

<p style="text-align: center;">UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS</p>
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Language Typology and Universals – LING 5350
Spring Semester 2022

General Information:

Instructor: Dorian Roehrs
Email: roehrs@unt.edu
Main office: (940) 565-4552

Office hours: **W 5:30 – 6:20 (DP E295A) and by appointment**

Class meets: **R 5:30 – 8:20 (DP D212)**

Important Dates:

Final project: **Thursday, May 12**

Course Description and Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to help students acquire formal tools for linguistic theory, and to help them make their first steps toward applying those tools to natural language typology, the comparative study of how languages differ and how they are alike in terms of morpho-syntactic properties. The focus will be on the exploration and description of different languages and language families, and on the formulation of possible language universals. Identifying major morphological and syntactic properties, we will study how languages can be classified on the basis of these structural similarities (rather than shared linguistic ancestry).

The goals of this course are twofold:

- 1) to identify major morphological and syntactic structures by reading and analyzing linguistic grammars of more “exotic” languages
- 2) to get acquainted with a number of issues in typology (e.g., language samples and the logic of language types and implicational universals)

While the point of departure will be the Germanic languages, the main focus will be on less well-studied and analyzed languages. More generally, the course aims at further developing analytical linguistic skills and a deeper understanding of language. The class is participatory (this is not a lecture course); that means, students should take notes on their readings at home.

Required Text:

Comrie, Bernard. 1989. *Language Universals & Linguistic Typology. Syntax and Morphology*. 2nd ed. University of Chicago Press.

The World Atlas of Language Structures Online 2013: <http://wals.info>

Instructor-generated handouts

General Course Policies: (For special COVID-19 considerations, see separate section below)

1. Attendance: Repeated unexcused absences and tardiness will affect your grade significantly. Three tardies are the equivalent of one absence. You are allowed a maximum of one (1) absence without penalty. After one absence, your attendance grade will suffer in percent. After the fourth absence, you will receive a failing grade for the entire class. Under certain circumstances, special accommodations can be made at the instructor's discretion.

2. Participation: Careful preparation for class and regular, active participation are the foundation of this course! **Cellular phones must be switched off and kept out of sight (unless they are used for class).**

3. Homework: There are reading assignments due for each class period. These assignments will consist of taking notes. In addition, students will, in teams, adopt a grammar of an "exotic" language *unfamiliar* to them, and be prepared to present and explain relevant aspects of its linguistic structure. This will culminate in the writing of three short reports.

4. Final Project: The Final Project will consist of a longer paper. It will be due on **May 12**.

5. Length and Formatting of Write-ups:

Reports (3):	2 - max. 3 pages
Final Project:	7 - max. 10 pages

12-point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1-inch margins all around

COLLECTIVE WORK. Students are allowed (in fact, encouraged) to work together on the homework assignments. However, every student will turn in their own write-up (and not a copy of somebody else's).

All class communication will be sent to your official UNT email address.

Evaluation:

Attendance, Preparation, Active Participation	10%
Individual Write-up of Reports (3 x 15 points)	45%
Group Presentation of Final Project	10%
Individual Write-up of Final Project	35%

Grade Distribution:

A = 100 – 90%
B = 89.9 – 80%
C = 79.9 – 70%
D = 69.9 – 60%
F = 59.9 – 0%

Special COVID-19 Considerations:

Attendance

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 please seek medical attention from the

Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

Class Materials for Remote Instruction

*Remote instruction may be necessary if community health conditions change or you need to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19. Students will need access to a **webcam and microphone** to participate in fully remote portions of the class. Additional required classroom materials for remote learning include: **Computer with internet access**. Information on how to be successful in a remote learning environment can be found at <https://online.unt.edu/learn>.*

Recordings

Under special circumstances, synchronous (live) sessions in this course will be recorded for students enrolled in this class section to refer to throughout the semester. Class recordings are the intellectual property of the university or instructor and are reserved for use only by students in this class and only for educational purposes. Students may not post or otherwise share the recordings outside the class, or outside the Canvas Learning Management System, in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

Face Coverings

UNT encourages everyone to wear a face covering when indoors, regardless of vaccination status, to protect yourself and others from COVID infection, as recommended by current CDC guidelines. Face covering guidelines could change based on community health conditions.

Religious Holidays:

In accordance with Section 51.911 of the Texas Education Code, UNT will allow a student who is absent from class for observance of a religious holy day to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time. Students are required to file a written request with each professor within the first 15 days of the semester to qualify for an excused absence. A copy of the state rules and procedures regarding holy days and the form for notification of absence from each class under this provision are available from the Registrar's Office.

American with Disabilities Act Compliance:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester.

and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Acceptable Student Behavior:

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs: <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources>.

The UNT Survivor Advocates can be reached by emailing SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or calling 940-565-2648. The UNT Survivor Advocates connect students who have been impacted by violence to resources (counseling, health, safety, academics, legal, etc.), and act as their advocate. They can assist a student by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change (if needed), and connecting students to the many other resources that are available, both on and off campus. They are here to help! For more information see <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/sexual-misconduct/reporting-sexual-misconduct>

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT):

The student evaluation of teaching effectiveness is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. A short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider SPOT to be an important part of your participation in this class.

Tentative Schedule

PLEASE NOTE THERE WILL BE NO RIGID ADHERENCE TO THIS SCHEDULE, SHOULD THE CLASS NEED MORE TIME FOR SOME LESSONS AND LESS TIME FOR OTHER LESSONS.

week	contents	assignments
WEEK 1 Jan. 17 MLK-Day Jan. 18 – 21	Introduction to course Chapter 1: Language Universals Chapter 2: Language Typology	Read Chapters 1 & 2
WEEK 2 Jan. 24 – 28	Chapter 2: cont. Chapter 3: Theoretical Prerequisites	Read Chapter 3, Kroeger Chapters 1 & 2
WEEK 3 Jan. 31 – Feb. 4	Chapter 4: Word Order	Read Chapter 4; (opt: Song Chapter 2); Choose Language
WEEK 4 Feb. 7 – 11	Chapter 4: cont.	Read WALS “Determining Dominant Word Order”, 81, 85-86, 88-89; (opt: WALS 82-84); Paper 1
WEEK 5 Feb. 14 – 18	Chapter 5: Subject	Read Chapter 5; (opt: WALS 101)
WEEK 6 Feb. 21 – 25	Chapter 9: Animacy	Read Chapter 9; (opt: Hopper & Thompson 1980)
WEEK 7 Feb. 28 – March 4	Chapter 6: Case Marking	Read Chapter 6; (opt: Song Chapter 3); Paper 2
WEEK 8 March 7 – 11	Chapter 6: cont.	Read WALS 28, 49-51, 98-99
Spring Break		
WEEK 9 March 21 – 25	Chapter 7: Relative Clauses	Read Chapter 7; (opt. Song Chapter 4)
WEEK 10 March 28 – April 1	Chapter 7: cont.	Read WALS 60, 87, 90, 96-97; (opt: WALS 122-123); Paper 3
WEEK 11 April 4 – 8	Chapter 8: Causative Constructions	Read Chapter 8; (opt: Song Chapter 5)
WEEK 12 April 11 – 15	Chapter 8: cont.	Read WALS 110, 111
WEEK 13 April 18 – 22	Wrap-up	
WEEK 14 April 25 – 29	Group presentations and feedback	Presentation of Final Project
WEEK 15 (Pre-final w) May 2 – 5 May 6 Reading D.	Group presentations and feedback	Presentation of Final Project
Finals	May 12, 2022	Write-up of Final Project

opt: optional

Hopper, Paul J. & Thompson, Sandra A. 1980. Transitivity in grammar and discourse. *Language* 56: 251-99.
Song, Jae Jung. 2001. *Linguistic Typology. Morphology and Syntax*. Routledge.