Friedrich Schiller University Jena
Department of English and American Studies
Winter term 2010/11

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Introduction to Linguistics (I)

Type of course: BA.AA.SW01 (**first part** of *Basismodul Linguistics*)
Time: Wed. 10-12 a.m. (10:15 - 11:45)
Venue: Carl-Zeiss-Str. 3, SR 222
Workload: **5 ECTS**

" I MISS THE GOOD OLD DAYS WHEN ALL WE HAD TO WORRY ABOUT WAS NOUNS AND VERBS."

Course description

This course introduces first-year students to the discipline of modern linguistics ('Sprachwissenschaft'), and specifically sets out to discover some foundational principles that underlie the structural organisation of human languages (or what is commonly called 'grammar'). We will take a closer look at the 'building blocks' of language, at the internal structure of words and larger units (phrases, clauses, sentences) and at the ways in which grammatical forms serve specific communicative functions. At the end of the course, students will have developed an understanding of the role that grammar plays in language and will have acquired some methodological tools for describing and representing the structure of English words and sentences.

Requirements and grading system

Regular attendance and active class participation
Thorough preparation of each session (obligatory readings and a short homework assignment each week)
Final exam

The final grade of this part of the module will be based on the **exam**. In order to be able to *enrol* for the exam, however, you have to submit **at least three** of your **homework assignments** during the semester. If you fail to do so, you cannot take part in the final exam, which results in failing the course!

Readings, assignments and classes

The course is based on obligatory **readings** (weekly chapters), which are also the foundation for the final exam (i.e. everything covered by the readings is relevant to the final exam). The **seminar** is essentially a platform for discussing your understanding of the readings; we will systematise certain aspects of the texts and focus on selected problem areas, but we will not go through the reading bit by bit (this is your preparatory task!). The **assignments** ensure your continuous progress during the course and present you with exercises designed to practice exam-style problems and skills.

A general note on the readings: As this introductory course is supposed to get you used to the reading, analysis and discussion of academic texts, the amount of time that you will need to put into the weekly preparation of each session is not to be underestimated! Please remember that the course is worth 5 ECTS (which amounts to a sum total of 150 hours of work).

The course management system

The course management system of our department, called WORDWISE, will be the online platform of this class. It is there that you download the weekly readings, follow-up handouts and materials, etc. Important information on the organisation of the course (e.g. announcements etc.) will also be distributed via WORDWISE (to your email address). Therefore, please enrol into this course on WORDWISE (the password was announced in class) and stay updated.

Office hours

Please take advantage of the office hours (Tuesdays and Thursdays). This is the place to talk about your progress in the course and any difficulties you may experience, as well as to receive individual feedback on assignments.

Course programme (syllabus)

	DATE	TOPIC	CENTRAL QUESTIONS
1	20.10.10	**Introduction** to the course: Goals, organisation and requirements. Introduction to the world of language(s).	*What am I going to learn in this course? How does it fit in with the rest of my studies? What am I required to do in this course? Where can I get the materials needed?*
		Introduction to linguistics	
2	27.10.10	Approaching the phenomenon of language and its scientific study: The many facets of language and the branches of linguistics.	*What does a 'linguist' do, and what kinds of question is s/he interested in? Which facets of language are studied at our department?*
3	03.11.10	Language form, function and communication. Linguistic symbols and their properties. On 'grammar' and 'rules' in language.	*In which way is language a 'sign' system? Why is it useful and natural for a language to have 'grammar', even a seemingly complicated one? And what does 'grammar' mean, anyway?*
		Building blocks and organising principles of language structure	
4	10.11.10	Sounds and sound systems. Phonemes.	*What kinds of sounds are there in languages? Which contribution do sounds make to language structure?*
	17.11.10	**no class!** [instructor attending a conference]	
5 6	**19**.11.10	**Block session (12 - 4 p.m.)** The structure of words. Types of morphemes and their functions. Contextual shapes of morphemes (allomorphy). Morphological processes.	*What are the smallest meaningful units languages employ? How are words structured, and how and why is the shape of words determined by the contexts in which they occur? How can new words be added to a language?*
	24.11.10	**no class!** [instructor attending a conference]	
7 8	01.12.10 08.12.10	**Paradigmatic** relationships between forms: Word classes. Criteria for word class distinctions. Major characteristics of open and closed classes in English.	*Why do words fall into certain 'classes', and how do we know which classes a language makes use of? Do all languages use the same classes? What do we need to know about English nouns, verbs, adjectives etc. in order to understand how English 'works'?*
9 10	15.12.10 05.01.11	**Syntagmatic** relationships between forms: Linear and hierarchical structure, phrases and constituency. Representing constituent structure.	*How do speakers combine words to form sentences? Are there perhaps any important units other than words and sentences? How can we analyse and visualise sentence structure?*
		Syntactic analysis: The study of sentence structure	
11	12.01.11	Syntactic roles and functions in the clause.	*What kinds of function do constituents perform in sentences?*
12	19.01.11	The clause patterns of English. Transitivity and valence.	*What are the characteristic syntactic patterns of English?*
13	26.01.11	Analytical practice. Extension of the framework: The role of grammatical 'baggage' in the clause.	*What about all the other grammatical phenomena we haven't talked about so far? Why 'burden' a language with different sentence types, tenses, passives, word orders, and the like?*
14	02.02.11	Combinations of clauses: An overview of formal and functional dimensions of complex sentences.	*What devices does the English language have for relating two (or more) events to one another?*
15	09.02.11	Clause combining continued; Wrap-up.	
	16.02.11	**Revision and consultation** (optional offer)	*Bring any open questions, problems etc. to class, and do not hesitate to ask them!*
	21.02.11	**Final exam** Time and venue to be announced	