

Course Code: HUMA 1010
Course Title: Introduction to Language
Course Offered in: Fall 2025
Course Instructor: Dr. Dechao Li

Course Description: This course introduces the nature of human language to students, with respect to phonetics (the sounds of language), phonology (the sound patterns of language), morphology (the structure and properties of words), semantics (the meaning of language) and syntax (the sentence patterns of language). It also provides a view of the biological characteristics of language, in terms of how it is acquired and processed by the human brain. Furthermore, it also discussed the social aspects of language.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

	Course ILOs
1	An appreciation of the specific properties of human language, as well as the universals and diversities among different languages of the world.
2	A basic grasp of the fundamental concepts in the study of language, with respect to phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantics and syntax.
3	An understanding of the biological foundations of language, in terms of how language is acquired and processed.
4	An awareness of the social aspects of language, as in its role in human thought and society.

Course Outline:

Part I: Introduction

Part II: phonetics: the sounds of language

Part III: phonology: the sound pattern of language

Part IV: morphology: the structure and properties of words

Part V: semantics: the meaning of language

Part VI: syntax: the sentence pattern of language

Part VII nature of language: What is language? Human language vs. communication systems of other species; language and thought; language of the world.

Part VIII language evolution:.

Part IX language acquisition: the linguistic capacity of children; childhood bilingualism and second language acquisition

Part X language in society

Planned Assessment Tasks:

Assignments (2 times):	20%
In-class quizzes (5 times):	35%
Final Exam:	45%

Three samples of readings:

Fromkin, Victoria, Robert Rodman, and Nina Hyams. 2014. *In Introduction to Language*. 10th ed. Australia: Cengage Learning.

David, Crystal. 2010. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. 3rd ed. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Fasold, Ralph, and Jeff Connor-Linton. eds. 2006. *An Introduction to Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.