**SYLLABUS**

ENGL 395/595: Workshop in Linguistics/Grammar for Teachers

Summer 2018

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**Class meets:** Online

**Overview and Goals:**

The purpose of this class is to add to your understanding of how language works and how it develops in both the native speaker of English as well as the learner of English as a second language. This will help you, the classroom teacher, to discuss and think about issues of language and teaching from an informed standpoint.

We will learn some basic information about the sub-systems active within human language such as the sound system (phonology), word meanings (semantics), and grammar (syntax and morphology), and then discuss how these linguistic principles and concepts relate to teaching reading, writing, and a second language. Additionally, we will give special attention to sentence grammar: namely, the parts of speech, the functions of phrases, and the constituents of the sentence. I hope that what you learn in this class will inform the decisions you make about teaching practices in your own classroom.

Though linguistics and grammar can be rather technical and at times very challenging, the one text we will read is specifically intended for teachers. Consequently, though the material may at times be difficult, it will be relevant. Our linguistics textbook*, Essential Linguistics: What You Need to Know to Teach Reading, ESL, Spelling, Phonics, Grammar*, 2nd Edition, begins with the nature of language and language acquisition.

After that, the authors explain fundamental linguistics concepts and then relate them to pedagogical practices. Much of our online discussion at this time will concern how these concepts relate to issues you are having with your students. If you are not currently a teacher or have never been one, you will find this portion of the course challenging. You will have to rely upon any interactions you have had with children or non-native speakers of English to participate in these discussions.

As for sentence grammar, our goal is to gain a nuts-and-bolts knowledge of how English sentences are structured. Though probably all of you who are practicing teachers already conduct mini-lessons on the subject of language and usage, this class will allow you to deepen your knowledge and make you more confident in talking about language.

During the second half of the term, we will develop a precise technical vocabulary and method of exposition that will allow us to characterize the structure of English sentences. Other than one chapter from *Essential Linguistics*, there will be no textbook for this half of the semester; instead, I will provide materials: documents and links to online grammar sites.

**Procedures:**

First, we should conceptualize this 14-unit course as consisting of two parts: the first is comprised of eight units based upon the textbook, *Essential Linguistics*, the introduction and first eight chapters of which concern the nature of language and language acquisition both spoken and written.

For each unit, I will assign a chapter to read and post questions for you to respond to in the “Discussion” folder of D2L. When the chapters include technical terminology and concepts, I will also post print “lectures” and worksheets that you can self-correct. Likewise, as we learn new linguistic concepts or principles, I will ask you to apply them in an assignment based upon the transcript you have made of real speech (See “Making a Transcript” in the *Content* page of D2L ). Each unit will end with a T/F or multiple choice quiz.

(Note that graduate students are not required to do the assignments based upon the transcript since they are required to do a project. However, graduate students may wish to make a transcript for their own edification or to use as part of their project.)

The second part of the course (six units) will be taken up entirely with sentence grammar. Chapter 9, “English Syntax” is highly abstract and assumes a lot of terminological and conceptual awareness on the part of the reader, so we will go through 5 units to get some background in English grammar.

To do this, we will make reference to the internet, especially such sites as The *Internet Grammar of English* (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/home.htm>) or the *Guide to Grammar and Writing* (<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/index.htm>). I will also supplement these units with printed “lectures” and worksheets that you will complete and self-correct.

As during the first half of the semester, your transcript of speech will serve as a source of data for assignments that will allow us to exercise our growing knowledge of grammatical structures and patterns. There will be some required discussion, but most discussion in this part of the class will be optional. As in part one, there will be a quiz at the end of each unit. Finally, the last chapter of F&F concerns the implications of syntax for teaching and that will constitute our last unit.

For each unit, begin at the “Course Home” page. There I will give you directions on how to proceed through the unit and provide you with deadlines for participating in the discussion and submitting assignments. Once we finish with a unit, it will remain visible to you until the end of the semester so that you can go back and reread lectures or view previous discussions.

**Grading:**

For undergraduates, grades will be determined by the results on the quizzes, assignments, and discussion (see below). If you’re a graduate student, only 60% of your grade is determined in the manner above, and you are not required to do the assignments; the other 40% is derived from your project. (See “595 Projects” in the *Content* page of D2L.).

Determining the quiz grade is straightforward and you will receive your score immediately. The correct answers will be available once the test is closed. The discussion grade I will determine at the end of the semester. I will value the consistency and thoughtfulness of your responses more than the accuracy. In other words, those who contribute early and offer original insights will be graded higher than those who contribute later and more or less repeat what has already been said. The assignments on the transcript that you make will be graded and commented on within a week of your turning them in.

Graduate students Undergraduates

Quizzes: 40% Quizzes: 50%

Discussion: 20% Discussion: 20%

Project 40% Assignments: 30%

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**Textbook**:

Freeman & Freeman, *Essential Linguistics: What You Need to Know to Teach.* 2nd Ed. 2014. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (ISBN: 9780325050935).

This book costs about $30 new and is available directly from the publisher, from the UWSP book store, or “wherever books are sold.” Also, if you live near Stevens Point, the library has a copy.

**REMEMBER**:

1. There is no real time discussion in this class, but there are deadlines. Each unit will be initiated and closed within 3 to 5 days, so you have to keep up with the pace of the class. If you find yourself slipping behind after the first couple of weeks, I suggest you drop. I strongly suggest you write down all of the due dates and times for the deadlines in your schedule book.

2. We are covering a three-credit class in 4 weeks. That means that you will be as busy as a student enrolled for eight credits in a regular term. Moreover, this course is content heavy, meaning that there are a lot of new concepts and terminology to learn and apply. In short, this will be a very challenging course.

3. Some of the quizzes are difficult and you cannot retake them, but the lowest grade you receive (or the one you miss) will not count for the final grade.