

## LIN4930: The Languages of the World

**Instructor:** Marcin Dadan

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**Lecture:** Tuesday 10:40-11:30 (4th) / Thursday 10:40-12:35 (4th & 5th) / in Anderson 021

**Office hours:** Tue 11:45-12:35 (5th), Wed:1:55-2:45 (7th), Thu:12:50-1:40 (6th) or by appointment @ TBD

*Always send me an email if you want to come some other day. We will find the time that works for both of us!*

**Course Description:** This course is a broad survey of the world's languages, their genetic affiliations and current status. By getting acquainted with some of the linguistic properties of various languages and language families, the course aims to provide students with a non-technical overview of the major subfields of linguistics, including general linguistics, geo-linguistics (what languages are spoken where and by whom), and language typology (the ways in which languages are similar and different). One of the important topics the course will address is linguistic diversity, the various ways it can be assessed and how linguists talk about it, the serious threats to that diversity that exist, why this may be a matter of concern, and how to respond to that situation.

The course is meant to cater to different audiences. For students interested in linguistics, it provides an overview of a broad range of phenomena in a variety of languages, and gives them a solid base for studying various linguistic subdisciplines with a greater awareness of the distribution and importance of the linguistic phenomena studied. The course is also a good starting point for learning more about the growing field of language documentation, preservation, and revitalization. For all other students, who may not pursue further studies in linguistics, the course will offer a window into how various socio-cultural factors, government influence, other cultures, migration patterns, influence human language and what that means for the society in general. More importantly, by studying differences and similarities between the world's languages and raising awareness of and sensitivity to linguistic diversity and linguistic issues, the students will gain a better understanding of global social and cultural issues, which may ultimately help them to more effectively communicate with members of other nations and cultures.

**Goals:** By the end of the course, you should be able to:

Describe and give examples of the ways in which human languages are alike and how they differ; use and understand basic linguistic terminology; identify the world's major and selected minor languages; discuss different possible relationships between languages; discuss the different roles language plays in society; be able to explain the importance of linguistic diversity to individuals and society; understand the pressures on linguistic diversity and the consequences of its loss.

**Textbook:** Pereltsvaig, Asya. 2018. Languages of the world: An introduction. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Additional Readings:** Lecture notes, readings, and assignments will be posted on the course website on CANVAS—you are encouraged to visit it frequently.

**Grading:** Course grades will be determined as shown on the next page.

Final Presentation: 40%

Assignments: 40%

Quizzes: 20%

A	93	C	73
A-	90	C-	70
B+	87	D+	67
B	83	D	63
B-	80	D-	60
C+	77	F	below 60

**Evaluation:** Attendance and participation in lectures is obligatory. You are required to pick a lesser-known language and become an *expert* on it during the semester. There will be multiple assignments (5-6) asking you to investigate various aspects of the language:

- its speakers, where it is spoken, and its basic grammatical properties (e.g. canonical word order and sound system) one or two interesting linguistic phenomena
- one or two interesting linguistic phenomena
- the larger language contact situation
- its genetic affiliation(s)
- its level of endangerment
- its social and political status

At the end of the course, you are supposed to summarize what you learned about the language you have been investigating, and connect it to the topics discussed in the class, in a short class presentation approx. 15 min.

Starting from week 2, almost every week there will be an in-class quiz that will address the readings.

There will be a few short assignments in this class, one roughly every two weeks, and the final presentations during the last weeks of the course. The assignments will be relatively short (2-3 pages plus references). All written work that you turn in must be completely and entirely your own effort. Make sure to acknowledge other people's work and cite all sources you used for your assignments.

You are expected to find real primary sources: books and journal articles. The library search engines are the best resource for this. All homeworks must be submitted either in a hand-written form during the class or as PDF documents on CANVAS.

**Other information:** In general, late work will not be accepted. Sometimes, however, absence from class is unavoidable. Acceptable reasons for absence from class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) will also be excused. If you know that you will be unable to complete any work on time, contact the instructor to make prior arrangements. If you are absent on the day an assignment is due, an electronic copy of a completed assignment is usually acceptable. If, for example, you fall ill

the night before a deadline, but have completed your homework, you may e-mail a copy to the instructor (see contact details above). You will have to provide a hard copy later, once you return to class, but will not be penalized. If an unexpected emergency arises, please inform your instructor as soon as possible, and no later than two days after the due date, and keep all records (medical or otherwise) pertaining to the unexpected emergency. The more warning you give, the easier it is to arrive at a solution.

Additional information about the University's grade policies is available: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

**Academic honesty:** Academic misconduct, including but not limited to cheating and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. It may result in disciplinary action and failure in the course. The University has an Honor Code which reads as follows: *We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.* The honor code is accessible online: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>. The bottom line is: 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.* Copying or sharing any part of your homework assignments in any way, shape, or form is strictly prohibited. For computer work, this includes, but is not limited to, using the same file/document as someone else, using a modified file/document, or copying information between files/documents. No written work may be a joint effort in any way unless explicitly permitted and stated.

**Electronics :** Cell phones are expected to be on silent and stored away. Cell phone use will not be tolerated and will result in dismissal from class. Laptops and tablets are allowed in class for class-related purposes only.

**Accommodations for students with disabilities:** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register online with the Dean of Students Office: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

**Course evaluations:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>

Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

**Tentative schedule (subject to changes)**

<b>Week One</b>	
August 20-22	Introduction
Topics:	Basic facts about languages; Languages and dialects; Linguistic diversity
Reading:	Pereltsvaig ch.1
<b>Week Two</b>	
August 27-29	Language endangerment
Topics:	Language Preservation and endangered languages
Reading:	Harrison 2007: ch1, ch2; TBA
<b>Week Three</b>	
September 3-5	Languages of Europe
Topics:	Indo-European, non-Indo-European, comparative reconstruction, endangered languages of Europe
Reading:	Pereltsvaig ch.2
<b>Week Four</b>	
September 10-12	Languages of Iran and South Asia
Topics:	Iranian, Indic, and Dravidian; Universals and Parameters; Generative typology
Reading:	Pereltsvaig ch3; Baker: ch 1-2; Baker: Formal Generative Typology
<b>Week Five</b>	
September 17-19	Languages of Northern Eurasia
Topics:	Finno-Ugric, Uralic, Languages of Siberia, Russian-based Pidgins
Reading:	Pereltsvaig: ch 4; TBA
<b>Week Six</b>	
September 24-26	Languages of the Caucasus
Topics:	Caucasian, Kartvelian, Indo-European languages, Field linguistics
Reading:	Pereltsvaig: ch 5;
<b>Week Seven</b>	
October 1-3	Linguistic fieldwork and language documentation.
Topics:	Methods in Language documentation
Reading:	Harrison (2007): ch7; TBA
<b>Week Eight</b>	
October 8-10	Languages of the Greater Middle East.
topics:	Turkic, Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Language contact
Reading:	Pereltsvaig: ch 6
<b>Week Nine</b>	
October 15-17	Languages of sub-Saharan Africa.
Topics:	Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Congo, Khoisan; official languages, trade languages, creoles
Reading:	Pereltsvaig: ch 7

**Schedule (continued)**

<b>Week Ten</b>	
October 22-24	Languages of Eastern Asia
Topics:	Sino-Tibetan, Austro-Asiatic, Tai-Kadai, Japanese, Korean; Isolating morphology and language change
Reading:	Pereltsvaig ch.8
<b>Week Eleven</b>	
October 29-31	Languages of the South Sea Islands
Topic:	Austronesian, The mystery of Malagasy
Reading:	Pereltsvaig: ch 9
<b>Week Twelve</b>	
November 5-7	Aboriginal languages of Australia and Papua New Guinea
Topics:	Are any languages primitive ?
Reading:	Pereltsvaig: ch 10
<b>Week Thirteen</b>	
November 12-14	Native languages of the Americas
Topics:	North America, Meso-America, Pirahã and its controversies
Reading:	Pereltsvaig: ch 11
<b>Week Fourteen</b>	
November 19-21	Sign languages; ★Final Presentations begin on Nov 21★
Topics:	Sign Languages and Deaf culture
Reading:	TBA
<b>Week Fifteen</b>	
November 26	★Final Presentations★
<b>Week Sixteen</b>	
December 3	★Final Presentations★