

Tense and Aspect
LIN 4930-3310/LIN 6932-26B0
Fall 2024

MWF 7th period (1:55-2:45), Kene Flint 101
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Office hours: MWF 6th period (12:50-1:40), or by appointment

The best way to contact me is via e-mail.

Computer classroom support: 392-6683

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

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 the instructor on Canvas.
3. An excellent discussion is Chapter 6 in the online course on Intensional Semantics of Kai von Fintel and Irene Heim. 2011. MIT Spring Edition. (Free)
<http://web.mit.edu/fintel/fintel-heim-intensional.pdf>

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, 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 are due by December 6th.

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 attending in 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. Tuning in later or tuning out earlier is considered 1/2 absences. Showing up later or leaving 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.).

Other Issues

- **Cellphone and Laptop Policy:**

To ensure full attention during class, you can only use laptops for taking notes and cellphones for emergencies.

- **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/>.

- **University Honesty Policy**

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 Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

- **Students Requiring Accommodations**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). 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.

- **Software Use**

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

- **Student Privacy**

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

Campus Resources:

- 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](#).
- *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](#).
- *Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SAES)*: Student Health Care Center, 352-392-1161;
- *University Police Department*: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
 - 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 Resource 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.
- **[Teaching Center](#)**, Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- **[Writing Studio](#)**, 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- **[Student Complaints On-Campus](#)**: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information](#).
- **[On-Line Students Complaints](#)**: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).

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>

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

Week 1: 8/23

Course overview and Introduction

Week 2: 8/26, 28, 30

Introduction (cont.)

Read: Comrie (1985), Chapter 1

Week 3: 9/2, 4, 6 (Note: 9/2 is Labor Day – no classes; 9/4, 6 Instructor is on a conference – classes cancelled)

Week 4: 9/9, 11, 13

Tense Logic

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

HW1 (W)

Week 5: 9/16, 18, 20

Reference-Time

Week 6: 9/23, 25, 27

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

HW2 (W)

Week 7: 9/30, 10/4 (Note: 10/2 is Rosh Ha-Shana; class cancelled)

Week 8: 10/7, 9, 11

Aktionsarten

Read: Vendler (1967)

HW3 (W)

Week 9: 10/14, 16 (Note: 10/18 is Homecoming – no classes)

Aktionsarten (cont.)

Week 10: 10/21, 23, 25

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 (10/21) to be submitted by 3:00PM on Tuesday (10/22).

Week 11: 10/28, 30, 11/1

Perfective and Imperfective

Week 12: 11/4, 6, 8

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: 11/13, 15 (Note: 11/11 Veterans Day – No classes)

The Perfect

Read: Comrie (1976), Chapter 2

Student’s presentation

Week 14: 11/18, 20, 22

The Perfect (cont.)

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

Student’s presentation

HW5 (W)

Students’ presentations

Week 15: 11/25, 27, 29

Thanksgiving week – No classes

Week 16: 12/2, 4

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

- The test will be posted on Canvas as an “assignment” at 3:00 PM on Monday (12/2) to be submitted by 3:00PM on Tuesday (12/4).

- **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.