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## SPAN 200G: BOSTON SPEAKS



Term: Fall 2010  
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(also by appointment.)

### **What is this course about?**

Language pervades every aspect of our lives. We rely on language to interact with other people. We rely on language to reason. We rely on language to learn. We rely on language to express our wishes, and our regrets.

Since we are all surrounded by language, it hardly comes as a surprise that we are also surrounded by questions about language. You are likely to have encountered many of them. Perhaps you grew up speaking one language at home and another at school, and you wonder why you feel more confident speaking or writing one language than the other. Or perhaps you have neighbors or friends that learned English when they were already adults and happen to speak with an accent, and you wonder why. Or maybe you know people that came to this country when they were kids and happen to speak English with no accent, and you wonder why. Or perhaps you have thought about whether it is possible to think without speaking to oneself, or whether people who happen to speak different languages think different because of the language that they happen to speak. Maybe you have seen deaf people sign and you have wondered whether what they do is any different from what we do when we speak English. Or perhaps you have heard in the news a fascinating story about animal language and you have wondered whether only humans have language. Or maybe you called your cell phone company, and you are still wondering how a computer manages to understand what you say, but only to a certain extent.

Sometimes, the questions about language that surround us have important moral or political consequences. Do you think that public schools should teach kids that happen to speak a language other than English in their own language? Should English be the official language of the U.S.? Why should you write your writing proficiency pa-

pers in English if you speak other languages? Should speakers of African American English be taught in Standard English? Why?

Language use is such an integral part of our lives that it usually goes unnoticed. It runs automatically in the background. We simply don't think much about how we manage to understand and produce language. We take it for granted. And yet, even when we don't spend too much time thinking about how language works, we, as citizens, might need to take a position with respect to some of the questions about language that surround us. That, you might think, it's just fine. After all, we happen to speak a language, with which we have some familiarity, through our education and our own cultural background. That should entitle us to answering those important questions about language. But, think about it, isn't that a bit like saying that just because we happen to have a heart, we are entitled to answer the questions that people might have about human hearts?

This course will introduce you to the inner workings of human language so that you can argue about language issues with a basic understanding of what scientists know about language. You will first familiarize yourself with some basic principles underlying the structure of all human languages, and then you will apply those principles to analyze some of the linguistic varieties that surround you in the Greater Boston area, and, in particular, the language of the community you most closely associate with.

## **About the Intermediate Seminar Program**

This course is an Intermediate Seminar. Intermediate Seminars offer students with 30 or more credits the opportunity to work on essential university capabilities in small-sized courses that are often thematic or problem-oriented and interdisciplinary in nature. Designed in part to help students prepare for the Writing Proficiency Requirement, Intermediate Seminars put special emphasis on critical reading, thinking, and writing. They focus on other essential capabilities as appropriate to the course and might therefore include attention to library research and information technology, collaborative learning, oral presentation, and academic self-assessment. Students who practiced reading, writing, and critical thinking in a First Year Seminar at UMass Boston will practice them at a more advanced level in the Intermediate Seminar.

**Only ONE Intermediate Seminar may be taken for credit. If you have taken another G200-level course in any department at UMB, you cannot receive credit for this one.**

**Prerequisites:** English 101, English 102, First Year Seminar (or waiver), and 30 credits. The First Year Seminar is automatically waived for students who enter UMB with 30 or more transfer credits. Because these are intensive reading and writing courses, some students may find it helpful to enroll in CRW 221 to further develop their skills with college-level writing before taking an Intermediate Seminar. Discuss your situation with the instructor if you have any questions about these prerequisites or your readiness for the work in this course.

**The Writing Proficiency Requirement:** Students from the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Science and Mathematics, and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences complete the University's Writing Proficiency Requirement through the Writing Proficiency Evaluation (WPE). The Writing Proficiency Requirement is not the same as the writing placement test you may have taken when you entered UMass Boston. The WPE can be met through either an examination or a take-home essay submitted along with a portfolio of papers written for UMB courses. See the WPR website ([www.umb.edu/academics/wpr](http://www.umb.edu/academics/wpr)) for more details about the exam and portfolio options and dates. Students who have not already satisfied the WPR should arrange to take the exam or submit a portfolio shortly after completing this course.

**Support Services for Intermediate Seminar students:** The Academic Support Office offers both individual tutoring and drop-in workshops for students who need help with the critical reading, thinking and writing skills necessary for success in General Education courses such as this one. More information on their programs is available online at [www.academicssupport.umb.edu/rwsscenter.htm](http://www.academicssupport.umb.edu/rwsscenter.htm), or at their Campus Center office (CC1-1300). The Ross Center for Disability Services (CC2-2010) provides accommodations and educational resources for students with demonstrated needs, as outlined on their website ([www.rosscenter.umb.edu](http://www.rosscenter.umb.edu)). Should you be eligible for these services, you should contact the Ross Center right away so that their staff can help you identify appropriate accommodations in this and other courses. Finally, if it appears that you might not pass this Intermediate Seminar and if the instructor cannot figure out how to support your success in the course, the instructor might inform the Director of the Student Referral Program in the University Advising Center. This strictly confidential program is part of an early warning system designed to help students address personal and academic difficulties that may interfere with their progress in the University. Assessment of these courses: In addition to course evaluation forms that are routinely administered at the end of each course at UMass Boston, Intermediate Seminar students are asked to complete a self-assessment questionnaire addressing their progress as critical thinkers and writers. Each term an assessment

committee will look at randomly chosen student writing from a small sample of Intermediate Seminars. Please save all your writing in this course so that, if you are chosen, you will have your work available. The purpose of this evaluation is to improve the program and to improve particular courses as necessary, not to evaluate individual students. You may remove your name from your papers if you prefer to submit them anonymously.

## Logistics

### Class meetings

**Where?** McCormack M-1-201

**When?** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 to 3:15.

### Individual meetings

Besides the regular class meetings, you will also have to set up several individual meetings with your instructor.

**Where?** McCormack 4-609

**When?** By appointment.

**How many?** You are encouraged to talk to Luis about your homework and course projects on a regular basis. The more opportunities you get to talk about your work, the better. In any event, **you are required to schedule at least three individual meetings with Luis**. The first meeting should be scheduled within the first two weeks of the semester. It will give Luis a chance to know about your background and interests. The second meeting should be scheduled before March 7, after your first paper and your project proposal is due. Your third meeting should not be scheduled later than the eleventh week.

**Why?** This course is designed to be a hands-on introduction to doing linguistic research. You will see that by the end of the course we, as a group, and you, as an individual, will have made many new, unpredictable discoveries. That is the part that I, as an instructor, love the most. It is also the part that past students of similar courses have enjoyed the most. You will see that when you discover something by yourself, it becomes an important part of who you are — even if what you have discovered might seem obscure or useless to other people.

Everything in this course is designed so that you achieve the deep learning that comes with individual research.

As usual, however, good things come at a prize. As much fun as making a discovery is, you will soon notice that discovering something about language — about any complex phenomenon — requires a lot of organization and self-disciplined thinking. Throughout the years, given my own personal experience, and given the experiences of my students, I have come to realize that the analytical tools involved in discovering important regularities about language are best learned by sharing your research with your peers, especially those with more experience doing what you are doing. That is why these individual meetings are so important: they will give you and me a chance to develop what it takes to get to discover something new. The individual meetings are so important that you may want to think of the three required meetings as a bare minimum. You will see that you will probably need many more than that to structure your research.

### **E-mail list**

To make sure that we all stay in touch between meetings, Luis will set up an e-mail list and a course blog.

You will get by e-mail notifications of any updates to the course blog, where homework assignments, take-home exams, readings and other class materials will be made available.

### **Course blog**

Homework assignments and class materials will be posted at

<http://www.alonso-ovalle.net/courses/span200g/>

A simple course log, accessible from the course blog, will keep track of the material covered during the class sessions.

### **Required Readings**

Besides the class materials that will be made available in the course blog, we will make extensive use of the following three textbooks, all available from the UMB

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bookstore (used copies are easy to find in any of the major internet bookstores). Copies are on reserve in the library (Wolfram and Ward is available as an electronic book.)

1. Napoli, Donna Jo and Lee Schoenfeld, Vera. (2010) *Language Matters. A Guide to Everyday Questions about Language*, Oxford University Press. **Second edition.**
2. Pinker, Steven. (2007) *The Language Instinct. How the Mind Creates Language*. 2nd ed. Harper-Collins.
3. Wolfram, Walt and Ward, Ben (eds.) (2006) *American Voices. How Dialects Differ from Coast to Coast*. Blackwell.

## Learning goals

### Specific to this course

By the end of the course, you will have developed a basic understanding of

1. the difference between prescriptive and descriptive approaches to language,
2. how languages are acquired, and, in particular, why first and second language acquisition are cognitively different processes,
3. how languages may differ from one another and what linguists think a dialect is,
4. and how human languages are structured: how linguistically relevant sounds are produced, how they are grouped together in syllables and in meaningful units smaller than words (morphemes), and how different categories of words are grouped together in larger syntactic constituents.

This foundational knowledge will allow you to

1. debunk frequent linguistic myths and misconceptions about language, and provide rational answers to everyday questions about language,
2. understand in scientific terms the linguistic varieties spoken in your community, how they relate to other linguistic varieties, and how they might contribute to our general understanding about human language.

This, on its turn, will allow you to

1. identify the many ways in which one's personal life or the life of a whole community might be affected by current myths and misconceptions about language, and
2. develop rational strategies to fight them.

### **Common to other Intermediate Seminars**

Beyond the specific goals stated above, this course, like other intermediate seminars, has been designed to help you develop a number of general skills:

**Critical Reading.** The class discussions, the homework, and your personal projects will usually require a deep understanding of very complex arguments. You will get many opportunities to practice summarizing the structure of an argument (determining what is presupposed, what is argued for, and whether there are embedded arguments), and evaluating its soundness (questioning the premises, and determining the validity of the argument form).

**Analytical Reasoning.** You will get an opportunity to get started doing simple linguistic analyses. That will require you to think hard about how to collect data, present relevant generalizations, state relevant hypothesis, and evaluate evidence for or against them. You will also learn how to narrow down your topic of inquiry so that it becomes manageable, and, in general, how to break down hard problems into simpler ones.

**Clear Writing.** In this course you will have to hand in many short-term writing assignments ("lab reports") that will build on class discussion and readings. Those assignments will provide practice in clear writing, and will get you ready to write the three required graded papers. You should think of the lab reports as complete writing pieces. That means that they should be written as if you were addressing a curious reader who is not enrolled in the class but still wants to know about what we are doing.

Writing clearly is very hard — that's why people make a living out of it. It is an art. You should think about both your short-term written assignments and your papers as time consuming processes. Writing requires a lot of organization, perseverance, and a firm time commitment. First, you will need to get clear about what you want to say, and you will need to sort out your own thoughts, realize what is substantial

and what is not, what can be presupposed, and what has to be brought into the discussion, etc. . . . Then you need to think hard about how to make it clear to a reader who has no idea about the topic of your assignment. That requires organizing your argument in clear steps, and expressing it in a clear language that will be familiar to the reader. The skills involved in doing all this work only improve with practice. You will get many opportunities to practice them throughout the course, and you will get constructive feedback from Luis and from your classmates about how easy to read your writing is.

Bear in mind that all writing is a process. A long one. You should expect to redo your papers frequently so that you can incorporate all the feedback that you will get.

**Assessing Other People’s Work and Collaborative Learning.** In this course you will be faced with some very difficult problems. When problems get too difficult for a person to solve, it makes sense to team up with other people. For that reason, we will rely on team work to address many of the issues addressed in class.

Team work can be fun, but it is also very demanding: it requires team members to be supportive of each other, while, at the same time, being critical. You will get plenty of opportunities to get trained in how to work in groups. Part of what you will learn is how to give your own feedback about other people’s writing. You will see that this is not an easy task: you will have to make an effort to understand what other people are writing, reconstruct their argumentation, and think about how you would have done it yourself. People will also expect constructive criticism from you.

## Course Requirements

Throughout the semester, you will be engaged in two types of work: during class meetings you will participate in a series of “lab sessions” (to which you will have to contribute **a weekly written lab report**) and you will be writing **three graded papers**, one of which will summarize the results of an original fieldwork research project. You will also have to make **two class presentations** (one team presentation, by mid-semester, and the other by yourself, right at the end of the semester.)

### The lab sessions

Most (though not all) of the class meetings will be “lab sessions”. Lab sessions are organized as a series of hands-on activities in which you will team up with other

classmates to look closely into problems connected to the topic of the class. During the first part of the semester, lab sessions will be devoted to debunking linguistic myths, during the second part of the semester you will get a chance to get started doing linguistic analysis, and by the end of the semester you should expect to be involved in preparing fieldwork materials.

The sessions will involve several weekly homework assignments, which will provide you with questions for your papers and your own individual research project.

**The Lab Reports.** You will be required to write a lab report after many of the lab sessions. Lab reports are written assignments, no shorter than a page (typed, double spaced, with margins no larger than one inch), where you will have to either summarize the findings of our investigations or try your best to answer some of the questions raised in class. Usually, lab reports will be assigned on a Friday, and be due the next Monday. **To qualify for a course grade, you must have submitted all class reports. There will be no exceptions.**

**The Writing Portfolio.** You should keep all your lab reports, together with the drafts of your papers, and any in-class writing in a portfolio, arranged in chronological order, and ready to be handed in at any point during the semester. All writing portfolios will be handed in by the end of the semester.

**Typing.** All lab reports should be typed. If you don't have access to a computer at home, you should take advantage of the university computer labs. When planning, be sure that you allow for some extra time for possible complications when printing out the assignments.

**E-mail Submissions.** All your work should be printed out and handed out to Luis. **E-mail submissions are not allowed. No exceptions.**

**Planning Ahead.** You should plan for at least two hours of outside preparation for each credit hour (this course is three credit course). On average, you should expect your weekly assignments to take three to four hours.

## The three graded papers

In addition to the lab reports, you will also have to write **three formal papers: two four-page papers and one six-page paper**. Their due dates are noted on the “Roadmap” section (which starts on page 13.)

Each of the two four-page papers will be devoted to debunking one of the linguistic myths discussed in the Napoli & Lee-Schoenfeld textbook by discussing relevant scientific evidence. The Pinker textbook, together with the lab reports and class discussion will help you prepare for these writing assignments. The first four-page paper is due **Thursday, November 7**. The second four-page paper is due **Thursday, 11/9**.

The six-page paper is of a different nature. This paper will summarize the results of a research project that you will be working on during the whole semester. Its last version is due on **December 22**.

### The third paper: your individual research project

Throughout the semester you will be working on the description of a linguistic variety spoken in your community: if you live in an English-dominant community, you will work on describing a certain variety of English; but chances are that there are other languages spoken in your community that you might want to explore (perhaps Spanish, Portuguese, Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Vietnamese. . .) specially if you happen to be a native speaker of those languages. The goal is to end up with a piece of writing closely resembling any of the chapters in the Wolfram and Ward textbook.

You will work on this research project in six stages.

**Choosing a topic.** At the beginning of the semester, you, together with Luis, will decide which linguistic variety you will be working on. The deadline for choosing a topic for your paper is **September 28**.

**Articulating a project proposal.** Once you have chosen a suitable topic, you will have to articulate a project proposal. Your project proposal should be a short written statement of why you are interested in the linguistic variety that you want to describe, together with a general description of the community of speakers that you will work with.

The deadline for the project proposal is **October 5**.

**A project outline.** Once you present your project proposal, you will need to write an outline of your project. The outline should be an extended proposal. You will have to be explicit about your plan of work: the type of issues that you want to explore, etc. . . . To give you an idea of the type of issues that the class might be interested in knowing about, you should browse through the Wolfram and Ward textbook.

We will discuss the process of writing an outline project in class. Project outlines will be submitted to Luis, who will give you further feedback.

The deadline for submitting the project outline is **October 21**.

**First draft.** After Luis approves the outline, you will start working on a simple set of fieldwork activities to find out about the issues that you have included in the project outline. You will also work on a first draft of your paper, which will include the results of your fieldwork.

The deadline for submitting the first draft is **November 18**

**The poster presentation.** After you get feedback on your first draft, you will start working on presenting your research questions and findings in a poster. We will also talk about how to organize a poster in class. Posters will be presented in a **mini research conference**, which will be held right at the end of the semester.

**The paper.** You will use your poster presentation, together with the feedback from Luis and your classmates to write the second draft of your third paper. Your paper should be at least six pages long (typed, double spaced, with margins no larger than an inch). The paper is due by the end of the study period (**December 22**).

**Comments and Revisions.** You will get feedback from Luis on your papers. You are expected to rewrite the two first papers by taking into consideration Luis' comments. For the third paper, you will get extensive comments from Luis and from your classmates, which should also prompt a revision.

**Deadline policy.** The deadlines for your papers are clearly stated in the syllabus. Extensions will not be granted, unless you make your request in writing before the deadline. Your written statement should specify what the reason for the extension is, and should propose an alternative deadline. If you are granted an extension, you will receive another written statement from Luis. The statement granting you an

extension should be dated before the original deadline. No extension will be granted via e-mail.

## **Class presentations**

You will also be doing **two** class presentations in this course. One will be your contribution to the mini conference that we will have by the end of the semester. It will be devoted to presenting your individual research project. The other will be a mid semester presentation in which you will team up with some of your classmates to present to the class at least two chapters of the Wolfram and Ward book.

## **Evaluation**

To qualify for a grade, you will have to complete **all** the lab reports, class presentations and papers (including all the stages involved in your personal research project), and come to class on a regular basis.

If you qualify for a grade, it will be computed as follows:

- Paper 1: 20 %
- Paper 2: 20 %
- Personal research project and third paper: 30 %
  - outline: 5%
  - first draft: 10%
  - poster presentation: 5%
  - final paper: 10 %
- Lab reports: 10 %
- Mid-semester class presentation: 10 %
- Class participation and attendance: 10 %

**Attendance policy.** Attending class meetings is not important: it is absolutely crucial! This course is organized around a series of hands-on in-class activities. The homework, the lab reports, the papers and your own personal project will presuppose

the content of the class meetings. You will not be able to do the assignments without attending class regularly. Since you will not qualify for a grade if you do not do your homework, regular class attendance is a prerequisite to qualify for a grade.

Attendance will be checked on a regular basis. If you cannot make it to a class meeting, you should give Luis prior notification. There are definitely acceptable excuses (like illness or other kinds of serious emergencies), but you should be aware that disorganization, laziness, and bad time management are not acceptable reasons to miss class.

**Incomplete Grade (Official Policy.)** The grade incomplete (INC) is reported only where a portion of the assigned or required class work, or the final examination, has not been completed because of serious illness, extreme personal circumstances, or scholarly reasons at the request of the instructor. If the student's record is such that he or she would fail the course regardless of the missing work, he or she fails.

Permission of the instructor must be obtained and the form for Grade Incomplete must be completed. These forms can be obtained from the appropriate departmental offices.

A student receiving the grade of incomplete (INC) is allowed one year in which to complete the course. The new grade must be submitted to the Registrar by the grading deadline for that semester, i.e. by the end of the next fall for the fall semester incompletes. The grade for any course not completed by this deadline will be converted to the grade of 'F'.

## Roadmap

The course is structured around three sections. Each section builds upon the previous ones.

The first unit is devoted to discussing a number of linguistic myths. Its purpose is twofold. First, it will give us an opportunity to probe into our own presuppositions about how language works. If you are like most people, you will probably have your own ideas about this, but, quite likely, those ideas will be supported by little scientific evidence. Most people have no idea about what we linguists do. This is our chance to see why it might be important to find out. We will also use the first unit as an excuse to get started practising how to organize an argument in writing. This is the unit where we spend most of the class time analyzing good and bad writing.

In the second unit, you will find out a bit about what we linguists do. We will have a quick look at some of the principles governing the structure of language at different levels, and we will have a quick look at how kids acquire those principles. The Pinker textbook will be your guide for this unit.

Finally, in the third part of the course, we will put some of this knowledge to practice and look at a number of languages. We will start with your class presentations about different dialects of English, and then move to briefly discuss the so-called “Boston accent”, African American English, and “Spanglish”. Time permitting, we may also talk briefly about creole languages. This part will conclude with your presentations, which will describe the language of your community.

**Caveat:** It is impossible to predict in advance how many of these topics we will end up investigating, and in how much depth, because it is impossible to predict in advance how successful our research team will be. It would be good if we manage to address all the topics, but it would also be good if we only address some of them, as long as we do it rigorously. To keep track of what we cover, we will keep a course log in the website. In any event, here’s a preliminary selection of topics, together with some important dates to remember.

## **Unit 1 (weeks 1-7): Debunking Linguistic Myths**

Main reading source: the Napoli & Lee-Schoenfeld textbook.

### **Week 1 [9/6 - 9-7]**

- Tuesday:
  - Presentations. Syllabus (1). IS questionnaires.
  - Class questionnaire.
  - Subscribe to the mailing list.
  - Reading: Napoli and Lee-Schoenfeld, ch. 1. *How do we acquire language?*
- Thursday:
  - Class discussion: Language myths.
  - Organizing an argument: discussion of Napoli and Lee-Schoenfeld ch.1.
  - First lab report: *How Do We Acquire Language?* (due 9/14).

- Readings for next week:
  - Reading: Napoli and Lee-Schoenfeld, ch. 3. *From One Language to the Next*.
  - Reading: Napoli and Lee-Schoenfeld, ch. 4. *Does Language Equal Thought?*
  - Reading: Pinker, ch. 3. *Mentalese*.

**Week 2 [9/14 - 9/16]**

- Tuesday
  - First peer review session. First lab report.
  - Readings for next class: Napoli and Lee-Schoenfeld, ch. 3. *Does Language Equal Thought?*, Pinker, ch. 3. *Mentalese*.
  - Reading for next class: Motluk, Alison. (2002) “You Are What You Speak.” *New Scientist*.
- Thursday:
  - Lab session: Language and Thought.
  - Lera Boroditsky’s NPR interview. (<http://cognition.stanford.edu/press/interview-high-quality.html>)
  - Second lab report: *Does Language Equal Thought?* (due 02/11/08)
- Readings for next week:
  - Napoli and Lee-Schoenfeld, ch.5. *Are Sign Languages Real Languages?*
  - Lucas, Ceil & Valli, Clayton. (2004) “American Sign Language”. In Finegan, Edward and Rickford, John R. (eds.) *Language in the USA. Themes for the Twenty-first Century*. C.U.P.

**Week 3 [9/21 - 9/23]**

- Tuesday:
  - Peer review session. Second lab report.
  - Lab session: *Are Sign Languages Real Languages?*

- Thursday
  - How to draft. Preparing for a lab report. Quoting sources.
  - Third lab report: *Are Sign Languages Real Languages?* (due 9/28/10)
- Readings for next week:
  - Napoli and Lee-Schoenfeld, ch. 8. *Can One Person's Speech be Better than Another's?*
  - Pinker, ch. 12. *The Language Mavens*
- **September 28 is the deadline for choosing the topic of your third paper.**

#### **Week 4 [9/28 - 9/30]**

- Tuesday:
  - Peer review. Third lab report.
  - Lab session. *Can One Person's Speech be Better than Another's?*
- Thursday:
  - First encounter with linguistic diversity. Watch: *American Tongues* (1988) (produced and directed by Louis Alvarez and Andres Kolker).
  - Fourth lab report. *Can One Person's Speech be Better than Another's?*
- Readings for next week:
  - Napoli and Lee-Schoenfeld, ch. 10. *Do Men and Women Talk Differently? And Who Cares?*
- **The first paper debunking a linguistic myth is due by the end of next week.**

#### **Week 5 [10/5 - 10/7]**

- Tuesday:
  - Analyzing and evaluating an argument. Group writing session on *Do Men and Women Talk Differently? And Who Cares?* Writing a squib.
  - **Project proposal due today.**
  - Readings for next class:

\* Napoli and Lee-Schoenfeld, ch. 12. *Should the United States Adopt English as the Official Language and Overhaul the Educational System Accordingly?*

- Thursday:
  - Peer review. Discussion of the group writing session.
  - Analyzing and evaluating an argument (II). Individual writing session on *Should the United States adopt English as the Official Language and Overhaul the Educational System Accordingly?*
  - **The first paper debunking a linguistic myth is due today.**

#### **Week 6 [10/12 - 10/14]**

- This week and part of the next will be devoted to the team presentations on the dialects of English (using the Wolfram and Ward textbook.) We will have around nine fifteen-minute presentations, three per class, each one will be followed by a ten minute group discussion. The goal will be to provide feedback to the presenters.
- Tuesday:
  - Presentation teams 1-3.
- Thursday:
  - Presentation teams 4-6.

#### **Week 7 [10/19 - 10/21].**

- Tuesday:
  - Presentation teams 7-9.
- Thursday:
  - Language vs. dialect.
  - Readings for next week:
    - \* Pinker, ch. 4: *How Language Works*.

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- \* Resource: O'Grady, W. (2005) "Syntax: The Analysis of Sentence Structure". In O'Grady, W. *et al.* *Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction*. Bedford/St. Martin's.

- **The project outline is due today.**

## **Unit 2 (Weeks 8-10): How Language Works.**

### **Week 8 [10/26 - 10/28]**

- Tuesday:
  - What do we know when we know a language? Categories: morphological, semantic, distributional.
  - Syntactic constituents (I).
- Thursday:
  - Syntactic constituents (II).
  - Heads and Complements. Merge.
  - Lab session on question formation. Yes / No questions. Move.
  - Fifth lab report: *Question Formation* (due 11/2).
- Readings for next week:
  - Pinker, ch. 5: *Words, Words, Words*.

### **Week 9 [11/2 - 11/4]**

- Tuesday
  - Discussion of lab report.
  - *Wh*-questions.
  - First encounter with the structure of words.
- Thursday:
  - Morphemes. Roots and Affixes.
  - Derivation. Derivational Affixes.

- Compounds. Lab session on the semantic composition of N-N compounds.
- Sixth lab report: N-N compounds.
- Reading for next week:
  - Pinker, ch. 6. “The Sounds of Silence.”

### **Week 10 [11/9 ]**

- Tuesday
  - From speech to discrete sounds.
  - How speech sounds are produced.
  - Vowels and consonants.
  - Consonantal articulation: places of articulation.
  - Manners of articulation: stops, fricatives, affricates, liquids, nasals.
- Thursday:
  - Vowels. Basic parameters for describing vowels. Syllables.
  - Seventh lab report. *How Speech Sounds are Produced*.
- **The second paper debunking a linguistic myth is due today.**
- Reading for next week:
  - Fitzpatrick, J. “Beantwon Babble (Boston, MA)” (ch. 10 in the Wolfram and Ward textbook).
  - Resource: McCarthy, John J. (1999) A case of surface constraint violation. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics*, 38, 169-195.

### **Unit 3 (Weeks 10-14): Boston Speaks**

#### **Week 11 [11/16-11/18 ] The Boston Accent. AAE.**

- Tuesday
  - Peer review. Seventh lab report.
  - More on syllables.

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- Lab session on *R-Dropping* (I). Gathering data.
  - Lab report: *R-Dropping* (due 11/16).
  - Reading for the next class:
    - Green, Lisa. (2004) “African American English.” In Finegan, Edward and Rickford, John R. (eds.) *Language in the USA. Themes for the Twenty-first Century*. C.U.P.
    - Baugh, John. (2004) “Ebonics and its controversy.” In Finegan, Edward and Rickford, John R. (eds.) *Language in the USA. Themes for the Twenty-first Century*. C.U.P.
  - Thursday:
    - Discussion of the lab report.
    - Views on the origins of African American English.
    - Lexicon.
    - A bit of syntax. Negative concord. Negative inversion. Habitual *be*. Embedded inversion. *BIN, den*
  - **The first draft of your third paper is due today.**
  - Readings for next class:
    - Lipski, John. (2007) “Spanglish, English, or Spanglish?: Truth and Consequences of U.S. Latino Bilingualism.” In Nelsy Echávez-Solano and Kenya C. Dworkin y Méndez (eds.) *Spanish and Empire*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, pp. 197-218.
    - Zentella, Ana Celia. (2004) “Spanish in the Northeast”. In Finegan, Edward and Rickford, John R. (eds.) *Language in the USA. Themes for the Twenty-first Century*. C.U.P.

### **Week 12 [11/23] “Spanglish.”**

- Thursday
  - Demographics: Spanish speakers in the Northeast.
  - The lexicon.
  - Some phonological patterns of the Spanish of the Caribbean.

- Stereotypical phonological markers: velar “r” in Puerto Rican Spanish, syllable final liquids in Dominican Spanish, consonant gemination in Cuban Spanish
- “Spanglish.” Is it really a language?
- Optional readings on creoles:
  - Pinker, ch. 2. “Chatterboxes.”
  - Chaudenson & Mufwene (2001) “Creole People and Languages.” In *Creolization of Language and Culture* (Routledge 2001).
  - Holm (1988), “Introduction to Pidgin and Creole Linguistics.” In Arends, Muysken & Smith (eds.). *Pidgins & Creoles: An Introduction*.

### **Weeks 13 - 15 [11/30-12/14] Mini-Conference**

- During the last two weeks and a half of the semester we will hold a research conference where you will present the results of your individual research project.
- **Third paper** due on December 22 (last day of the Final Exam Period)

## **Academic honesty**

**Collaboration.** Collaboration on in-class activities is encouraged, but collaboration on take-home assignments and exams is prohibited. Collaboration includes permitting someone else to copy your work. If there is sufficient reason for Luis to think that you have collaborated on a take-home assignment, you will not qualify for a course grade.

**Plagiarism.** Whenever you use another person’s intellectual work without properly acknowledging it, you are committing plagiarism. Cutting and pasting from someone else’s work published on the web, or downloading material from the web and presenting it as your own are forms of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a very serious offense, and one which is extremely easy to detect and prove. Being accused of plagiarism will get you in serious trouble.

To avoid a charge of academic dishonesty, you should always cite your sources properly. Your reader should always be informed of where you are getting your information from. If you get a piece of information from a published source, or from

the web, you should always acknowledge it with a citation in the text. You should always be sure that you surround direct quotations with quotation marks and that you include a citation of the source of the quotation. Reduce the use of direct quotations to a minimum.

Students are expected to abide by the University's Code of Student Conduct in all their classes at UMass Boston, which you can read at

[http://www.umb.edu/students/student\\_rights/code\\_conduct.html](http://www.umb.edu/students/student_rights/code_conduct.html)

Plagiarism is a particularly serious violation, as outlined in the Academic Honesty section of the code (section VI), and will not be tolerated. Offensive and insulting behavior undermines the sense of community that the Intermediate Seminars strive to build. Class discussion and group projects can be productive only in a climate of respect for the opinions and beliefs of all. A healthy exchange about issues may include disagreement about ideas, but it must not demean the character or background of the individuals holding those ideas.

## **Special needs**

Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 offers guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center for Disability Services, M-1-401. The student must present these recommendations and discuss them with each instructor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period.

## **First name policy**

“Use first names as soon as possible.

(...) Titles, like neckties, imply differences in rank or age, but science moves best when all are treated as equals.”

(James Watson, *Avoid Boring People*, p. 69)

Please, address Luis by his first name — and only by his first name!