

**Tense and Aspect**  
**LIN 4930-258F/LIN 6932-26B0**  
Fall 2020

MWF 7<sup>th</sup> period (1:55-2:45), online – in a synchronous format  
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Office hours: MWF 6<sup>th</sup> period (12:50-1:40), or by appointment

**Best way to contact me is via e-mail.**

Computer classroom support: 392-6683

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

**SINCE THE CLASS IS DELIVERED ONLINE IN A SYNCHRONOUS FORMAT, PLEASE NOTE:**

- While this course is delivered online, there will be several synchronous activities, including lectures, discussion, presentations, and your feedback. These activities will take place during our assigned class time as indicated above. You are expected to be available during those times.
- **Additionally, please keep in mind that all times listed on this syllabus and announced in class are according to Eastern Standard Time (i.e., Gainesville time). If you are not located in the Eastern Standard Time zone, you should adjust times for all synchronous activities and due dates accordingly.**
- Most of our one-on-one communication will occur via email.  
There are two important course policies regarding email: 1) I expect that you are reading your email at least once per day, and 2) All emails that you send must follow basic rules for professional correspondence. If you are unsure of what constitutes professionalism, feel free to ask...or simply err on the side of caution
- Computer Access: The University requires access to and on-going use of a computer. This should not be a tablet device or smartphone, but an actual desktop or laptop computer. To succeed in this course, you will also need a stable internet connection and appropriate space to take online exams using the Honor Lock proctoring service. Minimum equipment specifications are available at: <https://it.ufl.edu/policies/student-computing-requirements/>.

**Course Description and Goals**

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/states/activities, 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 (AKA viewpoint 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.

**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 assignments* 5 x 4% = 20%
- *Exams* 2 x 30% = 60%
- *Term paper OR Article Presentation* 20%

Graduates

- *Homework assignments* 5 x 4% = 20%
- *Exams* 2 x 30% = 60%
- *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 63% of the assignment should be good. For each failing or un-submitted homework assignment, your grade will be lowered by 4%.
- For each homework exercise, I will create an “assignment” on Canvas, where it should be submitted.
- We will typically discuss the homework in class, so late homework cannot be accepted.
- 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 take-home exams to be submitted on Canvas. I will create an “assignment” for each one and allow you 24 hours to answer them.

**Note:** 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, or 14.

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 are due by December 7th.

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 (i.e. the instructor and 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 with respect to the date of their presentation.

• *Attendance and participation*

- Attendance and participation are essential. You are unlikely to succeed in this course without tuning in and paying attention. Please make sure your cellphone is off and you are not distracted by any other way during class time. 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.

- To take attendance, I will end the class a few minutes earlier so you can write a comment. Please try to include some feedback, which I promise to take seriously. I would be grateful if you let me know whether I went too fast/slow, if you have an idea of how I can make things clearer and more enjoyable, etc.
- 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. Tuning in later or tuning out earlier is considered 1/2 absences.
- Absences are considered excused only after you have provided documentation of a conflict that is explicitly covered in the UF Attendance Policy (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>). If you are unable to provide documentation, you may be able to have your absence excused by the Dean of Students Office in extenuating circumstances.
- *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.).

### Course 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/>.

### The course grading scale:

|         |         |         |          |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| A       | A-      | B+      | B        | B-      | C+      | C       | C-      |
| 93-100  | 90-92.9 | 87-89.9 | 83-86.9  | 80-82.9 | 77-79.9 | 73-76.9 | 70-72.9 |
| D+      | D       | D-      | E        |         |         |         |         |
| 67-69.9 | 63-66.9 | 60-62.9 | Below 60 |         |         |         |         |

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

### 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: 8/31, 9/2, 4

Course overview and Introduction

#### Week 2: 9/9, 11 (Note: 9/7 is Labor Day – no classes)

Introduction (cont.)

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

#### Week 3: 9/14, 16 (Note: 9/18 is Rosh Ha-Shana - class cancelled)

Tense Logic

**HW1 (W)**

#### Week 4: 9/21, 23, 25

Tense Logic (cont.)

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

#### Week 5: 9/30 (Note: 9/28 is Yom Kippur and 10/2 is homecoming - classes cancelled)

Reference-Time

**Week 6: 10/5, 7, 9**

Reference-Time (cont.)

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

**HW2 (W)**

**Week 7: 10/12, 14, 16**

Reference-Time (cont.)

**Week 8: 10/19, 21, 23**

Aktionsarten

**Read:** Vendler (1967)

**HW3 (W)**

**Week 9: 10/26, 28, 30**

Aktionsarten (cont.)

**Week 10: 11/2, 4, 6**

Aktionsarten (cont.)

**Review (M); Exam 1: (Due by Tuesday 3PM)**

**The test will be posted on Canvas as an “assignment” at 3:00 PM on Monday (11/2) to be submitted by 3:00PM on Tuesday (11/3).**

**Week 11: 11/9, 13 (Note: 11/11: Veterans Day; no classes)**

Perfective and Imperfective

**Week 12: 11/16, 18, 20**

The Progressive

**Read:** Comrie (1976), sections 0.1-0.3 and sections 1.1.1- 1.2.0 (pp. 16-26)

**HW4 (W)**

Student’s presentation

**Week 13: 11/23 (NOTE: 11/25, 27: Thanksgiving – no classes)**

The Perfect

**Read:** Comrie (1976), Chapter 2

Student’s presentation

**Week 14: 11/30, 12/2, 4**

The Perfect (cont.)

**Read:** Comrie (1976), section 3.1 (pp. 52-60)

Student’s presentation

**HW5 (W)**

Students’ presentations

**Week 15: 12/7, 9**

- **Review (M); Exam 2 (Due Tuesday by 3PM)**

- **The test will be posted on Canvas as an “assignment” at 3:00 PM on Monday (12/7) to be submitted by 3:00PM on Tuesday (12/8).**

- **Term Papers are due (M)**

**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.