**EL5104 Approaches to Language**                    **Thursday: 6 pm – 9 pm, AS4-0206**
**AY2022/2023, Semester 1**
**Department of English, Linguistics, and Theatre Studies; NUS**

## Module Description

This foundational module familiarizes graduate students with the major theoretical principles and research paradigms that define the various subfields of linguistics. The module surveys the history of linguistics as a discipline, and introduces major thinkers, key linguistic concepts, significant debates, and basic research methods. Topics covered include formal linguistics, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, contact linguistics, psycholinguistics, computational linguistics, and applied linguistics. Students will complete the module with a solid understanding of the range of topics addressed and approaches used in the study of language.

## Workload

This is a 4 MC module = 10 hours a week, allocated as 0-3-0-4-3 (Lecture, Tutorial, Lab, Project, Preparation)

## Instructor information

Dr. Nick Huang ("Nick" is fine)

Email            znhuang@nus.edu.sg

Office           AS5, 05-05

Office hours     online, by appointment

## Course assessment

**Class participation (15%)**: Students will be required to post responses on the weekly readings, by 11.59 pm on Wednesday before class. All responses are to be posted on LumiNUS. Submit 9 responses to get full credit.

**Presentation (15%)**: Students will present one of the weekly discussion readings in class. Presenters will also lead class discussion, by presenting and discussing questions or reading responses posted by other students of the class.

**Tests (30%)**: Students will complete two closed-book in-class, short-answer tests on the material covered throughout the semester (15% each). The tests are not cumulative in terms of scope (i.e. Test 1 and Test 2 will cover different topics).

**Essay (40%)**: Students will write up an individual proposal for a research project of approximately 3,000 words, including relevant background literature, the research question to be addressed, the methodology to be used, and the hypothesized findings.

### Class participation

This module will be conducted in person. Although I will make the course materials available on LumiNUS, I expect students to attend class every week and to participate actively.

### Late work

If you realise you cannot meet a deadline, let me know as soon as possible, unless it is a family, personal, or health emergency. Otherwise, <u>there will be a 10% penalty for every day or part thereof.</u>

## Module structure

All readings will be made available on LumiNUS. There is no textbook.

This module will be taught in person. We will meet one time a week, at 6 pm on Thursday. We will take a break around halfway (~7 pm) each class.

## Schedule (tentative)

| Week | Date | Topic | Deadlines |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 11 Aug | The origins of modern linguistics | |
| 2 | 18 Aug | Phonetics | |
| 3 | 25 Aug | Phonology and morphology | |
| 4 | 1 Sep | Syntax | |
| 5 | 8 Sep | Semantics and pragmatics | |
| 6 | 15 Sep | Historical linguistics, language evolution | |
| Recess | | | |
| 7 | 29 Sep | Language variation and change | Test 1 |
| 8 | 6 Oct | Language variation and change (continued); Language in its social context | |
| 9 | 13 Oct | Discourse analysis | |
| 10 | 20 Oct | Language contact and World Englishes | |
| 11 | 27 Oct | Psycholinguistics, language and thought | |
| 12 | 3 Nov | Computational linguistics, corpus linguistics | |
| 13 | 10 Nov | Applied linguistics, language teaching | Test 2 + Essay |

## Class attendance

Class attendance is expected. If you have to miss class, please let me know as soon as possible.

## General rules

### Know the syllabus

If you have questions about how the module is managed, the schedule, requirements – consult this syllabus first.

### Keep an eye on the big picture

This is a graduate survey course in linguistics, and the pace is intended to be faster than undergraduate courses. I will make available some textbooks as a reference on LumiNUS, but a key goal is to create opportunities for reading primary literature, engaging in academic discussion, and seeing how different subfields are connected (or not) to each other. Consequently, an important skill is learning how to read quickly and get the gist of a reading – even for topics that you might be less interested in.

### Feel free to collaborate, but submit your own work

You should feel free to discuss the course material with other students. Working with others is a great way to learn!

However, the work that you submit must be your own.

When turning in the essay, list the students who you worked with / discussed with, if any.

## No plagiarism

NUS Code of Student Conduct (Clause 4):

> *The University takes a strict view of cheating in any form, deceptive fabrication, plagiarism and violation of intellectual property and copyright laws. Any student who is found to have engaged in such misconduct will be subject to disciplinary action by the University.*

For the purpose of this class, this means:

- Cite your sources. It's fine to refer to other sources, but always give them credit. Quote them if you are not confident of paraphrasing them in your own words.
- To repeat: You **must** write up your own work, even if you might have arrived at your conclusions after discussing the topic with someone else.

## Ask questions – don't be shy about asking for help

You should feel free to post questions on LumiNUS: Forum > Questions. I want you to learn something in this module and to do well. So, if you have questions, always let me know: znhuang@nus.edu.sg.

More general FASS resources:

a) FASS Student Support team
    a. Lynn Seah – lynnseah@nus.edu.sg
    b. Mark Tan – mark.tan@nus.edu.sg
    c. Tan Kai Lin – kailin.tan@nus.edu.sg

b) Counselling Centre: http://www.nus.edu.sg/uhc/
    Email: ucs@nus.edu.sg
    Telephone: (65) 6516 2376 (Counselling Centre Office Hours)
            (65) 6516 7777 (Lifeline NUS for life-threatening emergencies – 24 hours)
            (65) 1800 221 4444 (SOS Crisis Hotline – 24 hours)
            (65) 6874 1616 (NUS Campus Security – 24 hours)

c) University-level Financial Aid:      http://www.nus.edu.sg/oam/financialaid/
        Contact:                        https://www.nus.edu.sg/oam/contact-us
    Faculty-level Financial Aid:        https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/fas/ug/financial-aid/scholarships-bursaries-financialaid.html

# Class participation (15%)

By **11.59 pm on Wednesday for each of those weeks**, post a comment about the readings for the week on LumiNUS > Forums > WkX.

Your comment for each reading should not be long, but I expect <u>two paragraphs: one per bullet item in the presentation schedule (= a textbook chapter or equivalent + the paper being presented that week)</u>. The paragraphs should contain some evidence that you have done the readings and thought about it. Some examples:

- A clarification question, with details about what you did not understand.
- A comment on why you found the readings convincing (or not convincing). Substantiate.
- A comment on connections between the readings.
- A comment pointing out problematic facts from English or some other language. You should feel free to draw upon your own knowledge.

If you are presenting that week, you do not have to post a comment for that week.

# Presentation (15%)

## Instructions

Sign up for a presentation slot. We have 20 students and 10 papers, which works out to 2 people / paper.

What you are expected to do if you are presenting:

1. Read the assigned excerpts. (You are also welcome to read more!)
2. Prepare a Powerpoint or Google Slides presentation covering the points below. This should be about 15-20 minutes long.
3. Be ready for questions from the audience. (Take a look at the comments posted.)

I would like presenters to take a critical view of the paper they are presenting. It might be helpful for the two presenters to take sides: one to defend the paper, one to criticise the paper.

## Rubric
Content (10%)

- Was your presentation an accurate summary of the reading?
- What is the big issue being investigated here?
- Details: What is the argument(s) they present? What did they find? What assumptions did they have to make?

Your opinion (2%):

- What questions does their finding raise?
- Does the analysis make sense to you? What issues should have been addressed?

Clarity (3%)

- How clear was your presentation overall?
- How clearly did you present the key evidence: the charts / figures / examples?
- Time management: was your presentation too fast? Too slow? (both in terms of actual number of minutes taken and in terms of pacing)

Version as of 12 August 2022

## Schedule

| Week | Date | Topic |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 11 Aug | The origins of modern linguistics |
| 2 | 18 Aug | Phonetics<br>- Roberts, ch. 1<br>- Presentation: Lisker & Abramson 1964, pp. 384-407 |
| 3 | 25 Aug | Phonology and morphology<br>- Roberts, chs. 2 and 3<br>- Presentation: Antilla et al. 2008, pp. 181-193 |
| 4 | 1 Sep | Syntax<br>- Roberts, ch. 4<br>- Presentation: Chomsky 1957, pp. 13-25 |
| 5 | 8 Sep | Semantics and pragmatics<br>- Roberts, chs. 5, 6<br>- Presentation: Coppock & Champollion 2021, pp. 54-77 (I will explain the section on sets first) |
| 6 | 15 Sep | Historical linguistics, language evolution<br>- Roberts ch. 7<br>- Presentations: DeLancey 2013; Emonds & Faarlund 2016 |
| Recess | | |
| 7 | 29 Sep | **Test 1**<br>Language variation and change<br>- Roberts ch. 8 |
| 8 | 6 Oct | Language in its social context + Guest presentation by Mie Hiramoto<br>- Presentations: Eckert 2012; Hall et al. 2021 |
| 9 | 13 Oct | Discourse analysis<br>- Blommaert 2005, chs. 3<br>- Presentation: Blommaert 2005, chs. 4 |
| 10 | 20 Oct | Language contact and World Englishes<br>- Sebba 1997 ch. 1<br>- Presentation: Schneider 2007 ch. 2 |
| 11 | 27 Oct | Psycholinguistics, language and thought<br>- Roberts ch. 9<br>- Presentation: Gleitman 1990 (first 20 pages of PDF) |
| 12 | 3 Nov | Computational linguistics, corpus linguistics<br>- Greenbaum & Nelson 1996<br>- Papers: *The Chomsky-Norvig debate* -- Norvig 2011: http://norvig.com/chomsky.html<br>- Kocijan et al. 2022 (manuscript), p.1-25 (stop at the end of Section 3.1)<br><br>Optional readings:<br>- Pereira 2001<br>- Jurafsky & Martin 2010 ch. 1: https://home.cs.colorado.edu/~martin/slp.html#Chapter1 |
| 13 | 10 Nov | **Test 2**<br>Applied linguistics<br>Paper: Shuy 2015 |

# Final essay (40%)

## Instructions

Write a final paper of about 3,000 to 4,000 words: Propose a follow-up research project based on the papers that we have read this semester, or a new research project on some topic of your choice (feel free to propose something based on what you are doing in your other modules, for instance).

- This project is likely to cover a very specific topic in a single language. It will be very difficult, given the page range, to cover a much bigger scope.
- You should do your own readings and draw on your own knowledge of languages.
- Explain clearly:
    o Why this question is interesting to you and to others
    o What has been said already
    o What exactly you intend to do, and how this question can be addressed or answered through your proposed study
    o Limitations of your approach
    o To the extent that there are experiments or corpus analyses that could/should be run, you should feel free to suggest and describe them.
- If you discuss other papers, make sure you cite them.
- Use either Chicago or APA citation style.
- No need for cover page.
- Submit the paper in Word / PDF format onto LumiNUS, by <u>Friday 11 November 11.59 pm on LumiNUS</u>. (But I am happy to consider requests for an extension.)

## Rubric

Content (30%)

- How rich is your discussion?
- How well did you summarise the issues at hand?
- Did you anticipate any weaknesses or issues with your proposed approach? How do you counter or address them? Do you discuss the extent to which they could affect your conclusions?

Clarity and style (10%)

- Does your paper make one go: "Oh, that's really interesting!"
- How easy is it to follow your argument?
- How clearly did you present and discuss relevant examples or statistics?