

# Introduction to Linguistics (I)

Type of course: BA.AA.SW01 (**first part** of *Basismodul Linguistics*)  
Time: Tuesday 2 - 4 p.m. (14:15 - 15:45)  
Venue: Carl-Zeiss-Str. 3, SR 207  
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 marking 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 mark 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 and pass **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 potentially 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 practise exam-style problems and skills.

*An important note:* The official workload for this course amounts to a sum total of **150 hours of work** (5 ECTS). This includes your weekly attendance (24 hours including the final exam) and the preparation of the final exam. The lion's share of the workload, however, consists of your **weekly preparation at home** (revision, reading, assignments)! It is reasonable to allow for **at least 4 hours each week** for this task!

## 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 on Tuesdays. 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 15.10.13	<b>Introduction</b> to the course: Goals, organisation and requirements. Introduction to the world of language(s).	<i>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?</i>
2 22.10.13	<b>Introduction to linguistics:</b> The many facets of language and the branches of linguistics.	<i>What does a 'linguist' do, and what kinds of question is s/he interested in? Which facets of language are studied at our department?</i>
3 29.10.13	<b>Language form, function and communication.</b> Signs, 'grammar' and 'rules' in language.	<i>In which way is language a 'sign' system? Why is it useful and natural for a language to have 'grammar'? And what does 'grammar' mean, anyway?</i>
4 05.11.13	<b>Sounds and sound systems.</b> Phonemes.	<i>What kinds of sounds are there in languages? Which contribution do sounds make to language structure?</i>
5 12.11.13	<b>The structure of words.</b> Types of morphemes and their functions. Contextual shapes of morphemes (allomorphy).	<i>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?</i>
6 19.11.13	<b>Morphological processes:</b> Inflection and derivation. Word-formation processes.	<i>How can new words be added to the vocabulary of a language?</i>
7 26.11.13	<b>Basic concepts in syntax:</b> Constituent structure, syntactic categorisation, syntactic functions.	<i>What are the general principles by which words combine into sentences?</i>
8 03.12.13	<b>Lexical categories (I):</b> Survey of the open and closed word classes of English.	<i>How does lexical categorisation work in English? What are the distinctive properties of nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. in English? Why are there two classes of verbs?</i>
9 10.12.13	<b>Lexical categories (II):</b> Verbs and auxiliaries.	
10 17.12.13	<b>Phrases and phrasal categories.</b> Representing constituent structure.	<i>How do speakers combine words to form sentences? How can we undertake a linguistic analysis of sentence structure?</i>
11 07.01.14	<b>Syntactic functions in the clause.</b>	<i>What kinds of function do constituents perform in sentences?</i>
12 14.01.14	<b>The clause patterns of English.</b> Transitivity and valence.	<i>What are the characteristic syntactic patterns of English?</i>
13 21.01.14	<b>Clause combinations (I):</b> Formal and functional types of complex sentences.	<i>What devices does the English language have for relating two (or more) events to one another?</i>
14 28.01.14	<b>Clause combinations (II):</b> Analytical practice.	
15 04.02.14	<b>Review and conclusion.</b>	<i>Bring any open questions, problems etc. to class, and do not hesitate to ask them!</i>
13.02.14	<b>Final exam</b> Thursday, 13 February 2014, 10-12 a.m., Carl-Zeiss-Str.3, HS 1	