

ENGE 1500:  
Introduction to English Linguistics  
Prof. Rowan Mackay

Course Description: Many of us may have learned and used English for many years. But how much do we know about English as a system of communication in today's society? This course offers an overview of the linguistic structure of English and how it is used in our social world. We systematically study the English language at various levels: from words and phrases, through to sentences and beyond. The course also provides students with the opportunity to observe and explain the ways in which English is used in everyday life. Some of the broader questions to be explored are:

- What is the nature of human language?
- What is linguistics?
- What is the difference between language learning and linguistics?
- How can we study English as a system of communication?
- What is the role of English in different domains in our society (e.g. in school, at home, on the internet)?

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Observe the characteristics of the English language;
- Understand some basic concepts in linguistics;
- Have an overview of the history of English
- Describe how words are formed in English (Morphology);
- Analyze the structure of English phrases and sentences (Syntax);
- Explain how meaning is organized in our mind (Semantics);
- Identify how language is used by speakers in actual social interaction (Pragmatics);
- Examine how sentences in spoken and written language form larger meaningful units of communication within contexts (Discourse);
- Understand the distinctive features of written language;
- Explore the development of Sign Language;
- Understand how first and second languages are acquired and learned (Language Acquisition);
- Understand the politics surrounding English as a language.
- Observe how people use English in society (Sociolinguistics).

Learning Activities: A variety of learning activities will be employed in this course. Lectures will be a combination of presentation of course content, interactive tasks (individual, pair, or group) and discussions. Tutorial groups will nurture further discussion as well as providing exercises.

Assessment:

1. Attendance\* (lectures and tutorials) 10%

2. Mid-term Quiz 20%

4. Term paper 40%

5. End of course examination 30%

\* Low attendance in tutorials and lectures will negatively affect your overall coursework grade.

Required Materials:

Yule, G. (2020). *The Study of Language*. 7th edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(available at the University book store)

Recommended:

Blogs:

Language Log blog is interesting for covering a whole range of linguistic queries, discussions, ponderings and controversies. <https://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/>

Language: A Feminist Blog is an excellent resource written by Debbie Cameron, Rupert Murdoch Professor of Language and Communication at Oxford University.

<https://debuk.wordpress.com/>

Texts:

Fromkin, V., R. Rodman, and N. Hyams. (2018). *An Introduction to Language*. 11th Edition. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth.

Joseph, John E. (2006). *Language and Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

\*\*You may also refer to the end of each chapter in Yule (2020) for further reading on each topic.

Extra reading and/or viewing material will be given in class.

Tentative Schedule:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Readings/materials</b>
Week 1: Introduction to the course	The first week will introduce students to the course and look at the question of the origin of language.	Yule Ch. 1 & 2
Week 2: History of English	In week 2 the history of English will be discussed and the study of the sounds of the language (Phonetics) will be introduced.	Yule Ch. 3 & 17
Week 3: Morphology and Syntax	In week 3, the history of English demonstrates great flexibility and change in the language. This week will cover word formation, and outline the study of morphology and syntax.	Yule Ch. 5, 6, 7 & 8
Week 4: Semantics and Pragmatics	In Week 4 we will look at the analysis of meaning in English at the level of words, phrases, and sentences.	Yule Ch. 9 & 10

Week 5: Discourse Analysis	Week 5 will broaden the study of meaning to look at how we understand language above the sentence level, in context.	Yule Ch. 11
Week 6: Language Acquisition	Week 6 will introduce first and second language acquisition.	Yule Ch. 13 & 14
Week 7: Written Language	Week 7 will focus upon the distinctive features of written language and the status of the written form.	Yule Ch. 16
Week 8: Sign language and gestures	In week 8, sign language and gesture will be introduced, with a particular focus upon Signed English.	Yule Ch. 15
Week 9: Regional variation	In week 9 the importance and significance of regional variation in English will be discussed, as will the methods whereby such variation is studied.	Yule Ch. 18
Week 10: Language and Culture	Week 10 will introduce the study of English as it sits within a cultural context. This will touch upon language and gender and language and race.	Yule Ch. 19 & 20
Week 11: The Politics of English	In week 11 the status of English in the world, as a global lingua-franca, will be discussed and the significance this has for the study of linguistics explored.	Reading tbc.
Week 12: English and Linguistics in the Future	In week 12, we will look to the future and address issues which are already arising or can be predicted. The internet, technology, and the changing society will all shape English linguistics in the years to come.	Reading tbc.

Course Grade Descriptors:

Grade A / Excellent: Outstanding performance on ALL learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study. The 'A' grade should be reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students and are expected to be achieved only by a small minority.

Grade A- / Very Good: Generally outstanding performance on ALMOST ALL learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations at this level and occasionally reaches standards that may be common at higher levels of study.

Grade B+ / Good (Plus): HIGH performance on all learning outcomes, OR HIGH performance on some learning outcomes which compensates WELL for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply WELL the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level WELL.

Grade B / Good: SUBSTANTIAL performance on all learning outcomes, OR SUBSTANTIAL performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a MORE COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade B- / Good (Minus): GOOD performance on all learning outcomes, OR GOOD performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade C+ / Adequate (Plus): VERY ADEQUATE performance on the majority of learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a SOMEWHAT SUSTAINED manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C / Adequate: ADEQUATE performance on the majority of learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C- / Adequate (Minus): SOMEWHAT ADEQUATE performance on A NUMBER OF learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to SOMEWHAT apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the BARE basic requirement at this level.

Grade D+ / Pass (Plus): BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on A FEW learning outcomes. Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Grade D / Pass: ALMOST BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on VERY FEW learning outcomes. Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in very few areas while responding very minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Grade F / Failure: Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements. Fails to address the task and likely does not understand what the task requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.

Academic Honesty:

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> . With each assignment, students will be required to submit a statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

Statement:

I declare that the assignment here submitted is original except for source material explicitly acknowledged. I also acknowledge that I am aware of University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and of the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations, as contained in the website

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

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Signature

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Date

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Name

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Student ID

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