

**Tense and Aspect**  
**LIN 4803-258F/LIN 6932-26B0**  
Fall 2018

MWF 7<sup>th</sup> period (1:55-2:45), AND 21  
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Office hours: MWF 6<sup>th</sup> period (12:50-1:40), or by appointment

Computer classroom support: 392-6683

Course website on E-Learning in Canvas: <http://elearning.ufl.edu>

### **Course Description**

The course will deal with temporality in language in general and tense and aspect in particular.

Tense has to do with the time location of events, usually with respect to the speech-time. Cross-linguistically, there are three possible tenses: Past, Present and Future. We will examine the notion of tense via English, which only has two of the possible tenses (Past and Present) and discuss languages with all three possible tenses or with no tenses at all (where the time location is expressed by other means).

As for aspect, there are two kinds: Aktionsarten (situation types), which have to do with distinctions such as events vs. states; and morphological aspect, which has to do with temporal properties such as Perfectivity.

To give you an idea of how morphological aspect differs from tense, consider the following English sentences:

1. John ate a banana.
2. John was eating a banana.

Both sentences report the situation of John's eating a banana. As they both locate that situation before the speech-time, they have the same tense, namely Past. They differ in their aspect: (1) is in Simple Past and (2) in the Progressive.

Just like there are tenseless languages, there are also aspects-less languages that have to resort to other means to express aspect.

**Prerequisite:** LIN 3010, graduate standing or permission by instructor.

**Textbooks** (Available at the Reitz Union bookstore, Tel. 392-0194)

1. Comrie, Bernard. 1976. *Aspect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
2. Other material can be found at the library and will be posted by instructor on Canvas.

## Course requirements and grading:

### Undergraduates

- *Homework* 7 x 4% = 28%
- *In class Exam* 22%
- *Take-home Exam* 30%
- *Term paper OR Article Presentation* 20%

### Graduates

- *Homework* 7 x 4% = 28%
- *In class Exam* 22%
- *Take-home Exam* 30%
- *Article Presentation* 6%
- *Term paper* 14%

### *Homework*

- Each H/W assignment will be with respect to the reading of the respective week. It will include questions or problem solving + an open question that requires your reaction to the reading assignment.
- Note that you were assigned the most classical works rather than the most recent ones. If you happened to come across recent studies that discuss one of them it would be very good if you included them in the reaction part of the H/W assignment.
- H/W will not be graded but only given a pass/fail check. In order to pass, each assignment must be **completed** and its lower grade should be a D, i.e., at least 60% of the assignment should be good. For each failing or un-submitted homework assignment, your grade will be lowered by 3%.
- Homework exercises are to be typed and printed out neatly. Staple multiple sheets together and put your name on it. Please write in complete sentences and complete thoughts. H/W assignments are due in class on the date stated on the syllabus. We will typically discuss the homework in class, so late homework cannot be accepted. If you are not in class when homework assignments are handed back, it is your responsibility to get your work from the instructor.
- You are encouraged to discuss the problems with other members of this class. However, you must write up your solutions entirely on your own, without help, in accordance with the Honor Code: <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>

### *Exams*

There will be two exams – one in-class and one a take-home. There will be no make-up exams without a documented medical excuse.

### *Term paper*

A term paper is a conference-style paper, to be presented in class weeks 12, 13, 14 or 15.

The paper (10-15 pages) and oral presentation (10-15 minutes, plus questions) will constitute 14% of the final grade of graduate students (7% for the written part and 7% for the presentation). Topics must be approved by week 12. All papers due by December 3rd.

Students may choose a theoretical topic to investigate or look into some local devices of expressing temporal relations in language.

### *Article Presentation*

You can choose any article you wish – just make sure it has to do with temporality in language. Your presentation should be in such a way that the audience (the instructor and the students) will understand the issues the article discusses. Engage the students in your presentation, maybe by preparing questions or suggesting intriguing ideas. Students have to coordinate with instructor when they present their article.

### *Attendance and participation*

Attendance and participation are essential. You are unlikely to succeed in this course without coming to class and paying attention. The material on the exams will come from the texts but also from what we do in class. Lecture notes and the texts will not always coincide.

Each student will be allowed 3 absences without penalty. After that, one point will be deducted from the final grade for every non-excused absence. Showing up later or leaving earlier is considered ½ absences.

NOTE: If you show up late it is your responsibility to make sure that I turn the absence into late. The least distracting method is to approach me at the end of the class.

**Cell Phone Policy:** Cell phones should be switched off for class. If you need it on for a specific class (because of a family medical emergency, for example) please notify me before class and sit near the door.

*Note:* There will be no extra credit work to help raise your grade; please do not ask. The best strategy is to do the best work you are capable of on the assigned work (exams, homework, presentation, etc.).

The course grading scale is below. Further information about UF's grading policies can be found at: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-
92 or above	89-91.9	85-88.9	80-84.9	77-79.9	74-76.9	70-73.9	67-69.9
D+	D	D-	E				
64-66.9	60-63.9	57-59.9	56.9 or below				

**Other Information:**

Honor Code: <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>

Disabilities: <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/disabilities.html>

Counseling: <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/counseling.html>

**Schedule (subject to changes according to class progress):**

**Week 1: 8/22, 24**

Course overview

**Week 2: 8/27, 29, 31**

Introduction

**Read:** Comrie (1985), Chapter 1

**HW1 (W)**

**Week 3: 9/5, 7** (Note: 9/3 is Labor Day – no classes)

Tense Logic

**Week 4: 9/12, 14** (Note: 9/10 is Rosh Ha-Shana; class cancelled)

Tense Logic (cont.)

**Read:** Prior (1967), pp. 1-12

**HW2 (W)**

**Week 5: 9/17, 21** (Note: 9/19 is Yom Kippur; class cancelled)

Reference-Time

**Week 6: 9/24, 26, 28**

Reference-Time (cont.)

**Read:** Reichenbach (1947), pp. 287-298

**HW3 (W)**

**Week 7: 10/1, 3, 5**

- Reference-Time (cont.)
- Week 8: 10/8, 10, 12**  
Aktionsarten  
**Read:** Vendler (1967)  
**HW4 (W)**
- Week 9: 10/15, 17, 19**  
Aktionsarten (cont.)
- Week 10: 10/22, 24, 26**  
Aktionsarten (**cont.**)
- Week 11: 10/29, 31 (Note: 11/2 is Homecoming Day; no classes)**  
Perfective and Imperfective  
**Review (M); In-class Exam (W)**
- Week 12: 11/5, 7, 9**  
The Progressive  
**Read:** Comrie (1976), sections 0.1-0.3 and sections 1.1.1- 1.2.0 (pp. 16-26)  
**HW5 (W)**  
Students' presentations
- Week 13: 11/14, 16 (Note: 11/12: Veterans Day; no classes)**  
The Perfect  
**Read:** Comrie (1976), Chapter 2  
**HW6 (W):**  
Students' presentations
- Week 14: 11/19 (Note: 11/21, 23: Thanksgiving – no classes)**  
A presentation by a guest or student
- Week 15: 11/26, 28, 30**  
**Read:** Comrie (1976), section 3.1 (pp. 52-60)  
**HW7 (W)**  
Students' presentations
- Week 16: 12/3, 5**  
**12/3: Review and Take-home Test**  
The test sheet will be given by instructor on 12/3 at the end of the class and be submitted by students at the beginning of the class on 12/5.

### List of readings

- Comrie, Bernard. 1976. *Aspect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Comrie, Bernard. 1985. *Tense*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Prior, Arthur. 1967. *Past, Present and Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Reichenbach, Hans. 1947. *Elements of Symbolic Logic*. New York: Free Press. Section 51, pp. 287-298.
- Vendler, Zeno. 1967. *Linguistics in Philosophy*. Chapter 4, "Verbs and Times", pp. 97-121. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.