LIN4930/6932: Constructed Languages (Conlang): Linguistics of Language Construction

Meeting times & Locations: MWF, 1:55 PM-2:45 PM (Period 7), MAT 0102
Course's CANVAS site: https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/526345

Instructor: Dr. Marcin Dadan
Office: TUR 4015
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Office hours (in person & Zoom): **Tue/Wed/Thu: 4:05-4:55 pm (P9) & by appointment**.
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Course description
Most human languages evolve through a long, natural process; constructed languages (*conlangs*) are the product of deliberate design. This course is an introduction to language construction (*conlanging*), considering the task of building a language from a number of different perspectives: structure (what elements and systems must a human language have?); evolution (what are common patterns of language change?); development (what are the typical milestones in the acquisition of language?); typology (which features and patterns are frequent and which are rare?); and social function (how do different social conditions impact the linguistic system?).

You will investigate both constructed languages like Klingon, Dothraki, Ithkuil or Toki Pona, and acquire the fundamentals of natural language features, typological principles, and connections between culture and language through the hands-on process of creating an original conlang with a clear goal in mind as to the language applicability (e.g., deciding about its users and the scope).

The course gives a unique opportunity to study natural language 'bottom-up' and reverse-engineer various typological and historical pressures operating on it, while constructing a linguistic system from scratch. It is a great chance for bringing your creativity into science while creating something tangible, which you can continue to work on even after the course is done.

The classes will contain elements of lectures, workshops, student presentations, and discussions.

Course Objectives & Goals
Students who complete this course will…
- become familiar with the history, purpose, and design principles of selected constructed languages.
- become familiar with some basic typological facts regarding natural languages.
- learn some basic principles of language evolution, change, and variation.
- gain some experience in constructing a mini language based on naturalistic linguistic processes.
- translate an existing text into their created language.
- present the elements of their constructed languages while in-progress and when finished.
- Work and interact with other students (providing and getting a feedback) in the process of creating a new and original language.
- evaluate finished conlangs based on the intended goals, design principles, and linguistic limitations.

Recommended Texts (*not required*):

Peterson, David. 2015. *The Art of Language Invention: From Horse-Lords to Dark Elves, the Words Behind World-Building*, ISBN: 0143126466, New York: Penguin Books.

Okrent, Arika. 2009. In the Land of Invented Languages. Spiegel & Grau.

Rosenfelder, Mark. 2010. The Language Construction Kit. Yonagu Books.

Campbell, Lyle. 2013. *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction.* 3rd edition. MIT Press.

Heine, Berndt and Tania Kuteva. 2002. *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization.* Cambridge.

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 2003. *Metaphors We Live By*. 2nd edition. University of Chicago Press.

Rogers, Henry. 2005. *Writing Systems. A Linguistic Approach.* Blackwell Publishing.

Additional required readings will be posted on CANVAS. **You are expected to read all assigned readings *before* the class when they are due. See the latest version of the schedule**. Instructional materials for this course consist of only those materials specifically reviewed, selected, and assigned by the instructor. The instructor is only responsible for these instructional materials.

Course requirements & Grades:

Attendance and Participation: 15%
Homework Assignments (Production points): 30%
Class Presentations: 15%
Short Quizzes: 15%
Final Project: 25%

The assignment of a final letter grade will be based on the following scale, recommended by CLAS. You can find more on UF grading policies here:

https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/#gradingpoliciestext

A	100 - 93	B	86 - 83	C	76 - 73	D	66 - 63
A-	92 - 90	B-	82 - 80	C-	72 – 70	D-	62 - 60
B+	89 - 87	C+	79 – 77	D+	69 - 67	E	below 60

Attendance & Participation: The attendance is obligatory (5% of the A&P score). In case of any scheduling conflicts, you should contact the instructor. **You may have up to 3 absences** (for whatever reason- excused or unexcused, except for the university sanctioned activities). More than 3 absences will result in the loss of 5% of your final grade. **Active participation is crucial in this course** as it is designed to have a creative workshop aspect. You will have a chance to participate in class discussions both during the presentation of the new materials (lectures) as well as during the group presentations. Be prepared to provide relevant and useful questions, reactions, and opinions. **Your (constructive and respectful) feedback to your classmates' presentations is extremely important and useful.**

See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies: https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/

Homework Assignments (Productions points)

You will be working in **groups or individually**, producing the assigned course milestones. This will require you to work both in the class (designing and presenting elements of your system) and outside the class (working together on designing the elements). Each of the group members will get to be **a team leader** for certain periods, coordinating the work of the whole team. There will be around 10 assignments to complete and present e.g., Phonemic inventory, morphological system, elements of lexicon, Case system, Speech Act routines, etc. All assignments should be typed and submitted as documents (.docx or Excel). You will submit your assignments as a group, and you should coordinate your work. If you work individually, you are responsible for your submissions.

Answers copied from the internet or other sources without stating them in the references will get '0' points. Same goes for the AI tools. **You should not use the AI tools to generate answers to your assignments unless you are explicitly instructed to do it or you discuss this with me in advance**. I will be checking whether your answers were generated by any of the AI assistants, and you will get '0' points (without the make-up possibility) and your academic misconduct will be reported.

Homework assignments should be submitted by the dates indicated in CANVAS. Any assignments handed in after the due date will be penalized 10%. **No assignments will be accepted more than <u>two days past the due date.</u>**

Class presentations:

Every week some groups/individual students will present the relevant parts of their conlang (one or more current homework assignment(s)). The presentations will last 10-15 min.and every member of the group is expected to lead at least one presentation.

Short Quizzes

There will be around 6 short (5-7 minutes) open book quizzes, some of them will be in-class (those quizzes will be unannounced), some of them will be online. All quizzes will be based on the readings assigned for that day. Online quizzes will be announced and scheduled in advance, and you will have around 48 hours to take them before the class for which the reading is due. You will get a schedule of the online quizzes once the semester starts. It is crucial that you read the readings before coming to the class. Quizzes will contain both open questions and multiple-choice/True or False components. See the most recent version of the schedule for the readings assigned for a particular week/day. You will be able to access the readings during the quiz. **There is no make-up for the quiz, unless you were absent, and your absence is excused.**

Final Project:

By the end of the course, each group will submit a document that consists of **two parts:**

1) **Translation of a short text** (a song, poem, prose, a film dialog, etc.), **with some reflections on the challenges that you faced in the process and the list of new elements that had to be added to the text to produce this translation (e.g., new words, new grammatical constructions, etc.).** Please consult me on your choices of the text to translate before you start working on it. Alternative assignment, i.e., some other application of your conlang (e.g., to

devise a learnability experiment, to model language change, etc.) is possible but it should be consulted with me the latest by the 11th week of the course.

2) **The grammar of your conlang**: a document that collects the design principles, the grammatical properties, and the lexicon of your conlang. This will be a systematized (and edited, if needed) collection of the data from your previous assignments in one document.

Extra Credit
Students who wish to do so may increase their total grade points with a maximum of 2 (2%; 1 hour =1 SONA Credit) by participating in experiments in the departments of Linguistics, Spanish & Portuguese, and Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences. For a list of studies that qualify, see the SONA website https://ufl-slhs.sona-systems.com/ . Please check regularly as the study listing will change throughout the semester. For details on how to use SONA, see this document. If you choose not to participate or do not qualify for any of the studies, you can receive the same amount of course credit by means of an alternative assignment. This involves writing a short research article, summary of a paper, designing an experiment, etc. Details will be made available by the instructor.

Tentative Schedule v1 (Subject to change; see CANVAS for the latest version)

Week	Dates	Topics	Readings	Work/Due
1	Mon, Jan 13	Introduction & Overview	Syllabus	
	Wed, Jan 15	Conlanging History	Adger 2019	
	Fri, Jan 17	Conlangs & Natlangs	'Utopia for Beginners'	
2	(Mon, Jan 20)	(No class)		
	Wed, Jan 22 & Fri, Jan 24	Conlanging Documentary		
3	Mon, Jan 27 & Wed, Jan 29 & Fri, Jan 31	Naturalness, Information, and Universal Language.	Blevins 1995 Natural and unnatural sound patterns	
4	Mon, Feb 3	Philosophical Conlang workshop		**1/ Established Conlang DUE: Wed, 02/03**
	Wed, Feb 5 & Fri, Feb 7	Conlang Presentations		

5	Mon, Feb 10	Phonological Inventory & Typology	Peterson Ch1-Sounds	
	Wed, Feb 12 & Fri, Feb 14	Sounds, Symbolism & Design Principles	a/ Peterson: The sound of Dothraki; b/ Dingemanse et al.	
6	Mon, Feb 17	Symbolism & Design Principles Contd.	Lev-Ari & McKay 2022 The Sound of Swearing.	**2/ Inventory & Quotes DUE: Wed, 02/19**
	Wed, Feb 19 & Fri, Feb 21	Workshop & Presentations		
7	Mon, Feb 24	Morphology, Cross-Linguistic Correlation & Naturalness	Peterson Ch2-Words + Irathient nouns	**3/ Your Conlang Design Principles DUE: Wed, 02/26**
	Wed, Feb 26 & Fri, Feb 28	Presentations		
8	Mon, Mar 3	Language Evolution, Grammaticalization & Change	Heine & Kuteva 2007.	**4/ Basic Lexicon DUE: Wed, 03/07**
	Wed, Mar 5	Thought, Culture, Metaphors, Change.	a/Gleitman & Papafragou 2005 Language & Thought; b/Peterson Ch3: Evolution+ Peterson Case Study: High Valyrian Verbs	
	Fri, Mar 7	Lexicon Presentations		
9	Mon, Mar 10	Nominal Morphosyntax	Song 2018 Ch11	**5/ Adpositions & Auxiliaries DUE: Wed, 03/14**
	Wed, Mar 12 & Fri, Mar 14	PPs & Aux Presentations		

10				
	Mar 15-22	**SPRING BREAK**		
11	Mon, Mar 24	NP Inflection & Markedness	Velupillai 2012: Nominal Categories & Syntax.	**6/NP Morphosyntax DUE: Wed, 03/26**
	Wed, Mar 26 & Fri, Mar 28	NP Presentations		
12	Mon, Mar 31 & Wed, Apr 2 & Fri, Apr 4	VP Morphosyntax	Velupillai 2012: Verbal Categories.	
13	Mon, Apr 7	Pragmatics & Speech Acts	a/ Velupillai 2012: Speech Acts; b/Myers-Scotton 2005	**7/ VP Morphosyntax DUE: Wed, 04/09**
	Wed, Apr 9 & Fri, Apr 11	VP Presentations		
14	Mon, Apr 14	Writing	a/ Morin 2022; b/ Peterson Ch4: The Written word. + The evolution of the Castithan Writing System.	**8/ Speech Acts Routines DUE: Wed, 04/16**
	Wed, Apr 16 & Fri, Apr 18	Speech Act Presentations		
15	Mon, Apr 21 & Wed, Apr 23	Sociolinguistics and Dialects	a/Meyerhoff 2018 Ch2.	**9/ Orthography OR a Dialect DUE: Wed, 04/23**
	(Fri, Apr 25)	(No Class)		
16	**Wed, Apr 30**	**FINAL PROJECT**		**DUE: Wed, 04/30**

Academic Honesty
UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Click here to read the Conduct Code. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Accommodations
Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. *See the "Get Started With the DRC"webpage on the Disability Resource Center site: https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/* It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Evaluations
Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

Recording Policy
Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class

section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

*E-learning technical support***:** Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call 866-281-6309 or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.

Teaching Center: 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.

Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.