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?
Poetics or Language “and” literature or Linguisterature

The universal language of linguistic power. How writers choose their words and sequences of words in such a way as to render them eternal: To be or not to be . . . Old tricks (rhyme, alliteration, metaphor and other tropes, compaction, etc.) and new ones (sore-thumbing, lonering, punch-lining, hologramming, integering, corridorizing, etc.). How writers get past the ineffable. The soul of words.

1. Week 1. Types of poetic distribution of linguistic elements in the stanzas of a poem: splittings, balancings, lonerings, one-offings.


   Example poems: Blake – The Tyger, Williams – To Waken an Old Lady.


5. Week 5. Fusion.


   Example poems: Yeats – When You Are Old and Grey, Williams – To Waken an Old Lady, Blake – The Tyger.


Example poems: Williams – *so much depends*, Silva – *Poema para ser lido de baixo para cima*

Example poems: Sandburg – *Fog*, Basho – *huruike ya*, Stevens – *The Well Dressed Man With a Beard*, Shakespeare – *To be or not to be – that is the question.*


Course Grade and Requirements:

Attendance and Participation: 50%
3 Poetry contributions with discussion 30%

Final research paper on selected poet with 2 poems analyzed using the linguistic tools discussed in class 20%

Books


Life in our class

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 10 1-336 (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.
The search for truth is in one way hard and in another easy –
for it is evident that no one of us can ever master it fully,
nor miss it wholly. Each one of us adds a little
to our knowledge of nature,
and from all the facts assembled
arises a certain grandeur.

Aristotle

From a wall in the Museum of Science in Boston