

Teaching Portfolio

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Table of Contents

Statement of Teaching Philosophy.....	3
Teaching Experience, Responsibilities, and Training.....	5
Areas of Teaching Expertise and Proposals for Classes of Interest.....	7
Teaching Assessment and Evaluations from Students.....	8
Official Teaching Certificate	14
Teaching Materials: Sample Syllabi.....	15
Teaching Materials: a Sample Assignment.....	26
Teaching Materials: Sample Responses from Students.....	29

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Learning about language entails two separate discoveries: that we can scientifically interrogate what looks like the most pedestrian component of our daily routine – the use of words to communicate; and that the evidence to answer these questions need not be sought for in books or archives, but is available within us, grounded in the intuitions that every language user can rely on. As an instructor, I capitalize on these two aspects of linguistics to endow students with a sense of *empowerment*. As I help them acquire the tools to autonomously seek and discover the patterns lurking behind words and sounds, I invite them to repackage what was taken for granted into an object of intellectual curiosity, leading them to open a window into understanding a component of our worldly experience that goes well beyond the technicalities of how grammars work. To achieve this goal, I strive to actively involve students in as many parts of the class as possible, by either inviting them to share their personal experience about a relevant topic – e.g., the distinction between *Jocks* and *Burnouts*, foundational categories in American teenager culture as well as in sociolinguistic research – or by collecting their intuitions on the phenomena discussed on a particular day. Reaching out for the students’ input allows the classroom to build a body of evidence to evaluate the claims of studies and theories discussed in class, while acquainting students with the practice of interrogating language for meaningful patterns.

Actively prompting for class participants’ own personal knowledge of language can also serve as an inclusion strategy directed at international or otherwise shy students who, despite full English proficiency, tend to be more hesitant to speak in public. In particular, the value that linguistics places on comparing and contrasting data from different languages provides a natural resource to turn a potential challenge into an opportunity for pedagogical and empirical enrichment. For example, I systematically prompt non-native speakers for data and insights about how the phenomenon that we are discussing manifests itself in their own mother tongue. For those who are too shy to share their data in class, I offer the possibility of emailing them to me privately, so that I can include them in the following lecture. The data set resulting from these contributions serves as a live demonstration of the range of variation that distinguishes the grammars from different languages, emerging as particularly effective teaching materials.

However, there is much more to linguistics than the seductive power of highly accessible insights. As a field of scientific inquiry, this discipline entails the act of connecting data to the broader questions designed to tap into the structure of human language. For this reason, I believe that no adequate understanding of what linguistics is – even at the most introductory level – can be reached without grappling with the practice of turning a set of empirical observations into broader, tenable generalizations. This task is certainly challenging, and frequently perceived by the classroom as more tedious than the excitement that comes with the raw data. Yet, “taming” our naïve speakers enthusiasm with the rigor required by the standards of scientific inquiry is a necessary step to fully appreciate what makes linguistics unique among other ways of talking about language. I believe that two ingredients can be particularly helpful to guide students in this process: a systematic discussion of how full-fledged experimental methods can be used to test linguistic hypotheses, and a healthy skepticism of any taken-for-granted answer.

The recent development of lab-based experimental techniques across subfields constitutes an invaluable asset not just to enhancing our knowledge in the field, but also to showing in a transparent way *how* such knowledge can be reached and expanded. As such, in introductory and more advanced courses alike, I always make sure to devote sufficient time to discussing these studies, seeing them as a formidable pedagogical resource in at least two respects. First, by providing an overt, step-by-step breakdown of the different research stages, they help students internalize the logic of the scientific method, providing concrete examples of how the same scaffold can be used to explore very different linguistic questions and phenomena. To achieve this goal, I seek out opportunities to involve the classroom both before discussing the actual study – for example, inviting the students to outline the predicted results for each condition – and after it – for example, by encouraging students to identify what issues remain unanswered, and how

these could be tested through a follow up investigation. Second, discussing experimental work contributes to rendering the phenomena of interest more relatable and tangible, either because the studies involve amusing behavioral tasks – such as the use of puppets in acquisition studies – or because they show that the abstract theoretical constructs that we employ to model human language are reflected in measurable, highly concrete cognitive tasks.

At the same time, I believe that no curiosity can be developed without a moderately *skeptical* attitude towards our object of study. While theoretical assumptions are important, few of them are really indispensable to propose insightful explanations about language. As such, I strive to lead the students to discover the limits of such concepts, rather than providing ready-made definitions. An especially rewarding teaching moment came when I once invited the class to identify the different units of meaning contained in words that are notoriously impervious to being broken down into different subparts. Students were not only able to individuate the puzzle, but actively proposed solutions to account for the data, for example suggesting the presence of a “ghost morpheme” (in the student’s words) that represents a singular number in English nouns. This exercise helped us see the limitations of the notion of morpheme as had been discussed in lecture, while allowing the class to contribute to improving the theory. It thus constituted both an exciting moment of discovery, and a window into the process whereby scientific knowledge about language is continuously revised and refined.

Instilling curiosity and skepticism in students requires the ability to reach out to every student on a personal level. I rely on two core pedagogical strategies to achieve this goal. First, I endorse the use of naturally occurring data – especially those from highly accessible sources like TV series and movies – in lectures and assignments. Besides making materials more relatable, this practice also allows students to get acquainted with the pervasiveness of linguistic phenomena, all the while giving them a taste of the difficulty of applying theoretical concepts to real world data. When I assigned an entire final take home exam on the TV Series *Fargo*, my efforts were rewarded by numerous emails thanking me for making the assignment fun while drawing students’ attention to an enjoyable show. Second, I strive to treat students as scholars, rather than just learners, fostering a personal and intellectual conversation that extends beyond the classroom. On the one hand, I seek to involve them in my research, encouraging them to come to my presentations and highly valuing their feedback. On the other hand, I constantly strive to feed their curiosity and intellectual eagerness. For example, if they show particular interest in a topic that we could not cover in detail in class, I direct them to specific research articles, offering to meet individually to discuss them. I see the challenges and rewards of engaging with the scientific literature as a tremendous pedagogical strategy to fuel students’ interest and critical thinking and push them to take ownership of their own projects.

Finally, completion of the University of Chicago Writing Intern training program, combined with my experience as a teaching assistant, allowed me to develop the pedagogical skills to help students refine their scholarly writing. In this respect, nothing proved to be better training ground than grading substantial amounts of syntax and semantics problem sets, all of which required students to build a cogent argument on the basis of previously given data. When assessing students’ performance, I especially focus on the warrant that links their response to the provided data, inviting them to make explicit all the steps that led to their proposed solution. Zeroing on the empirical basis of a claim, especially when such a claim is self-evident (e.g., “*table* is a noun, not a verb”), can easily make the students frustrated. Yet, it is precisely the rigor of the empirical argumentation that makes linguists’ claims replicable and falsifiable, and thus different from more impressionistic ways of describing language. I therefore believe that emphasizing this component of the writing process, and providing writers with concrete suggestions on how to improve it, is a crucial part to being an instructor in linguistics. Not only does this emphasis lead students to improve their performance on assignments and papers; more broadly, it also helps them turn from consumers to producers of knowledge, preparing them for a transition that, regardless of the professional path that they will undertake, necessarily awaits them in adulthood.

Teaching Experience, Responsibilities, and Training

In this section, I outline my teaching experience, as well as the teaching-related training that I received throughout my career.

Experience as main instructor:

University of Paris 7-Diderot:

- **Fall 2018 Social Meaning (hosted by the University of the Basque Country)**
 - o **Notes on the course:** The class provides a compact introduction to the study of social meaning, with a special emphasis on the integration between sociolinguistic, semantic and pragmatic approaches to this topic. The audience includes members of the host university at large, ranging from undergraduate students to faculty members.

University of Konstanz:

- **Winter 2017 Language in Culture and Society.** [Syllabus](#)
 - o **Notes on the course:** The class provides an introduction to the study of language in the social context. It is taken by undergraduate students interested in pursuing a BA in linguistics or a language-related discipline, and a career in teaching or language pedagogy. It is the only course in this area offered at the University of Konstanz.
- **Summer 2017 Intensification: between logic, discourse and social meaning.** [Website](#)
 - o **Notes on the course:** The course was taught at **ESSLLI 2017**, the European Summer School in Logic, Language and Information. It is an advanced seminar that relies on intensification as case study to invite discussion and critical reflection on different aspects of human communication, and in particular on how the logical component of linguistic meaning connects to the socio-indexical value of linguistic forms. Co-taught with Yaron McNabb.
- **Spring 2017: Semantics I.** [Syllabus](#)
 - o **Notes on the course:** The class is the first part of a 3-semester sequence in the study of formal semantics and pragmatics. It is taken by undergraduate students interested in pursuing a BA in linguistics or a language-related discipline. It typically represents the first opportunity of exposure to formal linguistics for students who would eventually decide to pursue an MA and a Ph.D in linguistics at the University of Konstanz.

University of Chicago:

- **Spring 2015: Introduction to Linguistics.** [Syllabus](#)
 - o **Notes on the course:** The class, consisting of about 40 students, is taken by lower division students considering majoring in Linguistics, or by students who are pursuing a different major and have an independent interest in the study of language. The class is also a prerequisite for all other undergraduate courses in linguistics.

Experience as a Teaching Assistant:

- Spring 2014: Introduction to Linguistics. Instructor: Tim Grinsell
- Fall 2013: Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics. Instructor: Peter Klecha
- Fall 2012 Teaching Assistant. Introduction to Syntax. Instructor: Karlos Arregi
-

Responsibilities as a teaching assistant: Running weekly discussion sections, grading and providing comments on weekly homework assignments, meeting with students, contributing with guest lectures and regularly briefing the instructor concerning issues that would emerge in the discussion section and in the class.

Further qualifications and experience:

- **Spring 2014, Pedagogies of Writing training seminar**

Notes: This training program, run by the University of Chicago Writing program, gave me the skills requires to initiate students to the challenges of scholarly writing, qualifying me to serve as Writing Interns in the Humanities Core classes at the University of Chicago (required for all freshmen). The training includes both a theoretical and an applied component, in which I practiced giving comments on essays, running seminars on specific writing-related issues and designing assignments and exercises geared to help students develop their argumentative skills.

- **Summer 2016: Certificate in University Teaching**

Notes: Run by the University of Chicago Teaching Center, this program allowed me to attend a series of seminars and workshops that helped me critically reflect on the teaching and the learning process while exposing me to the feedback and advice of experienced instructors and mentors across different disciplines. The Certificate has been released upon satisfactory completion of a Pedagogy Seminar and an individual teaching consultation, in which my teaching was observed, videotaped and evaluated by specialists from the Teaching Center.

Areas of Teaching Expertise and Proposals for Classes of Interest

My cross-disciplinary research program, along with my interest in topics and approaches within and outside the boundaries of linguistics, allows me a great amount of flexibility in the range of classes that I am qualified to teach. Such areas include:

- Undergraduate introductory courses
- Undergraduate and graduate course/seminars **in semantics, pragmatics, syntax psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, historical linguistics**
- Topic-driven undergraduate and graduate seminars geared towards exploring a specific conceptual or methodological issue. I see such classes as a great opportunity for graduate and advanced undergraduate students to gain exposure to current debates in the field, and to recruit and re-combine in novel ways the knowledge acquired in previous classes.

Doctrines of linguistic correctness: Re-evaluating the descriptive/prescriptive distinction –

We are taught that prescriptive, folk-oriented approaches to language should be dismissed as irrelevant, in contrast to the descriptive neutrality of linguistic science. By dissecting several proposals (e.g., Deborah Cameron's in *Verbal Hygiene*) that problematizes this view, the course aims to foster discussion and critical thinking on a topic that is central to every speaker's experience, and to any scientific enterprise focusing on language. We will combine the theoretical discussion with close analysis of salient case studies – e.g. double negation, agreement mismatches, non-literal *literally*, preposition stranding – to tap into the processes whereby linguistic phenomena are made sense of and explained by both linguists and naïve speakers. The course enhances interdisciplinary and breadth of thought by assigning readings from a wide variety of perspectives, including formal linguistics, psycho/sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and media commentaries on language. [Sample syllabus.](#)

Experimenting with meaning - Experimental methods have acquired a central role in theoretically-informed linguistic research. Part of their appeal lies in the fact that they allow us to “see” the tangible, behavioral correlates of otherwise highly abstract concepts, serving as a testing ground for theories and frameworks. The class will explore how the adoption of lab-based tasks has transformed the enterprise of studying linguistic meaning. By engaging with recent work in a variety of semantic and pragmatic domains (e.g. implicatures, presuppositions, number words), we will use this research as a window into how the scientific method can be applied to test fine-grained linguistic hypotheses. [Sample syllabus.](#)

Meaning: from its logical to its social aspects – Linguistic expressions carry two kinds of *meaning*. On the one hand, they are conventionally associated with a *semantic* meaning, such as an object/concept in the world or a logical operator. On the other hand, they index a *social* meaning, that is, a package of socio-psychological qualities that consciously or unconsciously convey information on speakers' identity (Eckert 1989). Yet, despite the common label, these varieties of meaning are normally assumed to be completely unrelated. In this class we aim to problematize this separation, focusing on cases in which the features of the semantic meaning appear to be related in a principled fashion to the social meaning of the expression. These include intensifiers like *totally*, discourse markers like *eh?* and “verbal crutches” like *literally* and *like*. After examining evidence that speakers make use of semantic knowledge to make making social evaluations about speakers, we will consider the possibility of adopting a more comprehensive notion of the category of meaning in natural language, in which both the semantic and the social components conspire to determine what content linguistic expressions “convey”.

Teaching Assessment and Evaluations from Students

I provide a representative sample of the student evaluations received as an instructor, providing my critical reflections and comments on the most representative answers. I also append a third party report on a lecture provided by the University of Chicago Teaching Center. **Full evaluations are available upon request.**

Language in Culture and Society (Konstanz, Winter 2018)

Undergraduate Introduction to the study of language in the social context, with a strong emphasis on studying phenomena from different languages and speech communities. I taught the class in a seminar format, assigning weekly articles from literature in sociolinguistics, anthropology and dialectology, and making an effort to provide the students with materials that they would relate to on a culture level (e.g., by discussing phenomena drawn from their own range of native languages and speech communities including Turkish, German, Catalan, English). While students sometimes did find these materials challenging, they expressed appreciation for the opportunity of participating to discussion and developing their own ideas. Students were asked to write critical response papers and deeply involved in class discussion; the final assignment consisted of a small original research paper, a proposal for which had to be presented in class on the final day.

1) Quantitative

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course met my expectations	0	0	0	33%	67%
The content of this course was presented at the appropriate level	0	0	0	33%	67%
The instructor held my attention and made the course interesting	0	0	0	0	100%
The instructor organized the course clearly	0	0	0	0	100%
The instructor stimulated and facilitated class discussion	0	0	0	0	100%
Complex issues are explained in a way which is easy to understand.	0	0	0	0	100%

2) What I find good about the course is...

“Everything! :-)”

“The friendly atmosphere”

“The use of articles and papers to explain the theoretical points of the classes.”

“The students are very much included (with discussions, asking their opinions, etc.)”

2) What I find less good about the course is...

“Some of the papers are very complex”

Semantics I (Konstanz, Spring 2017)

Introduction to semantics for undergraduates. Students were enthusiastic about the continued opportunity to intervene during lecture. They also expressed appreciation for the clarity of the lectures and the overall structure of the course. Some students also pointed out that the lectures were sometimes a bit fast-paced. I find this concern reasonable. While this was students' first exposure to semantics, it is also the only course in formal semantics offered at the university. As such, the course is designed to provide an in-depth discussion of issues in compositional semantics, both at the empirical and at the formal level, in a relatively short amount of time. I will do my best to adjust accordingly when teaching a similar class in the future, making sure to pause, review and provide as many examples as needed.

1) Quantitative

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course met my expectations	0	0	10%	40%	40%
The content of this course was presented at the appropriate level	0	0	10%	10%	80%
The instructor held my attention and made the course interesting	0	0	11%	33%	56%
The instructor organized the course clearly	0	0	30%	10%	60%
The instructor stimulated and facilitated class discussion	0	0	10%	30%	60%
Complex issues are explained in a way which is easy to understand.	0	0	10%	70%	10%

2) What I find good about the course is...

"We can ask questions at any time and the teaching is excellent!"

"I really like the structure and the lectures."

"Thanks for always getting the class to participate, for always drawing the bigger picture, and for showing that logic is necessary for semantics."

"He explains everything again with good examples if it hasn't been understood before."

"The lecturer is very approachable and gives us many active participation opportunities."

3) What I find less good about the course is...

"Maybe he could sometimes slow down a bit, because he explains very fast"

"Sometimes the theories are hard to understand without more examples."

Introduction to Linguistics (UChicago, Spring 2015)

The evaluations of my performance as an instructor were highly positive and speak to three important qualities of my teaching: (i) clarity and organization; (ii) my commitment to foster curiosity and interest; (iii) active engagement with the classroom. As far as weaknesses are concerned, a few students manifested the desire for more explicit definitions of concepts. While taking these comments as a motivation to be as clear as possible in the future, I partially see them as reflecting the decision to emphasize analysis and critical thinking over notions/definitions.

1) Quantitative

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course met my expectations	0	0	0	20%	80%
The content of this course was presented at the appropriate level	0	0	13%	7%	80%
The instructor held my attention and made the course interesting	0	0	6%	27%	67%
The instructor organized the course clearly	0	0	14%	13%	73%
The instructor stimulated class discussion	0	0	13%	20%	67%
The instructor motivated independent thinking	0	0	14%	13%	73%

2) What were the instructor's strengths? Weaknesses?

"Strengths: Presented clearly organized lectures, good public speaker, attempted to answer questions fully, and made clear guides to help you study for the exams. Weaknesses: None that I can think of"

"Andrea is a great lecturer. I think his only weakness is that while he was very good at giving examples of concepts, he didn't always define/explain them first, so sometimes you had to go back and try to figure out a definition yourself when the homework asked for it."

"Andrea is very passionate about linguistics, and it really shows. He has a good sense for when, how often, and at what difficulty to pitch us questions during lecture, so classes felt more like 75% lecture and 25% discussion. This along with his sense of humor in person and in his slides kept me engaged."

"Andrea was very organized and clear. He tried to keep things interesting with clips from popular culture, and greatly encouraged us to be curious, ask questions, and be critical of what we were learning."

"Andrea is obviously passionate about linguistics and tried to get the class interested, too. He's awesome at making things relatable and hyperexplaining what we don't understand.."

3) How has this course contributed to your education?

"It convinced me that linguistics is the topic for me. Thanks Andrea!"

“Linguistics crosses into two interests of mine: psychology and foreign language. The whole class makes you take a deeper look at the elements of language that we take for granted.”

“I took this course on a whim, and I'm really glad I took it. I think about topics in linguistics often now, and it's really cool to see them manifest in everyday life, or in my psychology or philosophy classes.”

“Intro to Linguistics provided a grounding in each of the major subtopics of Linguistics and made me interested in the subject, while teaching me how to think more critically and analytically about the language that we use in our everyday lives.”

“I loved this class. Made me want to major in linguistics, and I'm taking phonology next quarter.”

“Andrea was an awesome instructor and taught me so much that I never would have thought I would be interested in.”

Evaluation 2: Report from the University of Chicago Center for Teaching

Center for Teaching

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Date: January 27, 2016

Instructor: Andrea Beltrama

Course: Introduction to Linguistics

Consultant(s): Sara Massey, Carmen Merport

Attendance: 35

Summary

Andrea Beltrama was a guest lecturer for one session of Introduction to Linguistics in the fourth week of the quarter. Introduction to Linguistics consists of three 50-minute weekly lectures and one weekly discussion section, though the lectures were also sometimes interspersed with moments of discussion. Andrea was familiar with the structure and content of the course, as he had acted as the lead instructor for Introduction to Linguistics the year before. The course was designed to expose students to a variety of linguistics subfields. In the classroom, Andrea had access to a slide projector and blackboards.

Andrea was a thought-provoking, approachable, and engaging lecturer. Students were visibly interested in the material he was presenting. To further capitalize on the teaching techniques Andrea used, our main suggestions are for him to draw on student participation more during complex examples, revise his use of terminology, and incorporate more formative assessment techniques.

Part I: Pre-observation Meeting

During our pre-meeting on 1/26/16, Andrea described his goals for the lecture and the aspects of the course he wanted us to focus on during the observation. His goal for the students was for them to understand that although linguistics places great emphasis on the systematicity of language, there is a certain amount of flux and unpredictability that linguists must account for as well. He asked us to take stock of student responsiveness, his ability to facilitate discussion, the clarity of the concepts that were being set forth, and the structure of the class session. Based on this, we focused on 1) class structure/clarity of presentation 2) achieving student interest/curiosity, and 3) effectiveness of engaging students in discussion.

Part II: Observation

1. Class structure/clarity of presentation

Andrea used a combination of PowerPoint slides and discussion among the class throughout his session. He began the lecture by presenting students with the question about the systematicity of language that informed the content of his lesson on the linguistic principle of re-analysis. He asked them to keep this question in mind throughout. He then used the overhead projector to present his students with a clear 'roadmap' for the class session. The roadmap divided the lecture into four parts, one of which was dedicated to discussion. Throughout the class, Andrea referred back to this plan, often by pulling up the roadmap slide and visually indicating which step he was on. The lecture began with simple examples of re-analysis that students had encountered in everyday life and could relate to, and progressed to explanations of the more complicated implications of this principle spanning multiple languages. Toward the end of the session, student participation began to wane as questions increased in complexity.

(a) Overall, the structure of the class session seemed to be well designed - transitions between various parts of the lecture were smooth and the connections between them were effectively communicated. While the structure of the session seemed very thoughtful, the portions of the lesson that were dedicated to more complex ideas and examples felt a bit rushed. Student participation was high during the discussion of "hamburger" and "deflategate" but waned when you began discussion of a French language example. In the future, you might continue to elicit participation from students during more complex examples, breaking down questions about larger issues into several smaller questions so that students can slow down and master the application of these principles. One productive way to elicit student participation in lectures on complex issues is a 'think and write' exercise, in which students individually jot down answers to a question posed by the instructor. They can then compare their notes to the answer or explanation provided by the instructor.

2. Achieving student interest/curiosity

In order to illustrate the concept of re-analysis, Andrea chose examples from mainstream American culture that the students found familiar ("hamburger" and "deflategate") – they laughed and there were ready hands when Andrea asked questions about these examples. At the end of the class, Andrea presented "open questions" that remained unanswered and provided students with a database resource and a free Google resource so that they could

investigate further on their own.

- (a) Before presenting your own “open questions” to students, you could elicit responses from the students first. You did this very effectively earlier in the lecture when you had students break down “hamburger” in a couple of different ways before going on to how you had done it.
- (b) Giving students resources for independent exploration of language change was a powerful way to enable them as linguists. Exploring these resources on their own may inspire further interest in language evolution!

Effectiveness of engaging students in discussion

At the beginning of class, Andrea invited students to ask questions whenever they arose, and also elicited comments and questions from the students throughout his lecture. Throughout the class, he asked for volunteers to participate by breaking down words and predicting what causes language change. On multiple occasions, he asked for students to respond to what their peers had said. Andrea asked “Is everyone clear about this?” on multiple occasions before moving on with the material, but did not get a verbal response from students.

1. When gauging whether students understand the material, questions that probe beyond yes/no may be more informative. You could ask a student (or groups of students) to summarize or recap the concept, and allow more time for students to agree or express a concern.
2. You might also want to incorporate some activities into your lectures that would give you formative feedback about how well the students are engaging with the material beyond what you hear in discussion. For instance, you might have had the students all write down an answer to one of your final questions or pose their own open question and hand it in to you (a “minute paper”).

Part III: Post-consultation summary

During our post-meeting on 2/9/16, Andrea expressed his general satisfaction with the lecture we observed. He felt that, based on his assessment of student participation and body language, he had achieved his objective of sparking student interest in the flux and unpredictability of linguistic systems. Indeed, the regular lecturer for the course told him he was able to elicit active engagement from students who do not usually participate in lecture. He was concerned about his pacing after watching the video - he felt that he had dedicated too little time to introducing the internet-based resources at the end of the lecture. We agreed with this aspect of Andrea’s self - assessment, as we thought that the presentation of these resources was an exciting way to get students actively involved in the linguistic issues in question. When we discussed ways to increase student engagement during more complex examples, Andrea expressed his concern that students verbally debating and discussing how to tackle complex problems may result in students leading their peers astray and not internalizing the outcome of the example. We discussed the use of ‘think and write’ activities, as these could give students the opportunity to engage with the material and reflect on their own before Andrea walks them through the outcome.

Official Teaching Certificate



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May 13th, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

Andrea Beltrama has completed the requirements for the Certificate in University Teaching. This program is designed to guide graduate students in reflecting critically about university teaching in general and their own teaching practices in particular. The curriculum of the program ushers students through a series of steps that include:

- Workshops on fundamental pedagogical topics for university teaching assistants and lecturers
- A course in one's discipline that considers the range of learning goals and strategies appropriate for teaching students at the college level
- Observing a videotaped session by the candidate of her own teaching performance
- Feedback on and discussion of that session with peer teaching consultants
- Workshops on assignment and course design that focus on the assessment of student learning and require the production of one completed syllabus
- Workshops on composing and collecting materials for a teaching dossier

Upon completion of the program, candidates possess a complete teaching dossier including a set of syllabi ready for classroom use, evidence that they have sought feedback and engaged in self-assessment of their teaching, and reflective statements on teaching that describe their teaching experience and overall approach to undergraduate education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Rando". The signature is fluid and cursive.

William Rando,
Director, Chicago Center for Teaching

Teaching Materials: Sample Syllabi

In this section, I provide three sample syllabi that illustrate my teaching philosophy, my teaching goals and my approach to class organization and performance assessment.

The first syllabus is from Introduction to Linguistics, a class that I taught in Spring 2015. The class normally represents the first contact with the world of Linguistics for students. It is taken by freshmen exploring majoring options or by advanced students in other areas – typically, psychology, mathematics and computer science – who are interested in the study of language. Given the key role of the class to spark students' interest in the discipline, I opted to emphasize breadth, presenting students with the many different research angles that scholars might have on the study of language. Specifically, I implemented this goal by:

- (i) Allowing two full weeks to the discussion of sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics, which were often left out in previous editions of the class;
- (ii) Periodically assigning articles from the literature and asking for a written critical responses, pushing students to get a firsthand experience of linguistic research by engaging with challenging materials.
- (iii) Opening *and* closing the class with the discussion of the descriptive vs prescription distinction, inviting the students to revisit the opening topic of the class in light of the knowledge acquired in the class. To improve readability, administrative information (e.g., office hours,) has been excluded. A copy of the original syllabus is available upon request.

Introduction to Linguistics

Course Description

Overview: This course is an introductory survey of linguistics, focusing on natural language phenomena and the methods used to understand them. We will address the following subdomains of linguistics during the course:

Phonetics: The physical properties of language forms (e.g., sounds)

Phonology: The psychological representation of language sounds

Morphology: How language forms combine to form words

Syntax: How words combine to form phrases and sentences

Semantics: The meanings of words, phrases, and sentences

Pragmatics: How sentences are used in context

Sociolinguistics: How language is affected by and affects social context

Psycholinguistics: How language interacts with cognition and reasoning

Goals: It might not come as a shock, but the goal of the course is to get some initial exposure to linguistics. While this will hardly provide any in-depth knowledge of specific phenomena, it will help you get a sense of the nature of linguistic phenomena, as well as their interaction with domains of human action such as cognition and social structure. Due to time constraints, we will jump around a bit and never spend too much time in one place. In doing so, we will adopt a hands-on approach to linguistic data while engaging with some (accessible!) scientific literature.

Prerequisites: This course presupposes no background in any particular language.

Requirements

Graded Components:

3. Attendance and participation in the class and section: 10%

Class and section attendance is mandatory. There are two sections for this course, one led by each of the two teaching assistants. You must register for one of these two.

Participation both in class and in section is expected. In fact, it will be required at times.

4. Assignments 60%. They come in two flavors.

- (a) Problem sets. 7 assigned throughout the course (lowest graded will be dropped). The problem sets involve reasoning with novel natural language data, as well as drawing connections between the readings. However, some problem sets (in particular, the final problem set) will be worth more than others. The problem sets are posted on Chalk on Wednesdays and are due in class the following Monday. While you are welcome to collaborate on the assignments, you must write them up individually. No late assignments will be accepted without an official note from your advisor.
- (b) On certain weeks (see syllabus) you will be assigned one or more research articles

The purpose of this assignment is to give you a chance to get familiar with actual examples of linguistic research. The articles will be discussed in the class when the

reading is due. Also, some questions in the problem sets and the exams will presuppose familiarity with the content of the papers. In sum, even though you won't be required to write response papers, you must do the readings.

3. Exams (two mid-terms and one non-cumulative final): 30%

Website: Slides from lecture, readings, assignments and the rest of the materials will be posted on Chalk. Please contact me if you don't have access to the website.

Textbook We won't really be following a textbook, but for general reference you can rely on *Contemporary Linguistics: An introduction* by William O'Grady, John Archibald, Mark Aronoff, and Janie Rees-Miller, available on Amazon. Next to each week I put the chapter that covers our materials, but note that class discussion will diverge quite a bit from the book.

Research awareness requirement: Linguists use a variety of sources to collect their data, including experiments conducted in laboratory settings. By satisfying the Research Awareness Requirement you will get exposure to how these studies are conducted.

Part 1: During the course of this term, you must take part in at least one ongoing research study as part of the Linguistics Department human subject pool. Visit <http://uchicagoling.sona-systems.com> and request an account; you will then be able to view and sign up for ongoing studies.

Part 2: There are two ways you can fulfill the second part of the research awareness requirement: by participating in a second study, or by attending one of the many linguistics talks held during the quarter, such as a Linguistics Department colloquium, a talk in the satellite workshops, or a talk presented at the Chicago Linguistics Society Conference (April 23-25). You will be required to write up a 2 page critical summary of the topic discussed. The best way to learn about upcoming talks is to subscribe to the Department's mailing list <https://listhost.uchicago.edu/web/info/uclinguist>

Schedule

Week 1: Overview, O'Grady Ch. 1

March 30: Introduction

April 1: Prescription vs description. **Read**: Acocella, Pinker, Kamm

April 3: What is (a) language

Week 2: Sounds, O'Grady Ch. 2-3

April 6: Phonetics I, **Assignment 1 due**

April 8: Phonetics II

April 10: Phonetics III and Phonology

Week 3: The units of sounds, O'Grady Ch. 3

April 13: Phonology, **Assignment 2 due**

April 15: Phonology

April 17: Morpho-phonology

Week 4: The units of meaning, O'Grady Ch. 4

April 20: Morphology, **Assignment 3 due**

April 22: Morphology

Read: One between Ohala on experimental phonology, Garrett on leveling and Sprouse and Schutze on acceptability judgments.

April 24: Midterm 1 (Phonetics, Phonology and Morphology)

Week 5: The structure of sentences. O'Grady Ch. 5

April 27: Syntax I, **Assignment 4 due**

April 29: Syntax II

May 1: Syntax III (featuring Gallagher Flinn)

Week 6: Meaning. O'Grady Chapter 6

May 4: Semantics and Pragmatics I, **Assignment 5 due**

May 6: Semantics and Pragmatics II

May 8: Semantics and Pragmatics III

Week 7: Language and the mind

May 11: Psycholinguistics I **Read:** Noveck 2001, Pouscoulous 2007. Assignment 6 due

May 13: Psycholinguistics II **Read:** Beltrama and Xiang 2014

May 15: Midterm 2 (Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics and Psycholinguistics)

Week 8: Language and the social context

May 18: Patterns of variation **Read:** Labov 1967

May 20: Social meaning. **Read:** Eckert 2003

May 22: Social information and perception **Read:** Niedzielski 1999

Week 9: Interfaces!

May 25: No class

May 27: Deixis (featuring Hilary McMahan), **Assignment 7 due**

May 29: The rise of standard English (featuring Laura Staum Casasanto)

Week 10: Wrap up

June 1: Revisiting the prescriptive/descriptive distinction **Read:** Cameron 1995

June 3: Review

Final exam: Time and place designated for us by the registrar

References

Acocella, Joan. 2012. The battle over the way we should speak. The New Yorker. Cameron, D. 1994. Verbal Hygiene. London: Routledge

Eckert, Penelope. 2003. Three waves of variation study: The emergence of meaning in the study of variation. Annual Review of Anthropology, 41. 87-100.

Garrett, Andrew. 2008. Paradigmatic uniformity and markedness. In *Linguistic Universals and Language Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kamm, Oliver. 2015. There is no proper English. *The Wall Street Journal*

Labov, William. 1972. The social motivation of a sound change. In *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Ohala, J. John. 1995. Experimental phonology. In *A Handbook of Phonological Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Niedzielski, Nancy. 1999. The effect of social information on the perception of soci-olinguistic variables. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 18(1)

Noveck, Ira A. (2001). When children are more logical than adults: experimental investigations of scalar implicature. *Cognition* 78

Pinker, Steven. 1994. *The Language Instinct*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

Schutze, Carson & Jon Sprouse. (to appear). Judgment data. *Research Methods in Linguistics*.

Below is the syllabus for Semantics I, an undergraduate course introducing students to the formal study of meaning. It is the first part of a three-course sequence at the University of Konstanz.

LING 115: SEMANTICS I
Syllabus
SoSe2017

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the students to the foundations and essential concepts of Semantics (Formal Semantics). We will develop a formal procedure to derive the meaning of a complex linguistic unit (for example, a sentence or a phrase) from the meaning of the words and the syntactic structure that compose it. By examining different aspects of semantic composition, this course provides techniques and formal tools to investigate the empirical properties of natural language.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Andrea Beltrama
andrea.beltrama@uni-konstanz.de
H132 (watch out! My name is still on H134, but my office is H132)
Office hours: Thursday 11:30h-12:30h

TUTOR: Erlinde Meertens
erlinde.meertens@uni-konstanz.de
H146
Office hours: Tuesdays 13:00h-14:00h

Tutorium: Wednesday 11.45h-13.15h in H303

PREREQUISITES: Ling101 (Introduction to Linguistics)

READINGS (see Ilias)

Textbook: Heim, I., and A. Kratzer. 1998. *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Blackwell.

Other books: Chierchia, G. and S. McConnell-Ginet. 1990. *Meaning and Grammar. An Introduction to Semantics*. MIT Press.

Lohstein, H. 2011. *Formale Semantik und natürliche Sprache*. De Gruyter.

Other articles and readings will be added on Ilias as the course develops. I will make sure to send an announcement well in advance every time a new reading is added.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE

Attendance to lecture and Tutorium	
Weekly exercises to practice	0%
Two take-home exams (together)	50%
Final exam (Klausur)	50%

[1) You need to pass the Klausur by itself to pass the course.

2) You can collaborate on take-homes, but each person **must** write the exam individually!]

Important! While attendance to class is not mandatory, **you will be tested on both the readings and the materials covered in class on both the take-homes and the final exam.** I will make the slides and the handouts available on Ilias after each class. However, attendance to lectures and tutoriums is *strongly recommended* to perform well in the class.

Outline of the course

I. Foundations and formal tools

- Lexical semantics vs. Compositional Semantics
- Set Theory
- Propositional Logic
- Lambda Calculus

Take-Home I (tentatively due June 7)

II. Compositional Semantics: Building simple sentences.

- Compositionality in the semantics of natural language
- Names and predicates
- Modifiers (adjectives, prepositional phrases, etc.)
- Computing ambiguities from syntactic attachment.

Take-Home II (tentatively due July 5)

III. Semantic phenomena: formal and experimental approaches.

- Quantifiers
- Negative Polarity Items
- Gradability

Below I attach the syllabus from “Doctrines of Linguistic Correctness”, an interdisciplinary course aimed at fostering critical thinking across different areas of the study of language. The syllabus illustrates the intellectual flexibility invited by the course, reflected in reading assignments drawing on different, sometimes conflicting perspectives on natural language phenomena and its areas of inquiry.

Doctrines of Linguistic Correctness: Revisiting the Prescriptive/Descriptive Distinction

Course description – “Linguistics is descriptive, not prescriptive!” From day one of every intro class, we are taught that conceptualizations of language in terms of *correct* or *incorrect*, *good* or *bad* are absurd, and squarely fall outside the range of phenomena that linguists should study. In this class, we will critically re-consider the validity of this approach from a variety of perspectives. Building on recent work in psycholinguistics, linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics, we will develop an approach in which “folk theories” on language are indeed an empirically fascinating domain to better understand how language works. While doing so, we will also take into examination several different domains of linguistic research where disregarding prescriptive norms in the name of purely descriptive accounts appears to be problematic. Some of the questions that we will consider include:

- 1- What are the socio-historical and ideological processes that contribute to the emergence of an *orthodox* way of speaking?
- 2- Do ideology-free perspectives on (the study of) language really exist?
- 3- What are the values that speakers invest prescriptive norms with?
- 4- What empirical interest can prescriptive norms have for linguistic research?
- 5- What methodological implications do prescriptive norms have for linguistic research?

Spirit of the class – As the title suggests, this course is primarily meant to foster discussion and problematize issues, as opposed to search for definitive answers. There will be two textbooks (Verbal Hygiene, by Deborah Cameron, and Fixing English: Prescriptivism and Language History, by Anne Curzan) and a substantial amount of readings drawn from (sometimes, radically) different perspectives, including formal linguistics, psycholinguistics sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and media/popular commentaries on language use. Because of this, **active** class participation, willingness to engage with (at times) challenging readings and openness to different perspectives are constantly required throughout the course.

Evaluation – The final grade will be based on the following:

Attendance and participation (20%) - Students are expected to do the readings before the Tuesday class. On Thursday, each student will lead discussion on a particular set of readings at least once over the course of the quarter.

Weekly response papers (20%) – A (max) 500 words paragraph engaging with (at least) three readings and raising (at least) two questions for class discussion. Students leading discussion are exempt from writing the response paper for the specific week.

Midterm assignment (20%) – A take home 4-5 page paper based on the analysis of a set of materials that contain.

Individual term project (40%) – The project consists of three main components.

- Picking a particular linguistic phenomenon which has been (or might be) of interest for both linguistic theory and prescriptive doctrines. The phenomenon can be relevant to any level of linguistic analysis (phonetics, syntax, morphology, semantics). You can focus on a phenomenon already discussed in the course, but you will be expected to go beyond what was said in class should you decide to do so. You are encouraged to come to talk to me no later than Week 4 to discuss the topic of your choice. And I have a long list of interesting phenomena, should you be short of ideas!
- Providing a well-argued analysis of the phenomenon. This includes two parts. First, a description of its linguistic/grammatical properties, as well as the way it is conceptualized in prescriptive doctrines. Second, you'll have to discuss *one* aspect of how the present phenomenon can cast light of any of the issues discussed in class. Possible perspectives include (but are not limited to!):
 - a) What kind of language ideology underlies the prescriptive attitude towards this form?
 - b) How do prescriptive and descriptive accounts diverge (or converge) with respect to this form?
 - c) How does the prescriptive treatment of the phenomenon relate to the doctrines surrounding similar linguistic forms?
 - d) What methodological implications do prescriptive attitudes have for a linguistic investigation of the phenomenon?

Developing one theme will be sufficient, and different themes will be more or less ripe depending on the phenomenon of interest.

- Writing up your work in the form of a 10-15 double-spaced page paper (due June 9th) and illustrating it to the rest of the class with a 10 minute presentation in the Week 10 mini-conference.

The plan

The class is divided in two main parts. In the first 5 weeks we will consider the descriptive/prescriptive debate from a broad perspective, introducing theoretical concepts such as *language ideologies, folk rationalizations, standardization, language change, grammaticality/acceptability judgments*. From Week 6 to Week 9 we will focus on specific cases studies. This will give us a chance to take a close look at the different processes whereby linguistic forms are made sense of by both linguists and naïve speakers. Depending on students' interests, the case studies are subject to change.

Part 1

Week 1 - Getting started

Topics: The descriptive/prescriptive debate; Review of the themes of the class;

Readings:

Cameron, Chapter 1-2-3;
Language Myths, selected chapters;
Curzan, part I

Week 2 -The dogma. Description: Science = Prescription: Myth.

Topics: The debate as it has been framed in linguistics

Readings:

Cameron, Chapter 6;
Pinker, Grammar puss;
Language Myths, selected chapters;
D'Arcy on Like and Language Ideologies;
Sprouse and Schutze on the nature of grammaticality judgments as a source of data;
Lisa Lai-Shen Cheng and Corver on the role of Diagnostic tests in Syntax;

Week 3 - Language ideologies, variation, change and prescription.

Topics: Is there any “view from nowhere” in the study language?

Readings:

Gal and Irvine, Language ideologies and linguistic differentiation;
Eckert, Three waves of variation;
Bucholtz. The Whiteness of Nerds: Superstandard English and Racial Markedness
Milroy, Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization.
Preston, Perceptual dialectology

Week 4- Folk theories don't make no sense. Or not?

Topics: Prescription and the principles of rational communication;

Readings:

Cameron, Chapter 2,
Bauman and Briggs, Language Philosophy as Linguistic Ideology;
Horn. Implicature;
Acton and Potts. That straight talk. Sarah Palin and the social meaning of demonstratives.
From verbal crutches to passive voices: prescriptive views, style and rationalization.

Week 5 - The standardization process

Topics: The social/political grounding of prescriptive rules

Readings:

Silverstein, Monoglot standard in America,
Gal, Contradictions of standard language in Europe
Lane. Minority language standardisation and the role of users.
Curzan, part II

Part 2: Case studies (subject to change)

Week 6 - The logic of verbal crutches: Non-literal *literally*, *very unique* and *completely free*.

Readings:

Israel. Literally speaking.
Lasersohn. Pragmatic Halos
Solomon. Are Definitely and Totally the new Literally?
Waksler. Over the Top intensifiers.
Irwin. SO [TOTALLY] speaker-oriented: An analysis of "Drama SO"

Week 7 - Subjugated to the subjunctive. Mood and tense across pragmatics, change and prestige.

Readings:

Giannakidou and Mari. *Mixed* (Non)veridicality and mood choice in complement clauses
Poplack, Shana & Dion, Nathalie. 2009. [Prescription vs. praxis](#)
Poplack. 1992. The inherent variability of the French subjunctive.

Week 8 - The puzzle of *acceptability judgments*. Are lay speakers really irrelevant?

Readings:

Labov. When intuition fails
Beltrama and Xiang. These are the pronouns that we use them but we don't like them.
Schütze and Sprouse. Judgment Data. Staum
Casasanto and Sag. The advantages of the ungrammatical.

Week 9 and 10 – Presentations, topics TBA

Textbook:

Cameron, D. 1994. *Verbal Hygiene*. London: Routledge

Curzan, Anne. 2014. *Fixing English: Prescriptivism and Language History*. Cambridge University Press.

Teaching Materials: a Sample Assignment

I include below the final assignment for Introduction to Linguistics, The assignment speaks to three important aspects of my teaching philosophy.

- It shows my commitment to leading students to autonomously discover patterns in language use, applying the notions learned in class in a dynamic fashion. This especially emerges in part 2 of the assignment (highlighted below), when students are asked to apply the principles of Gricean pragmatics to selected dialogues.
- It fosters critical thinking by pushing the students to simultaneously consider and assess different analytical perspectives – e.g., by asking them to analyze the data from both a variationist and a “third wave” sociolinguistic angle in question 3.3 (highlighted below).
- It emphasizes the importance of using engaging, independently relatable material, often drawn from cultural references shared across the class. As anecdotal but telling evidence, I received various separate emails from students at the end of the course thanking me for making them discover not only linguistics, but also a fascinating movie and TV series.

LING 20001:

In honor of Lorne Malvo and the wonderful land of 10,000 lakes

Watching the series Fargo, as well as the Coen Brothers' movie that inspired it, should be a requirement for any Intro to Linguistics class. Since I wasn't allowed to change the Syllabus to reflect this, let me at least try to inculcate some of my personal worship for the wonderful figure of Lorne Malvo. If you are not familiar with the series, just watch it. Yet, no background knowledge is assumed for this assignment, except for knowing that Lorne Malvo is the one driving the car that gets pulled over, and is not afraid to kill. So, watch out!

Note: The assignment is due June 1 at 5 pm for graduating seniors and June 3rd before class for all other students.

Part 1: the basics

Watch the following clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTmdU-x8pCo>.

Consider what Malvo says between 1:19 and 1:25. It includes three different sentences. The first word should be “We”, the last one should be “car”.

1.1 Orthography matters after all!

Provide an orthographic representation of the sentences uttered; in other words, write it. [10 points]

1.2 Phonetic Transcription

Transcribe the sentences phonetically. Worry only about segmental contrasts; do not worry about prosody or very subtle contrasts in vowel quality or syllabicity. But do worry about aspiration, though! [20 points]

1.3 Morphosyntax

List the morphemes in the transcribed sentences and list for each of them: (i) morphosyntactic category, if it is a word (Verb, Adjective, Noun etc); (ii) basic meaning, if it is a content morpheme; (iii) inflectional features. These should include any applicable combination of case, person, number and gender. In case inflectional features are not contributed by a specialized morpheme, specify them for the morpheme they attach to. If a morpheme occurs twice, list it twice (or as many times it occurs). And keep in mind that a morpheme might occur twice, and yet have different inflectional features. You should list 20 items. Forewarned is forearmed! [50 points]

1.4 Syntax

Individuate three constituents, each of a different type, from the sentences that you transcribed above. Prove that they are constituents by running two constituency tests for each. Name the tests. It is fine to repeat the same tests for the different sequences. It is not fine to pick single words. We already know that they are constituents! [10 points each]

Individuate three sequences of words in the sentence that are not constituents. Prove that they are not constituents by running two constituency tests for each. Name the tests. It is fine to repeat the same tests for different sequences. [10 points each]

1.5 Human language

We talked about the features that make human language different from, say, animal communication. These included arbitrariness of meanings and displaceability of sentences. Show how each of them emerge in the clip, provide an example for each of them, and motivate your answer. [20 points]

Part 2: Malvo meets Grice.

Now watch the clip again. Focus on the part after 1:20, in particular. By relying on Grice's model of conversation, provide an analysis of Malvo's response in italics. In doing so, be sure to spell out the following components: (i) literal meaning; (ii) pragmatic interpretation/implicature; (iii) maxim(s) that help(s) us derive the implicature, and reasoning whereby they do so. Keep into consideration the broader context of the clip when answering these questions. And please, be explicit! [20 points each]

At 1:37:

- (1) Malvo: You could go get in your car and drive away.
Gus: Why would I do that?
Malvo: *Cause some roads you shouldn't go down*

At 2: 06

- (2) Gus: Could you please step out of your car?
Malvo: *How old is your kid?*

At 2:36

- (3) Malvo: You're alive [. . .] *because you chose to walk into the light, instead of into the darkness*

Part 3: Embracing the social

It is now time to go back to 1996 and watch a clip from Fargo, the movie. This is a necessary step for at least two reasons. First, it would be somewhat unsatisfying to analyze Malvo's genius without knowing its cultural and artistic roots. Second, while there is a fair amount of overlapping between the Movie and the Series, the two productions are actually quite different in a lot of respects. This also includes the accents, social meanings, indexicality, and all the relevant sociolinguistic baggage that we discussed in class. For this reason, let us focus now on two clips from the movie. Before anything else, watch the clips.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_ux_5CcleM

Background: The two cops are investigating a triple murder that happened the previous night, where a police officer is found dead along with two other passengers of a different car.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vjB3wiZKAA>

Background: As part of the same investigation, the cop is talking to a potential witness who claims to have seen the suspect in the area

3.1 Variation: a first pass

List 5 linguistic features from the clips that bear a 1st order indexical relationship to the state of Minnesota, or the Upper Midwest in general. Of these features, 2 must be non-phonological (i.e., either syntactic or lexical). They do not need to come from the same character [4 points each]

3.2 Going down the indexicality chain

1. Looking at the two clips, what are some of the stereotypical traits/qualities of these people that are made salient in the dialogues? List and discuss three. They can range from typical activities, to ways of behaving, to what these people are doing, to topics of conversation that these people seem to like to talk about. [10 points]
2. For any of them, make a hypothesis about how the mapping between these qualities and the linguistic features is mediated via the first order indexical relation "Upper Minnesota". [10 points]
3. How do the patterns of language use of these people contribute to give life to these stereotypes and qualities? In particular, do you see - or can you think of - any iconic relationship between the linguistic features listed above and such qualities/attributes? For various examples of iconicity at work in sociolinguistics, refer back to the slides from class. [10 points]

3.3 Extra credit

We talked a lot about the difference between a variationist and a third-wave approach to sociolinguistics. And while we talked about how people in the latter field criticized the former approach, we didn't say much about how people in the variationist camp could be skeptical about the third wave approach and the notion of social meaning in general. Could you think of any possible criticisms of this kind? In other words, if you were a hardcore variationist, what aspects of the third wave approach would you criticize? Discuss at least two, and make sure to motivate your answer. [20 points]

Teaching Materials: Sample Responses from Students

I include below a sample of three responses to the first question of the in-class final exam assigned in Introduction to Linguistics. The first question simply asked to discuss one aspect of linguistics that the student found most interesting, and in which they would be interested in pursuing further coursework. I thought of this question as an opportunity of students to provide feedback and reflect on how this class impacted their education. I also conceived of the question as a way to indirectly gauge the amount of interest and curiosity that I managed to instill about the different parts of the class, as well as about linguistics in general. While variation is to be expected in this kind of responses, I was extremely pleased to see that students' responses covered pretty much any topic that we dealt with in class, suggesting that I managed to make at least some students engaged with every area covered in the course. Below are three sample responses (I apologize for the poor quality of the image. Unfortunately, given that the exam was handwritten, it was not possible to produce a more graphically pleasant output).

1 The basics

1. If you were to take another linguistics class in your life, *only one*, what area(s) of linguistics would this class be on and what phenomena would you like to investigate? Why? Motivate your answer. (10 points)

I would like to study syntax because I find it fascinating to see how words put together can convey such a wide variety of meaning. Moreover, I like how the absence of words can convey meaning as it happens in extraction without RPs. I really enjoyed looking into verb mood usage in other languages and Chomskian grammar. I think that through syntax and comparative grammars we can make sense of what makes languages universal despite being so different!

Interesting!
Lots of work to do! 😊
I am very interested in both phonology and morphology; I think it is so fascinating all the different sounds speakers can produce and constrict to a language, but more so, I am intrigued by the concept of morphemes as well and how they can be repurposed. I would love to study an old, well-documented language (Latin, perhaps) in which I can investigate how morphemes have been repurposed, or discuss the purpose of some

I would take a class on pragmatics and I would like to investigate the way in which assumptions about ~~convey~~ the speech of others (like those made with Grice's maxims) affect communication ~~with~~ in various settings (formal vs. casual, different cultures, etc.). I found pragmatics very interesting since ~~being~~ systematizing and characterizing communication beyond what is literally said is a complicated puzzle that I'd like to know more about. *-ks!*