

## LING 201: Introduction to Language

*Last updated 24 January 2023.*

The College of Staten Island, CUNY  
Spring 2023

**Website:** <https://ling201spr2023.common.gc.cuny.edu/>

**Instructor:** Joseph Pentangelo

joseph.pentangelo@csi.cuny.edu

\* Please include "LING 201" in the subject line of any emails to me.

**Office Hours:** Fridays, 1:30–2:30, 2S-225 (in-person)

Email me to set up remote office hours.

### Catalogue Description:

4 hours; 4 credits. This course is an introduction to the study of language. It explores the following relationships: language and society; language and culture; language and thought; language and biology. For English majors and minors, this is designated as an ENH linguistics course.

Prerequisite: ENG 151

### Note on Asynchrony:

This is an asynchronous course, meaning that there is not a particular time at which we all meet for the class, either in person or virtually. Instead, everyone does their work within a given week. Quizzes and exams will be submitted through the class website, listed above, and we will use Blackboard for our discussion board. Optional livestream meetings may be offered later in the semester, if there is student interest.

## 1. Course Requirements

### Readings & Videos:

Each week, you will be assigned readings to complete and at least one video to watch. The videos will help explain the readings, and provide some additional information and context. It is imperative that you read/watch these materials in a timely manner, so that you can participate in the discussion board and do well on the quizzes and exams.

Most of our readings come from the following three books:

- David Crystal's (2010) *A Little Book of Language*

- *The 5 Minute Linguist*, edited by E.M. Rickerson & Barry Hilton (2007)
- David Wilton's (2004) *Word Myths: Debunking Linguistic Urban Legends*

The readings and videos will be shared with you on the password-protected Readings page on the course website. The password is “linguist” (without the quotation marks).

### Office Hours:

Office hours are time set aside for me to help you with any questions that you have about the course or the materials. You are encouraged to attend as often as will be useful to you. You may attend office hours either in-person or online. Email me to set up an online appointment.

### Grade Breakdown:

- Discussion Board (40%)
- Exams (30%)
- Quizzes (30%)

### Grade Key:

|    |        |      |        |
|----|--------|------|--------|
| A  | 93%+   | B-   | 80-82  |
| A- | 90-92% | C+   | 77-79% |
| B+ | 87-89% | C    | 70-76% |
| B  | 83-86% | D    | 60-69% |
|    | F      | <60% |        |

### Discussion Board:

This class makes extensive use of a discussion board on Blackboard. You are required to post at least once per week on the discussion board, responding to any threads made by me. In addition, you are encouraged to create new threads to discuss the readings, videos, and topics discussed, and to respond to one another's threads.

### Quizzes:

There will be a total of 6 quizzes on subject matter from the previous few weeks' readings. Each quiz is worth 5 possible points (i.e. 5% of your overall grade). Quizzes are open-book, but you may not share answers with one another.

### Exams:

There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. Each of these will be graded out of a possible 15 points (i.e. 15% of your overall grade). The midterm will cover materials from the start of class up to the due date of the midterm, and the final will cover materials from the due date of the midterm to the end of the semester. In other words, the final is not cumulative. The dates for these exams are shown on the calendar below. Exams are open-book, but you may not share answers with one another.

**Extra Credit:**

There will be a chance to earn up to 5 overall points with extra credit. Details to come later in the semester.

## 2. Class Policies

**Office hour:**

You may attend office hours either in-person or online. I will hold in-person office hours weekly on Fridays from 1:30–2:30pm in room 2S-225. Email me to set up an online appointment. You are encouraged to attend as often as will be useful to you.

**Syllabus:**

This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be made clear to all students, and an updated syllabus will be made available on the course website.

**Plagiarism & academic dishonesty:**

Collaborating or forming a study group is encouraged, but this does **not** mean that you are allowed to copy one another's work, nor the work of others outside of this class. Do not share your answers to exams or quizzes with other students in any way. Do not post assignments or other course materials on CourseHero or similar websites. Do not use ChatGPT or any other AI software to compose your discussion board posts or quiz/exam answers. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity, which notes that “penalties for academic dishonesty include academic sanctions, such as failing or otherwise reduced grades, and/or disciplinary sanctions, including suspension or expulsion.”

**Statement on accommodations for students with disabilities:**

Qualified students with disabilities will be provided reasonable academic accommodations if determined eligible by the Center for Student Accessibility. Prior to granting disability accommodations in this course, the instructor must receive written verification of the student's eligibility from the Center for Student Accessibility. It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the Center for Student Accessibility and to follow the established procedures for having the accommodation notice sent to the instructor.

## 3. Course Calendar

With a few exceptions indicated in the calendar below, the below rules apply:

- Videos, readings, and assignments will be posted every Monday.
- Weekly discussion board posts will be due by 11:59pm every Friday.

|         | Topic                                  | Materials Posted | Assignments Due |
|---------|--|------------------|-----------------|
| Week 1  | Course introduction                    | Jan. 25          | Jan. 30         |
| Week 2  | What is language?                      | Jan. 30          | Feb. 3          |
| Week 3  | Prescriptivism & descriptivism         | Feb. 6           | Feb. 10         |
| Week 4  | The sounds of language                 | Feb. 13          | Feb. 17         |
| Week 5  | The International Phonetic Alphabet    | Feb. 20          | Feb. 24         |
| Week 6  | Phonology                              | Feb. 27          | March 3         |
| Week 7  | Meaning                                | March 6          | March 10        |
| Week 8  | Semantics, <b>midterm</b> assigned     | March 13         | March 17        |
| Week 9  | Pragmatics                             | March 20         | March 24        |
| Week 10 | Words & the lexicon                    | March 27         | March 31        |
| Week 11 | Morphemes & morphology                 | April 3          | April 14        |
| Week 12 | Etymology                              | April 17         | April 21        |
| Week 13 | Language change                        | April 24         | April 28        |
| Week 14 | “Grammar” & syntax                     | May 1            | May 5           |
| Week 15 | Language endangerment & revitalization | May 8            | May 12          |
| Week 16 | Final wrap-up, <b>final</b> assigned   | May 15           | May 19          |