Goal of the course: to remember what made it possible for each of us to discover the structure of the language that was being spoken around us. With ZERO instruction. To get a better understanding of the immensity of this achievement. To realize that all that we experienced during this amazing example of extraordinary learning was play. It was all FUN.

The subsidiary goals of the course will vary with the particular interests of each student. A small minority may want to become linguists; for them, it will serve as an introduction to some fundamental pillars of the field. But for the broad majority, linguistics itself may seem to be only a distant tangent to their majors. Interestingly, regardless of which of these groups you find yourself in, all of us were peerless linguists when we were babies. As kids, and without any equipment, we performed detailed analyses of language that no professional adult linguist can duplicate, no matter how many computers are available for the task. And we were playing throughout.

Thus for anyone getting acquainted with linguistics, that person is poking around in a part of their mind which may have been inactive for decades, but which may become partially reaccessible. One of the less obvious goals of the course is that students, by watching how they (re)learn linguistic concepts, can use our time together as an exercise in deuterolearning. Gregory Bateson, one of the greatest thinkers of the twentieth century, distinguished between protolearning, such as learning statistics, chess, or surfing, and learning how to learn – the activity for which he coined the term deuterolearning. In our course, participants will be encouraged to watch the way they acquire new concepts – to keep a journal, if possible. What they learn about the way they relearn awareness of language may generalize to other areas of their studies.

One of the most important questions we can ask ourselves is this: who says that learning has to be slow and painful? We know something quite else to be true.

We ask: can we learn to return to the natural learning that we had fun using to awake into our mother language when we were 2 or 3? Can we reignite the innate joy and creativity that all of us swam in in our first years?

**Section I  –  Morphology – the Study of Words**

**Week 1.**  Etymology – a brief history of English
1st class:  
What English wells from: German, Latin, Greek
2nd class:  
How spelling tips you off
Homework:  
Luiseño problem

Week 2.  
Affixes and small change – short pieces of meaning

3rd class:  
Words of one syllable: church, grunt, strong, in.
Words of two syllables: Germanic affixes – churches, grunt-ing, stronger, inner
4th class:  
Fancy talk: Latin & Greek 75-centers. How to hi-falute
Homework:  
Swahili problem

Week 3.  
Parts of speech I

5th class:  
The category scorecard – what words are who
6th class:  
What went wrong with the uncola. Esso becomes Exxon
Homework:  
unkind >>> **inkind; intolerant ≥ ?*untolerant

Week 4.  
Parts of speech II

7th class:  
Kinds of nouns: count, mass, proper, collective, . . .
8th class:  
Kinds of verbs: actions, events, perceivings, states
Homework:  
Wording up: weigh [the fruit /200 pounds]; misweigh [the fruit / *200 pounds]. Misscream *(the oath).

Week 5.  
Parts of speech III

9th class:  
The grammar of suffixes – what kinds of stems a particular affix can attach to: un[kind/*elbow]
10th class:  
Morphological trees: [[un-kind]_{A} + ly] vs. [un[friend + ly]_{N}]
Homework:  
Piling on the affixes – nominalizations of verbalizations of adjectivalizations of nouns: segmentalizationalizational.

Week 6.  
Alloing I – some differences don’t make any

11th class:  
Allomorphs: in- “versus” im- [in/*im]tractable but [im/*in]practical cats/*es but sash/es/*s
12th class:  
How to unnotice differences in cursive writing. Graphemes and allographs: low-ending and high-ending cursive letters. Low-beginning and high-beginning allographs of cursive letters
Homework:  
a “versus” an. More “versus” -er – more intelligent /*intelligenter but smarter/?more smart.

Section II – Phonology – the Study of Speech Sounds

Week 7.  
The phonetic alphabet – points of articulation, manners of articulation

13th class:  
Transcribing consonants
14th class:  
Transcribing vowels
Homework:  
A present for classmates – transcribing something that matters
Week 8.  **emic** “vs.”  **etic**

15th class:  Alloii II – how to unnotice phonetic differences.  
Phonemes and allophones – the “2”’s in English; “2” vowel lengths in English; vowel nasality in English.

16th class:  The Lazy Tongue.  The Lazy Hand – allochires in finger-spelling.

Homework:  Turkish suffixes.

**Week 9.**  Autodishyptonization of selective phonetic deafness

17th class:  Different phonemes or different allophones?

18th class:  Faspeach.  *Grapepizza.  Googuys.  Bapman.*  Homework:  
in how few syllables can you say *No I do not want any of them?*


**TAKE-HOME MIDTERM**

**Section III – Semantax – the Study of Phrases, Sentences, Meanings**

**Week 10.**  Chunks (a. k. a. phrases, constituents)

19th class:  **Endocentric phrases.**  HEADS and modifiers:  [Adj + NOUN = *fat CAT*];  [VERB + Adv = *VISIT seldom*]; [Adv + ADJECTIVE = *rather UGLY*]; [Adv + ADVERB = *too SOON*].  A maybe different case?:  
[PREPOSITION + noun phrase = *IN the box*]  
**Exocentric phrases.**  Sentence = NP + VP.  Coordinate structures.

20th class:  Phrase-structure rules and trees.  How to make a tree.
Homework:  The Fifty-Four Trees:  Japanese, English, Brasilian

**Week 11.**  Sentencemes and allosentences

21st class:  Related sentences – How to say things in other words.  
Zellig Harris’s three core insights:  (a) big sentences are made out of little sentences (so-called kernel sentences); (b) the meanings of big sentences are composed (somebow) of the meanings of the meanings of the kernel sentences from which they derive; and (c) kernel structures are much more similar across the languages of the world than are surface structures.  Noam Chomsky’s notion of deep and surface structure.  From deeper to shallower versions of a sentence – transformations (T’s).  Processes which delete chunks, move them around, or fuse them together.

22nd class:  The Core of Semantax (OCM):  Only Chunks Move  
Ambiguous sentences.  How T’s disambiguate.  Islands.

Homework:  How many different ways are there to say *No one has ever kicked Ed.*  [Hint: more than you can possibly think]
Week 12. A hint of meaning

23rd class: Relational Grammar; Thematic relations. What T's preserve. A sentence and its translation – how different the two surface structures, how similar the two deep structures.

24th class: Abstract semantax: adjectives as NP's; inchoatives and causatives; actions, performative clauses.

Homework: Find the deepest possible structures of these sentences: Max returned friends with Sal; Kim allegedly mooned Pat; Terry ridiculed my ideas.

Week 13. Language and society

25th class: Variation across area, gender, class, race, style clashes
26th class: The N-word. “Correctness.”

Homework: Read Labov's “The logic of non-standard English.” Do you agree with his notion of “verbal deprivation”? Are you for it or against it?

Week 14. Metaphor

27th class: To metaphor :: to talk about one thing in terms of another. Love is a journey. Argument is war. Truth is light.

Week 15. Language and beauty: poetics.

29th class: FIND THE POEM. We listen to a poem and translations of it into three different languages. But we are not told which of these four versions of the same (?) poem was the original one. We try to guess which one it is. How are we able to achieve this feat? What is it in a poem that makes it great, strong, indelible? We begin to see the contours of mastery in the art of verbal music.

30th class What we have learned so far. So what?


Read around in it. Find things that fascinate you. Tell other members of the class what you have found.

Turn in homework assignments on time. Come to class regularly. Think. Question. Argue. Participate.
This is a heads-on class. Watch how you learn, watch how your classmates learn. Do not think that you will get it if all you do is read and write things. NB: an unreasonable number of excused or unexcused absences may affect your grade.

Suggested supplements:

Edward Sapir, *Language*, (1921) [a paperback is still in print!!].
Better yet: it is on the web for free!!
http://www.bartleby.com/186/

The good news: Any tests will be open book – any books or other materials may be brought to the tests. More likely, they will be take-home. You will be able to consult more there than you can carry.

The bad news: None of your materials will help much, if you have not learned to think for yourself about the course. This course is not about memorization of a set of concepts and definitions. Rather, what is required is a general openness of mind, and the exercise of intelligence and creativity. What is not required, but is fervently hoped for, is that you become fascinated with language, and find that you cannot live without it. [BTW: you can’t]

Grading policy: To be discussed in class.

Disabilities: In accordance with the terms and spirit of Public Law 101-336 (Americans with Disabilities Act) and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will cooperate with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable special arrangements for students with disabilities. If you have a disability which will require some accommodation under the terms of these acts, please come to me and discuss your individual needs, or give me a written statement. If you have not registered yet with the Office of Disability Accommodation, I encourage you to do so. Their telephone number is (940) 565-4323; TDD access (940) 565 2958.

General: Insofar as this is possible, nothing is written in stone. No significant learning is possible in contexts which are not as kind and flexible as possible. We are all humans, trying to learn from each other. If there are special problems for you, come and talk to me about them.
“It is in fact nothing short of a miracle that modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry; for this delicate little plant, aside from stimulation, stands warmly in need of freedom; without this, it goes to wrack and ruin without fail.”

Albert Einstein

The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science.

Albert Einstein
The World As I See It