LEL2A: Linguistic Theory and the Structure of English (LASC08017)

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Course aims and objectives

The course explores the linguistic structure of Modern English in relation to some central issues in linguistic theory. The material is organised thematically, covering the phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics of English as the principal components of linguistic structure.

1. Phonology: introduces some key ideas from phonological theory within the broader context of the study of linguistic structure. Material will consider some of the main characteristics of the phonology of English and will present some of the central concepts in phonological analysis.

2. Morphology: explores some central aspects of the morphological structure of English words, examining some of the traditional elements of morphological analysis.

3. Syntax: presents syntactic properties of major constructions in English, including a thorough grounding in syntactic structure.

4. Semantics: develops a logical analysis of the meaning of English sentences and its relationship to syntactic structures.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand the structure of the phonological system of English and the theoretical issues that arise in its description and analysis.
2. Understand the way that words are structured in English and other languages and the relations between morphology, phonology, syntax and semantics.
3. Have an understanding of the foundations of syntactic and semantic analysis.
4. Be able to parse any English sentence, and objectively analyse grammatical phenomena in English and other languages.
5. Be able to critically assess different theoretical analyses of particular constructions.

Schedule and lecturers

Week	topic	Lecturer
1	phonology	
2	phonology	Patrick Honeybone
3	phonology	
4	morphology	Itamar Kastner
5	syntax	
6	syntax	
7	syntax	Bettelou Los
8	syntax	
9	syntax	
10	semantics	Robert Truswell
11	semantics	

And our tutors: Ricardo Battilani, Nadine Dietrich, Lisa Gotthard, Claire Graf, Aleksandra Sevastianova, Zack Situ, Jenny Steele and Hans Wilke.

Assessment

Assessment	% of final mark
Weekly Exercises on LEARN	15
Tests on LEARN	15
Phono/morpho essay, 15 November (W9, Mon)	40
Syntax assignment, 9 December (W12, Thu)	15
Semantics assignment, 9 December (W12, Thu)	15
total	100

Hybrid delivery

The course will be delivered in hybrid fashion, with some activities online and some in person. The typical three **lectures** per week will be primarily presented synchronously, on-line, although we might also make use of pre-recorded videos. The lectures will be accompanied by lecture notes of various kinds as well as readings. Lectures will be recorded.

Tutorials are currently planned to be held in person. The tutorial is a weekly meeting in a small group setting with a tutor, supplemented by asynchronous discussion boards. Tutorials start in week 2 and follow the usual system of discussing the material of the previous week. They will not be recorded.

You will be automatically assigned to a tutorial group which fits in with your timetable. Attendance is **compulsory** and registers will be taken. Students who miss two or more tutorial sessions will be contacted by their tutor in the first instance. If you miss three or more consecutive tutorial sessions, this will be flagged up to our Student Support Team so it is essential to let us know if you are experiencing any difficulties as we are here to help.

If you are unable to attend your tutorial session, please contact your tutor (whose details can be found on the Learn page) and the Teaching Office (lelinfo@ed.ac.uk) by email. You must contact them before the start of your session if possible, otherwise you will be marked as absent.

Tutorials will commence in **week 2** (week beginning Monday 27th September 2021). If you need to change to a different tutorial group/time there is a form you need to complete to do this. The form can be found on the Learn page under 'Tutorial Information' and 'Changing your Tutorial Group'.

Discussion of the material can also take place on **our Discord chat server** (link on Learn). If you ask us a question individually via email, we will post it to Discord on your behalf and answer it there so that everyone can see our answer.

Finally, **"LEL2A in Context"** will feature short pre-recorded videos accompanying each week's material. Since lectures are given online, staff and students don't get the chances they previously had to discuss topics that come up during class but are not part of the material itself. We would like to make up for this, allowing students to see the connections between LEL2A and linguistics in general, but also the relevance of linguistics to society in general. These videos are not assessed and should not factor into your formal assignments.

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Schedule for a typical week

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Here is our *recommended* schedule for a typical "week", whereby a "week" begins on Tuesday at 1pm (Exercises and Tests will be distributed slightly differently in each block).

- **Tuesday** afternoon:
    - Attend Lecture 1 (1.10pm).
    - Check when the week's Exercises should be done and plan accordingly.
    - Read through the material for the upcoming tutorial.
    - Start work on any parts of the tutorial you're comfortable with.
- **Thursday**:
    - Attend Lecture 2 (1.10pm).
- **After the Thursday lecture**:
    - Enjoy LEL2A in Context and contribute to the discussion on Discord.
    - Continue work on the tutorial.
- **Friday**:
    - Attend Lecture 3 (1.10pm).
- **Monday**:
    - Attend your tutorial.
- **Tuesday** morning:
    - Submit the Test, if the week has one.

Feedback

Feedback is essential to learning. Preparing and attending tutorials is a good way of receiving feedback.

In order to do well on this course, it is extremely important to stay on top of the material (rather than rely on last-minute cramming, for example). Getting together in small peer groups to prepare the tutorial material for every week is highly recommended. If you find yourself losing the thread, ask for help – from your tutor, or from the course organizer. Post questions about the material on the discussion boards, and try to answer questions posted there by others – explaining something to someone else is a good way to consolidate knowledge. LingSoc/CogSciSoc/FamiLing/CogSciPALS peer support is also available.

- The Learn Exercises help you understand a given week's material and are due two weeks after they are released, although we recommend completing them right after finishing the week's material. You can take them twice if you want to, so that you can learn from the feedback that you got on your first attempt. Opening the Exercise starts your first attempt.

- The Learn Tests can only be taken once. They are due two weeks after they are released, although we recommend completing them right after finishing the week's material. Marks for the Learn assignments may have to be scaled, in accordance with the University's Common Marking Scheme. Opening the Test starts your attempt.

- The essay is a typical essay, more information on which will be provided in due course.

- The syntax and semantics assignments will consist of problem sets similar to the tutorial problems discussed in the tutorials.

You will receive written feedback on each kind of assignment – do read it, and get in touch if parts of it are unclear.

Marking

We use the University's Common Marking Scheme. A full description of this scheme, including descriptors of the various grades, can be found on the following page:
https://www.ed.ac.uk/ppls/linguistics-and-english-language/current/undergraduate/assessment/common-marking-scheme

Reading (See also the Resource List on LEARN)

Phonology – Essential:

Carr, P. (2013). *English phonetics and phonology an introduction* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

Hayes, B. (2011). *Introductory phonology*. John Wiley & Sons.

Carr, P. (1999). *English phonetics and phonology: an introduction* (119–127). Blackwell.

Carr, P. (1993). *Phonology* (pp. 92–96). Macmillan.

Phonology – Further Reading:

Giegerich, H. J. (1992). *English phonology : an introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

Davenport, M., & Hannahs, S. . (2010). *Introducing Phonetics and Phonology*. Routledge.

McMahon, A. M. S. (2001). *An introduction to English phonology*. Edinburgh University Press.

Wells, J. C. (John C. (1982). *Accents of English*. Cambridge University Press.

John Harris. (1990). Derived phonological contrasts. In A. C. (Alfred C. Gimson & S. Ramsaran (Eds.), *Studies in the pronunciation of English: a commemorative volume in honour of A.C. Gimson* (pp. 87–105). Routledge.

Morphology – Essential:

Plag, I. (2003). *Word-formation in English*. Cambridge University Press.

Morphology – Further Reading:

Carstairs-McCarthy, A. (2018). *An introduction to English morphology : words and their structure / Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy.* (2nd Ed.). Edinburgh University Press,.

Don, J. (2014). *Morphological theory and the morphology of English*. Edinburgh University Press.

Bauer, L. (2003). *Introducing linguistic morphology* (2nd Ed). Edinburgh University Press.

Syntax – Essential:

The Syntax Syllabus (on LEARN). It is recommended that you print this out and have it bound (e.g. by a ring binder).

Syntax – Further Reading:

Huddleston, R. D. and G.K. Pullum (2002). *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge University Press.

Huddleston, R. D. and G.K. Pullum (2005). *A student's introduction to English grammar*. Cambridge University Press.

Semantics – Essential:

Kearns, K. (2011). *Semantics* (2nd Ed.) Palgrave Macmillan.

Semantics – Further Reading:

Cruse, D. A. (2011). *Meaning in language: an introduction to semantics and pragmatics* (3rd Ed.) Oxford University Press.

Saeed, J. I. (2016). *Semantics* (4th Ed.) Wiley Blackwell.