

# SPAN 215 – Summer Intensive Course, 2011

## Introduction to Spanish Linguistics

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Class: Mon-Fri 9:35-10:50 in 8 Life Sciences  
Office hours: Daily after class until 12:00 and by appt.

### Introduction

Is language special? How do we learn language? We often do not consider how all of us learn a language. Consider this fact: barring mental impairment, all humans will learn a language, which is not necessarily the language of their parents. Do we come hardwired from birth to learn language? Is it a uniquely human trait?

As you can see, there are many issues that surround language. Linguistics is the empirical and systematic study of language. In other words, linguists apply scientific methods to the study of language. This endeavor can be surprisingly difficult.

As a gateway course, I will share with you different aspects of the empirical study of language. This discipline is so broad that we will only be able to scratch the surface of the various aspects that linguists consider. However, I hope to leave you with the impression that linguistics is not *just* about grammar rules, nor is it about how to “speak better” but rather reflects a deeper understanding of our brain and our species.

### Objectives & Goals

Spanish is the official language of the classroom. For many of you, this course will be the first content course that you will take in a second language. So as a primary objective, this course will help you improve your Spanish fluency. You will practice your Spanish by engaging in discussions, readings, and presentations. Furthermore, by the end of this course, you will be able to:

- identify the major branches of linguistics
- discuss the empirical methods that linguists use to study language
- name the various linguistic levels of analysis
- analyze linguistic data at these different levels of linguistic analysis

Although this list may appear as a lofty goal to many of you, I promise you that by the end of the course, you will never look at language in the same way. Given that this is an Intro to Spanish Linguistics class, we will look specifically at Spanish as our case study as we discuss the various levels of linguistic inquiry.

### Textbook

There will be no required textbook for the class. I will provide materials to be covered in class through presentations, PDFs and scanned readings. Most readings will be available on ANGEL.

### Attendance

Because this course is being offered during a 6-week session, it is very important that you attend every class. Missing class means you miss more than you would during a regular semester course. Of course, I understand that emergencies arise and these situations will be treated on a case-by-case basis. In addition, I regard my decision to provide you with all materials in class as an agreement that your class time will be your learning environment.

### Who should take this course?

SPAN 100 or the equivalent is a prerequisite for this course. This is not a grammar class, so I will assume a basic understanding of the Spanish language. Since this class is listed as a gateway course, it is intended to help Spanish majors and minors decide whether they would like to continue on a Linguistics track or if the Literature track is a better match for them.

### Course Outline and Grades

My expectations for this course are different from those of a regular semester. Our timeframe will result in denser class presentations. In other words, you will be getting a lot more information and new material on a daily basis. Your final grade will be computed based on the following:

Exams (3)	45%
Assignments	15%
Final Project	20%
Participation	20%

The exams are *tentatively* scheduled as follows:

Exam I: Syntax & Morphology on Friday, July 15

Exam II: Phonetics/Phonology & History of Spanish, July 27

Exam III: Variation & Spanish in the U.S., August 8

The letter grade will be assigned according to the standard table:

92.5 - 100 = A	72.5 - 76.4 = C
89.5 - 92.4 = A-	69.5 - 72.4 = C-
86.5 - 89.4 = B+	66.5 - 69.4 = D+
82.5 - 86.4 = B	62.5 - 66.4 = D
79.5 - 82.4 = B-	59.5 - 62.4 = D-
76.5 - 79.4 = C+	00 - 59.4 = F

### Class Conduct

My intention is to provide a learning environment for all of us. My hope is that all of you feel free to express yourselves in Spanish without worry of others disrespecting you or critiquing your level of proficiency. Also, language issues can be surprisingly controversial. This makes sense when we consider how intricately tied language is to culture and identity. Opinions and lively discussions are welcome but let us always return to observable and objective facts. Here are a couple of ground rules:

- We are all adults; I will never call you out for texting on your phone, doing crossword puzzles, or reading newspapers, but I will tell you up front: this will affect your participation grade.
- Please silence your cell phones.
- Since this is a morning class, I don't mind if you bring coffee or snacks. However, be courteous to those around you and do not leave litter.
- Assignments can be turned in electronically, (actually, I encourage it where possible) and I will give you feedback electronically.
- Please e-mail me through regular e-mail and not through ANGEL. I am more likely to receive your messages in a timely fashion that way.

**Disability Access Statement** The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible.

**Academic Integrity** The Pennsylvania State University defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts (Faculty Senate Policy 49-20). Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of their students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be reported to the University's Judicial Affairs office for possible further disciplinary sanction. See <http://www.psu.edu/dept/oue/aappm/G-9.html>

## **Tentative Schedule**

### **Semana 1: Language as a symbolic system**

6/29 Wednesday: Introduction / discussion on Language

6/30 Thursday: Language as a uniquely human trait

7/1 Friday: Rules of grammar / studying Language

### **Semana 2: Sentence-level analysis**

\*\*\*No classes Monday, July 4<sup>th</sup> (Independence Day holiday)\*\*\*

7/5 Tuesday: Linguistics as the empirical study of Language

7/6 Wednesday: Syntax

7/7 Thursday: Syntax, cont'd.

7/8 Friday: Syntax, cont'd.

### **Semana 3: Word-level analysis**

7/11 Monday: Morphology

7/12 Tuesday: Morphology, cont'd.

7/13 Wednesday: Morphology, cont'd.

7/14 Thursday: Review

7/15 Friday: Exam 1

### **Semana 4: The Building Blocks of Language**

7/18 Monday: Phonetics

7/19 Tuesday: Phonology

7/20 Wednesday: Phonology, cont'd.

7/21 Thursday: Phonology, cont'd.

7/22 Friday: History of Spanish

### **Semana 5: Language as a dynamic system**

7/25 Monday: History of Spanish, cont'd.

7/26 Tuesday: Review

7/27 Wednesday: Exam 2

7/28 Thursday: Variation

7/29 Friday: Variation

**Semana 6: Spanish in the U.S. and the world**

8/1 Monday: Sociolinguistics

8/2 Tuesday: Bilingualism / Spanish in the U.S.

8/3 Wednesday: Final project workshop

8/4 Thursday: Sign Language / Pidgins & Creoles

8/5 Friday: Review

**Semana 7:**

8/8 Monday: Exam 3

8/9 Tuesday: Final Presentations

8/10 Wednesday: Final Presentations