

COURSE ID

LING 4880/6880

TITLES

Course Title: Introduction to Language Documentation and Field Methods

Athena Title: Language Doc and Field Methods

COURSE DESCRIPTION (must be 50 words or less)

Introduction to linguistic fieldwork and language documentation through work with a speaker of an unknown language. Methods of eliciting, transcribing, organizing, and storing data; data analysis, formulating and testing hypotheses; and ethical issues involved in linguistic fieldwork.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate students will be required to do additional weekly elicitation sessions with the language consultant outside of the classroom during the second half of the semester, with the objective of gathering data that will allow for a more fine-grained analysis in their final research projects. They will write an annotated bibliography of at least ten references by week 13, and their final papers are expected to be of a quality suitable for presentation at a national conference.

GRADING SYSTEM

A-F (Traditional)

CREDIT HOURS AND LECTURE/LAB/DISCUSSION HOURS

FIXED

VARIABLE

Credit Hours

3

Lecture Hours

3

NON-TRADITIONAL FORMAT (if lecture/lab hours or lecture/discussion hours are fewer than credit hours, please justify)

Experiential Learning: Research

Engagement: As described in the Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes, this course is very demanding in terms of both individual and collaborative work. Students will engage with the native-speaker language consultant to elicit data both in groups and one-on-one on a weekly basis, and will be responsible for contributing their own recordings and transcriptions to a shared database and jointly creating a dictionary of the language.

Mentorship: Students will learn how to conduct linguistic fieldwork through hands-on experience under the close guidance and supervision of the instructor. Faculty feedback will be provided during elicitation sessions and on all written work submitted over the course of the semester (including weekly written assignments, two short papers, and a final research paper).

Challenge: Students will apply their knowledge of linguistics to collect and analyze data, make generalizations, formulate hypotheses, and test these hypotheses by eliciting additional data from the consultant. In addition to collaborative work and discussion over the course of the semester as they create a description of an unknown language, students will write a final paper analyzing some aspect of the language's structure in detail. This final project requires students to synthesize relevant literature and make an original contribution through a theoretically informed analysis of novel data.

Ownership: Students are in charge of eliciting, recording, transcribing, and archiving data that will be accessed by the entire class; each individual's contributions are important for the success of the class as a whole. The culmination of the class is a final research paper, for which students will define their own individual research questions, under the mentorship of the instructor.

Self or social awareness: In class discussions, students will constantly articulate and reflect on their findings and new hypotheses; discussions will be geared to help them develop new questions and goals. The ethics of fieldwork are an important topic of the course; students will put this in practice as they work with the language consultant, learning about the speaker's language, culture, and personal experiences and showing respect and appreciation for the consultant and their contributions. Class discussions will also require students to reflect on the previous elicitation sessions and their understanding of/sensitivity to cultural differences. The skills and knowledge acquired can inform students' future work with human subjects in a range of different contexts, not just in the documentation of understudied language varieties. Students will present their work at a departmental colloquium (either in poster format or as an oral presentation, depending on the size of the class); they will receive feedback from a general linguistics audience and gain experience in communicating the results of their research in a formal setting.