from this policy, the result being that they become upset when the policy is applied consistently, as advertised. Look at the schedule of assignments and budget your time. Bottom line: do whatever you have to do to hand graded assignments in on time. ALSO, late work will not be accepted after an assignment has been returned and/or solutions have been posted. See Graded weekly HW assignments for late work submission suggestions.

Suggestions for Succeeding in this Class:

The most important thing to keep in mind is that I have a plan for this class, and that plan is based on what I believe to be sound pedagogy. If you follow my plan, your chances of succeeding are very high, but if you decide not to follow it in some way, your chances of succeeding decrease tremendously. You would be wise to complete all the assignments on time and to approach them in the recommended way. Shortcuts will only get you in trouble.

One very important component of this plan is preparation. Because there will not be a complete lecture presented in class, it’s essential that you gain a foundation of understanding before you come to class. The textbook and CD lectures contain everything you need to prepare for class. Use them.

Another important component of my plan is attendance. The smartest thing you can do is attend every class for the entire period and be actively engaged. There is no substitute for attendance and attention. While the textbook and CD presentations are helpful in many ways, they, alone, are probably not sufficient to prepare you to do your best on the graded assignments.

Also, while studying for the exams is helpful, practicing for them is even more important. The tests in this class require you not just to “know things,” but to “do things” as well. Of course, to be able to “do things” you must also “know things” - that is, you must understand linguistic concepts before you can apply them to real language – but “knowing things” is not sufficient if you can’t “do things”. If you study for these tests the way you study for other tests, you will not do well. You should answer the practice test questions and make sure you understand them thoroughly.

IN GENERAL, this class requires a different approach from what you’re used to. Students who are unwilling and/or unable to make the necessary adjustments usually do not do well. On the other hand, students who ARE willing and able to make the necessary adjustments usually do very well.

BOTTOM LINE: If you follow my suggestions, you’re very likely to do well; if, however, you do not follow my suggestions, you’re less likely to do well. It’s that simple.

Note: this class is not easy, and while many people earn “A” grades, many others do not succeed. The grade you receive will be the grade you earn, so start earning the grade you want or need now. If you aren’t prepared to invest the necessary time and effort in this class because of other commitments (job, heavy class load, etc.), you would be wise not to take it now. I hate to see students disappointed because of their grade in this class; it disappoints me, too.
Here's a map of my pedagogical plan, along with the approximate time commitment for each part:

**Step 1.** (ca. 1 hour) Read the assigned pages in the textbook and do all of the *quick exercises* and *data analyses* →

**Step 2.** (ca. 2 hours) “Attend” the lecture on CD →

**Step 3.** (ca. 1 hour) Do as much of the practice exercise work in the textbook as you can →

**Step 4.** (ca 2.5 hours) Attend class, prepared with questions (see below for a template describing class sessions) →

**Step 5.** (ca. 1.5 hours) Complete the rest of the practice exercises →

**Step 6.** (ca. 1 hour) Complete the weekly homework exercise to be graded

Total time commitment: 9 hours per week, which is precisely what a 3 unit class should require, per the SDSU catalog

**What will Happen in Class:**

- Every week will begin with dedicated time for Q&A about *previous* material and exercises (use the Blackboard discussion board in advance to post questions) and presentation about *current* material and exercises (use the Blackboard discussion board in advance to post questions). This will be followed by presentation/discussion about the new material [approx. 4:00pm – 5:30pm].
- We will complete and go over a practice (not to be graded) HW exercise individually and/or in small groups; you can use this to help yourself complete the graded exercise, as the format will be identical [5:45-6:40pm].

**NOTE:** you are strongly encouraged to make the class time as much *yours* as possible; the best way to accomplish this is to get on the Blackboard discussion board each week and tell me what *you* want to cover in class. I'll prepare special presentations for you if you give me enough lead time (at least 24 hours, please). But even if you don’t post your questions in advance, feel free to bring them to class and we can discuss them. I won’t be able to prepare a presentation, but that’s what the chalk/white board is for.

**Special Note for Liberal Studies Majors:**

As you know, you may be required to write a reflection about this class (or take a test on this material) in your senior assessment (LS 498). You should save all of your graded work, including homework assignments and test reports, because you might need to attach samples of your work to your reflection.

**Grading Contract:**

All students will be given an option regarding what assignments they wish to complete and the grade level that they want to shoot for. A signed contract indicating which option you choose will be due with the syllabus quiz. Please review the options on the following page and carefully consider all the pros and cons before making your decision. All students must sign and submit a grading contract in order to pass the class – there is no default grading option.
Behavior Expectations

It pains me to do this because it makes me think I’m teaching elementary school, rather than university classes, but I’ve found that it is necessary. In fact, one semester in the student evaluations a student specifically mentioned the need for such expectations to be explicitly stated in the syllabus. So let me preface all of this by apologizing to the people who don’t need this explicit statement. Unfortunately, some people do.

As any teacher at any level would, I have certain behavior expectations for both myself and my students. I will always come to class punctually, I will always be well-prepared, and I will always address you, my students, in a respectful manner. I expect the same punctuality, preparedness and respect from you. If you do come in late or leave early, I expect you to do it in a way that is not disruptive to the class. I also expect that you will not engage in other disrespectful behaviors, such as the ones specified below:

- **Allowing cell phones to ring during class.** Take a second to turn off all beeping and ringing devices BEFORE you enter the classroom. It distracts everyone.
- **Text messaging during class.** Over the course of the past few years I’ve noticed fewer and fewer cell phones ringing in class. This is most welcome. What’s not so welcome, however, is the significant increase in the number of people text messaging during class. Because this generally doesn’t result in any disruption to the rest of the class, it’s not quite as heinous a crime as ringing phones, but please, if you’d rather send text messages than be in class, stay home. I find it extremely rude when I see students engrossed in their phones instead of class.
- **Coming and going as you please.** This one seems to be especially in need of an explicit statement, as multiple students do it in nearly every class. **ALL** of your instructors, not just this one, are insulted when you pack up and leave during class (especially when you walk right in front of us and out the door). For classes meeting once a week, I’ve scheduled a break in the middle of class for people to come and go. Please use the break for this purpose. Classes meeting more than once a week have a built-in break from one day to the next. Please use these breaks to come and go, and I’m sure everyone else will appreciate it.
- **Reading non-class materials during class.** When I see people reading newspapers or magazines or doing their taxes (yes, it has happened twice!) in class, I’m highly insulted. As I said with the text messaging, if you’d rather do these things than focus on the material, please stay home.
- **Working on art projects during class.** When I see a pair of scissors and glue on your desk, I know you can’t possibly be focusing on linguistics. This, too, raises my blood pressure.
- **Carrying on non-academic discussions in class.** If you’re talking to each other about the material being presented in class, then I have no problem with that, as long as you do it quietly and don’t disturb the people around you; it can be an important part of the learning process. But when I see people completely turned away from the board and laughing and smiling as they talk, I can only assume that the discussion is not relevant to the class. Again, I don’t appreciate this, and neither do the other students in the vicinity, who also find it very distracting, even if the discussion is relevant to the class discussion. Please don’t make me shoosh you.
- **Sleeping with your head on your desk.** If you’re that tired, stay home and get some rest. Your health is your first priority.

In general, these behaviors, and others like them, are disrespectful both to other students and to the instructor. Perhaps students think that I don’t see these behaviors taking place, and in many cases they may be correct. The fact of the matter is, though, that I see quite a bit of what happens in class,
even when students try to hide it (the magazine in the binder trick doesn’t always work). I’m sure that you wouldn’t want your students to do these things in your class, nor would you appreciate it if I did these things when you came to see me during my office hours, so please extend me (and your classmates) the same courtesy that you would want from others.

**My response to disrespectful behavior**

In general, while I’m always deeply offended by rude behavior, I don’t address every instance of it. My primary job is teaching, not disciplining, and my time is limited enough as it is. I don’t intend to waste much of this precious time telling adults how to behave like adults. If, however, a student’s rude behavior disrupts the class in any way, Mr. Hyde will come out, and I will say something, and it won’t be pleasant. I’ll say it right in front of the entire class, and I’ll make it painfully clear how inappropriate the behavior is. You’ve been forewarned.

Also, please don’t ask me for a letter of recommendation if you have violated (or plan on violating) any of the “rules” above. My policy is not to write letters for such students, even if I agreed to prior to the offense.

Again, I apologize for having to include this in my syllabus. Most of you already understand everything I’ve said in this section, but it seems to be necessary for those who don’t.

**Excerpts from student evaluations of this LING 420 class from a previous semester**

Printed below are comments pulled from student evaluations taken at the end of a recent semester. Please read them to see what your predecessors had to say about their experience in this class.

“We needed more time for the take-home test.”

vs.

“The take-home test shouldn’t have been handed out so early.”

LESSON: How you manage your time and approach the assignments makes all the difference.

“At the beginning, we were told if we don’t practice, we will not succeed. I didn’t and it reflected on my test. Then, when I started to do the exercises, I began to understand a lot better. I should have listened at the beginning!”

“At first when I found out I had to take this class I was not excited at all. However, in the end I really enjoyed it. I guess the bad comments I heard about the class were from students who did not study and do well. I must say, it isn’t too hard if you are willing to spend the time studying.”

LESSON: Your success will depend largely on your effort.

“Too much new material in each class.”

vs.

“Class is boring because he repeats what’s in the book”

LESSON: How easy or difficult this class is depends largely on your level of preparation.
LING 420 Grading Options (modified contract grading)

Every student must choose a grading option. The two grading breakdowns are below:

**Grading Option X:** 300 points: in-class cumulative final exam (100 MC questions)  
200 points: two in-class 100 point exams (each one 1/2 MC, 1/2 written)  
50 points: paper #1 (written)  
100 points: paper #2 (written)  
200 points: weekly graded HW exercises (written)  
100 points: weekly reading quizzes (MC questions on Blackboard)  
25 points: take-home syllabus quiz (25 MC questions)  
25 points: in-class phoneme chart quiz (written)  

**total:** 1000 points

A: 93.0-100%  
B+: 87.0-89.99%  
C+: 77.0-79.99%  
D+: 67.0-69.99%  
F: 0-59.99%

A: 90.0-92.99%  
B: 83.0-86.99%  
C: 73.0-76.99%  
D: 63.0-66.99%  
B-: 80.0-82.99%  
C-: 70.0-72.99%  
D-: 60.0-62.99%

Successfully learning the content of this class requires a lot of practice, which is what Option X requires. In fact, students have commented in the past that I “forced” them to learn the material. Most students would be wise to commit to doing all the work and choose Option X.

However, I understand that not all students want to complete so many written assignments (perhaps they don’t appreciate being “forced” to do so much work), so for students who would prefer not to complete most of the written assignments, I’m offering an option that consists mostly of objective assignments (and fewer assignments overall):

**Grading Option Y:** 300 points: in-class cumulative final exam (100 MC questions)  
200 points: two in-class 100 point exams (each one 1/2 MC, 1/2 written)  
100 points: weekly reading quizzes (MC questions on Blackboard)  
25 points: take-home syllabus quiz (25 MC questions)  
25 points: in-class phoneme chart quiz (written)  

**total:** 650 points

B: 83.0-100%  
C+: 77.0-79.99%  
D+: 67.0-69.99%  
F: 0-59.99%

B-: 80.0-82.99%  
C: 73.0-76.99%  
D: 63.0-66.99%  
C-: 70.0-72.99%  
D-: 60.0-62.99%

Please note that if you choose Option Y you can not earn higher than a “B” grade. Please also note, however, that while students who choose Option X can and often do earn “A”s, they are in no way guaranteed an “A”. The grade you get will be based on the number of points you earn either way.

You will be required to choose one of these options when you hand in the syllabus quiz.

**NOTE:** It will be difficult to successfully complete the weekly HW assignments without the benefit of the in-class practice HW assignment, so students who don’t plan on attending class regularly should consider choosing grading Option Y.

**** THERE WILL BE NO EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS OF ANY KIND ****  
*** THERE WILL BE NO ARTIFICIAL ADJUSTING OF GRADES FOR ANY REASON ***