University of Southern Maine
The Literacy, Language, and Culture Program

EDU 561 Aspects of the English Language
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Fall 2017
Tuesdays, 4-7pm
South Portland High School, Room 221

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SYLLABUS

Description

This survey course examines the elements of English and their relevance to second language acquisition. The course analyzes the phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and semantic structure of English; the social aspects such as variation, change, and register; and the communicative aspects such as pragmatics, psycholinguistics, and acquisition. Application of these language aspects will be accomplished through problem solving and discussion activities integrating the aspects of English within the second language classroom context. Primary emphasis will be placed on a better understanding of English through class discussion, oral presentations, and practical application for teaching in the ESL classroom (3 credits).

Course goals: Students will be able to...

• Understand basic transformational grammar rules.
• Apply grammatical rules to practical, relevant, and communicative teaching situations in the ESL classroom.
• Analyze and correct syntactical errors in speech.
• Understand the basic concepts of derivational and inflectional morphology.
• Read and write the English phonemic transcription system (IPA).
• Analyze and correct errors in English pronunciation (segmentals and suprasegmentals).
• Understand variations in language style and register.
• Understand the varieties of meaning.
• Enjoy learning about the English language through a sharing of experiences, discussions, and presentations.

Method

Knowledge is socially constructed. In this class, we will construct personally meaningful knowledge through formal lecture, discussion, and reading. You will be actively involved in this process by interacting with your peers and me, working on a variety of activities, and doing important scholarly work in the field.

Relation to CEHD Core Values

• Democracy – Students will be exposed to multiple views and perspectives with regard to understanding the structure of the English language and the challenges it poses for English language learners (ELLS). They will utilize inclusive dialogue and be encouraged to express their views.
• Civility and Caring – The instructor will model the use of constructive communication, protection of individual dignity, and empathy, compassion, and openness. Students will be expected to demonstrate these qualities in their interactions with instructor and peers. Students will demonstrate appropriate communicative qualities through presentations and practical projects. Evidence of differentiation for ELLs and other diverse learners will be expected to be included in students’ work.
• Equity and Diversity – Course content will include ways to differentiate for a variety of learner types including struggling readers and individuals from different cultures. Students will be expected to include differentiated elements in work.
• Social Justice – Students will adjust instruction, as needed, to empower all learners to develop L1 and L2 literacy skills in order to be active members of society.
• Ethical Practice – Instructor will engage in and insist on the highest level of professional practice. Students are involved in assessing theory, research, and the best pedagogy, determining how to link this understanding to their own teaching practice.
• Scholarship – Students will examine research, theory, and best practices to guide their own content area instruction and assessment.
• Professional Learning and Continuous Improvement – Students and instructor will participate in ongoing dialogue to exchange ideas for mutual and continuing professional growth.

Optional readings


Requirements and grading policy

You will receive detailed instructions for each of the assignments, and each assignment will be discussed in class. Please follow the APA format (6th edition) when citing sources: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)

1) Participation in the discussion (20%)

It is important to be present in class in order to be able to understand the lectures, take notes, and participate in the conversation. I expect you to play an active role in the discussion, which means that you should come to class prepared. Please invest time in going beyond our lectures and optional readings in your exploration of the phenomena we will be talking about in class.

You cannot create your final project overnight. Since you will need much time to work on it, please plan accordingly. Participating in the discussion will help you create a good final project.

You cannot pass the class if you miss more than two classes without permission. Remember that you can always email me if you need to.
2) “Discovering a new language” (20%). Due: 10/17

This assignment is an opportunity to visualize and imagine what learning an L2 is like. Pick one of the languages spoken in public schools in Maine (e.g., Swahili, Khmer, Russian, Dinka, Tagalog, etc). Create a short profile for this language. Focus on the following: 1) classification (language family, major dialects, etc); 2) geographic distribution; 3) a brief overview of its linguistic features (alphabet, pronunciation, vocabulary, etc); 4) difficulties experienced by speakers of this L1 when learning ESL.

Please make a copy of this profile for each student in our class before submitting the final product to me. There is a handout on Blackboard in which the assignment is described in much detail. Please read it carefully. Length: 2-3 pages.

3) ESL learner study (20%). Due: 12/5

This is an opportunity to do some highly focused, one-on-one work with an ELL that will include some basic discourse analysis. You will record an interview with the ELL. I recommend picking an ELL with whom you will be able to have a 15-20 minute conversation. Obtain a writing sample from the student. You will then transcribe parts of the interview using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). If you want to type this up, consider using http://ipa.typeit.org. You can also handwrite your transcription. In your analysis, you will focus on the following: 1) pronunciation (phonetics); 2) vocabulary (morphology); 3) grammar (syntax); 4) language use and meaning (pragmatics and semantics). Please include examples that support your conclusions and a list of the practical ramifications of your project in the paper. Be sure to access the handout in which the assignment is described – download it from Blackboard. Length: 10-15 pages.

4) Activity portfolio (20%). Due: 12/12

Please pick one of the aspects of the English language discussed in this class (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, etc) and create a set of ten short activities that focus on teaching it in an ESL class. Place these in a folder or a binder, along with any materials that may accompany them, and submit them to me for review. Pick one of the activities and demonstrate it in class (10-15 minutes). Please download the handout in which the assignment is described from Blackboard. Please sign up for your presentation.

5) Quizzes (5 x 4% each, 20% – see the course outline, below)

This class is “vocabulary-heavy,” i.e., you will learn many new terms and concepts. Furthermore, the five quizzes will help us check your understanding of the content.

A = 93-100%, A - = 90-92%, B + = 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B - = 80-82%, C + = 77-79%, C = 73-76%

Academic support

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. At any point, if you encounter difficulty with the course or feel you could be performing at a higher level, consult with me.

Students experience difficulties in courses for a variety of reasons. For problems with writing skills or time management, make an appointment to see a tutor at USM Learning Commons Tutoring (780-
Technology support (including Blackboard-specific questions and issues)

To contact the USM Help Desk, send an email to usm-helpdesk@maine.edu or call 780-4029. If you are going to do a PowerPoint presentation and have a Mac, you may need a “dongle.” It can be borrowed from USM.

Library support

Live support is available during business hours. Go to http://usm.maine.edu/library and click on “Ask a librarian” to chat with a librarian. You can also call the USM Library in Portland (780-4270), Gorham (780-5345), or at LAC (753-6540). Remember that, as a USM student, you have already paid for access to online article databases through our library’s website (EBSCO Host/Academic Search Complete, JStor, and others). Use them to conduct research as needed.

Course outline

Week 1 (9/12): Introduction – Language, linguistics, and applied linguistics

Week 2 (9/19): English – History and context

Week 3 (9/26): L1 and L2 acquisition (SLA)
    Optional: HLL (chapters 1-4)

Week 4 (10/3): TESOL methodology
    Optional: HLL (chapters 5-7)

Week 5 (10/10): Morphology and syntax
    Quiz 1
    Optional: Grammar: KTG (pp. 1-30, optional: Appendix 1)
    Optional: Grammar and morphology: KTG (pp. 31-73, 283-284, 232-241, 266-268, 272-273)
    Optional: Countable and uncountable nouns: KTG (pp. 152-160, 282-283)

Week 6 (10/17): Grammar
    Submit your “Discovering a new language” paper
    Optional: Verb tenses (present & past): KTG (pp. 74-137, 280-282, 269-271, 275-276, App. 2)
    Optional: Verb tenses (future): KTG (pp. 138-151)
    Optional: Infinitives and gerunds: KTG (pp. 201-209)

Week 7 (10/24): Grammar
    Quiz 2
    Optional: Passive voice: KTG (pp. 242-251)
    Optional: Prepositions, articles, phrasal verbs, and modal verbs: KTG (pp. 161-184, 210-231)
Week 8 (10/31): Grammar
Optional: Adjective clauses, conditionals, wish sentences, and other relevant topics: KTG (pp. 193-200, 252-262, 270-271, 273-274)
Optional: Practical ramifications and teaching grammar: KTG (pp. 287-312)

Week 9 (11/7): Phonetics
Quiz 3
Optional: Vowels, consonants, IPA, and word stress: AE (chapters 1-5)

Week 10 (11/14): Phonology
Optional: Connected speech, pronunciation problems, suprasegmentals, and intonation: AE (chapters 6-11)

11/21 – No class, Thanksgiving

Week 11 (11/28): Phonology
Optional: Teaching pronunciation: AE (chapters 12-16)

Week 12 (12/5): Pragmatics, semantics, and semiotics
Quiz 4
Submit your ESL learner study

Week 13 (12/12): Conclusion + Activity presentations (please sign up)
Quiz 5
Submit your activity portfolio

Thank you!