

Language Patterns: Types and Universals

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Office hours TR 2-3 or by appointment

Class time and place TR 12:30-1:50, Morton 202

Language Patterns provides an introduction to the major grammatical categories and constructions in language, from parts of speech to grammatical relations, case, constituent order, aspect, negation, and voice. Students will learn the major patterns in each of these areas, diagnostics distinguishing them, and theories attempting to explain patterns or tendencies in the data. Through this course students should learn:

- to see beyond the categories of languages they know
- to make informed hypotheses about linguistic phenomena
- to consider historical, cognitive, and other explanations in language
- to recognize the ways linguists describe, observe, and analyze language

More general goals include learning to read articles in the field, understanding standard terminology and schools of thought, and gaining the ability to pose questions and assemble data. In order to meet these goals, readings will be selected on specific topics from articles in the typological literature. Language sketches will be assigned to serve as models of grammatical description and to reveal how languages work as systems.

Schedule at a glance (major assignments in *italics*, readings underlined)

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	<i>Week and topic</i>
			...	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	1 Introduction
<u>Aug.</u>	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	2 The fundamentals, <u>Parts of speech</u>
Sept.	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3 The fundamentals; Europe: <u>Czech</u>
	12	13	<u>14</u>	15	16	17	18	4 <i>Find grammar</i> ; Noun-related phenomena; <u>Possession</u>
	19	20	21	22	23	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	5 Noun-related phenomena; Asia: <u>Chinese</u>
	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	1	2	6 <i>Exam 1</i> ; Verb-related phenomena, <u>Tense</u>
Oct.	3	4	5	6	7	8	<u>9</u>	7 Verb-related phenomena; Africa: <u>Luganda</u>
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	8 FALL BREAK; Verb-related phenomena, <u>Honorifics</u>
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	9 Verb-related phenomena; Australia/Pacific: <u>Kapampangan</u>
	24	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	10 Verb-related phenomena, <u>Serial verbs</u>
	<u>31</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	11 <i>Exam 2</i> ; The Americas: <u>Guaraní</u>
Nov.	7	8	9	10	<i>11</i>	12	13	12 <i>Presentations and sketches</i> (sketch due 11/11)
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	13 Re-examining the fundamentals
	21	22	23	24	25	26	<u>27</u>	14 Re-examining the fundamentals; THANKSGIVING
	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	1	2	3	4	15 Re-examining the fundamentals; Summary
Dec.	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
	12	13	<u>14</u>	15	...			<i>Final exam 12/14, 8:30-11:30am</i>

Prerequisites

Anthropology/English 220; English 304 and 307 are helpful.

Detailed schedule (major assignments in *italics*, readings underlined)

Week 1 (8/26). Introduction.

PART 1. THE FUNDAMENTALS

Week 2 (8/31-9/2). Describing and understanding language; Basic concepts (the word, Parts of speech and phrase categories).

Week 3 (9/7-9/9). Language types in broad strokes (morphological types, ways of tracking arguments, constituent order types); Europe: Czech.

PART 2. NOUNS AND TYPICALLY NOUN-RELATED PHENOMENA

Week 4 (9/14-9/16). Nominalization, Noun compounds, Number; Size, Possession, Pronouns, Demonstratives, Definiteness.

Week 5 (9/21-9/23). Counting, Quantifiers, Noun classes, Case, Discourse markers, Relative clauses; Asia: Chinese.

PART 3. TYPICALLY VERB- AND SENTENCE-RELATED PHENOMENA

Week 6 (9/28-9/30). *Exam 1*; Tense, Aspect.

Week 7 (10/5-10/7). Verb compounds (noun incorporation), Number, Size, Person; Africa: Luganda.

Week 8 (10/12-10/14). FALL BREAK; Negation, Mood, Commands, Questions, Honorifics.

Week 9 (10/19-10/21). Location and direction, Transitive/intransitive alternations, Indirect causatives, Applicatives, Voice, Existence; Australia/Pacific: Kapampangan.

Week 10 (10/26-10/28). Adverbial clauses, Complement clauses, Combining phrases, Serial verbs.

Week 11 (11/2-11/4). *Exam 2*; The Americas: Guaraní.

Week 12 (11/9-11/11). *Presentations and sketches*.

PART 4. RE-EXAMINING THE FUNDAMENTALS

Week 13 (11/16-11/18). Basic concepts (the word, parts of speech and phrase categories); Grammatical relations.

Week 14 (11/23-11/25). Constituency and constituent order; THANKSGIVING.

Week 15 (11/30-12/2). Describing and understanding language; Summary.

12/14. *Final exam*, 8:30-11:30am.

Requirements

Homework	15%	(The cumulative grade may be lowered with noticeably poor attendance.)
Midterm exams	35%	
Sketch	15%	
Final exam	35%	

- **Homework** is designed to make sure you are doing the reading, attending, and understanding concepts. They often include problem sets or short descriptions that will form part of the sketch. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments may be accepted up to one week late, but the grade will be lowered.
- The two **exams** test terminology and ability to do problems.
- The **presentation and sketch** are due in week 12. By the beginning of week 3, you should have located a suitable reference grammar of an 'exotic' language (outside of Germanic and Italic). Look for one that's comprehensive, easy to read, and makes clear what each word means. Bring your source to class and get it approved. In week 12, you'll turn in a sketch (10-20 pages, double spaced) based on your source and make a five-minute presentation to the class with a handout. The point is to summarize the main features of the language (genetic classification, sounds in a chart, constituent order, negation, tense, etc.) and what aspects are expected or unexpected from a crosslinguistic perspective.
- The **final exam** will be cumulative and will concentrate on problem sets and terminology.

Useful references

- Asher, R. E., ed. in chief. 1994. *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. Oxford: Pergamon Press. REF P 29 E48 1994 (10 vols.)
- Crystal, David. 1992. *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell. REF P 29 C68 1992
- Frawley, William J., ed. 2003. *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Malmkjaer, Kirsten, ed. 1991. *The Linguistics Encyclopedia*. London: Routledge. REF P 29 L52 1991
- Payne, Thomas E. 1997. *Describing morphosyntax: A guide for field linguists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.