

Linguistics 427- Fall 2012
Advanced Phonology
**Frequency, Variation, & Coarticulation:
Patterns of Use or Evidence of Grammar?**
T/Th 9:25-10:40 in HRG 125

Instructor: Dr. Kevin B. McGowan Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30 - 4:30pm
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208 Herring Hall

Course Description

As we have designed it together over the summer, this is not so much a course in how to *do* phonological analysis as it is a course in what phonology is. We will, of course, get our hands dirty now and again and do some actual phonology, but for the most part we will be reading, thinking about, and discussing different theories of phonology. We will evaluate the assumptions each theory makes about what language is and how it works. Questions we will encounter include: what should count as evidence for a theory of phonology? is there any such thing as grammar? how can we tell? are there mental representations of abstract linguistic units and, if so, how abstract are they? what responsibility does the phonologist have for sociolinguistic variation, frequency differences, and coarticulatory patterns in a language?

The specific course goals are:

1. To survey a representative (but by no means comprehensive) sample of phonological theories and to discuss their assumptions, goals, similarities, and differences.
2. To approach two or three of the big, active, intractable current problems in the linguistic analysis of sound and gesture and to use these problems to evaluate the theories we have surveyed.
3. To practice writing critical analyses of theoretical and empirical writing.

Departmental Prerequisite: Linguistics/Anthropology 200 & 311

Readings:

We will read at least one (never more than two) papers for each class meeting. **It is absolutely essential that you do this reading**, that you do it carefully and thoughtfully, and that you come prepared to ask questions, discuss ideas, and argue if you feel so enthused.

There is no required textbook. All required readings will be on our OwlSpace site and will be a mixture of textbook chapters, summary articles, and primary research literature. Some of this reading will be challenging, some of it will be long, and all of it is necessary. You will not do well in this class if you do not do the readings.

Optional Textbook:

McCarthy, J. 2008 *Doing Optimality Theory* 1st edition. Wiley-Blackwell Publishers. ISBN: 1405151366
Introductory Phonology. by Bruce Hayes ISBN: 1405184116

The textbooks are available through online retailers and *Doing Optimality Theory* should be at the Rice University Bookstore soon. Discussions will parallel the readings but will not always cover the

same material. You are responsible for all material covered in readings and in class. Regular class attendance and active participation are essential and will be reflected in your overall course grade. Slides, when used, will be made available online, but serve only as an outline for the discussion we'll have together in class.

Course Requirements

1. **250 word Précis** 8 x 7.5% each = 60%

It is essential that you do two things in this class:

- (a) Carefully prepare all of the readings and
- (b) Think critically about what you have read.

Sadly, technology has not yet advanced to a point that will allow me to assess this reading and preparation via MRI analysis of your brain meats (and, anyway, the department doesn't have access to an MRI). Therefore, I ask that you write 1 brief 250 word précis for at least eight (8) articles of your choosing. Précis are due on paper, with a staple if necessary, in class on or before the day the paper in question is to be discussed. I can not, in fairness to you or your classmates, accept a précis *after* the discussion of that article has happened. I would prefer that you not write a précis for any of the McCarthy textbook chapters, but you may certainly choose to do so. You will write 8 of these 1 page summary/analysis papers over the course of the semester.

Grading: You will receive comments and feedback as necessary on these brief papers but no letter or number grade beyond 'acceptable' or 'revise and resubmit'. Completing all 11 papers on time and thoughtfully will result in full credit for this part of the course grade.

2. **Final Project Abstract** 5%

On November 2nd, I will ask that you each hand in a brief (250 to 500 word) abstract of your final project. This abstract needs to demonstrate that you (a) have a topic in mind (b) have done some preliminary thinking and research on this topic and (c) have decided the format your final project will take.

Grading: Grading of this abstract will be identical to the précis: 'acceptable' or 'revise & resubmit'.

3. **Final Project** 35%

Your final project is an opportunity for you to perform an original, individual explication of any question, theory, topic, analysis, or piece of data of your choosing from this class or in any way related to phonology or phonological grammar. Undergraduates may choose as your format either a 7-10 page (1,750 - 2,500 word) essay -or- a 15 minute in-class presentation (complete with slides or handout as appropriate). Graduate students will both write the essay and give the presentation.

Grading: Papers will be due in PDF or Open Document format on OwlSpace by the end of our scheduled exam period. You will receive comments on these papers as necessary and a letter grade ranging from A+ to F. Presentations will take place in class during the last week(s) of the course. These will be graded A+ to F by me with input and evaluations by your peers. A general paper grading rubric and presentation evaluation criteria will be made available to you

while you are preparing your final project.

Honor Policy

Appropriating someone else's work and portraying it as your own is cheating. Collaborating with someone and portraying that work as solely your own is cheating. Obtaining answers to homework assignments or exams from previous semesters is cheating. Falsifying data or experimental results is cheating. (The foregoing is not intended to be a complete list. A complete description of Rice's Honor Code, plagiarism, and other general information can be found at the Rice Honor Council Web page at <http://honor.rice.edu/>). If you are caught cheating, you will be referred to the Honor Council. If you are unsure about whether a specific action is cheating, you may check with your TA or the instructor. Some specific guidelines for this course are:

- Do not collaborate on the writing of any précis, abstract, presentation, or paper.
- Cite all sources used and cite and designate all quotations as such.
- If you put your name on something it should be entirely your work (including thinking).

Study Groups

I encourage students to form study groups to talk about readings. Invite me if you want and I'll try to come. However, after you figure/argue them out together please compose your précis entirely on your own, separately from the other study group members.

Americans with Disabilities Act

If any student in the class has a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations, please get in touch with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities will also need to contact Disability Support Services in the Ley Student Center. I look forward to working with you to make this class enjoyable and accessible for all.

Schedule

TUESDAY	THURSDAY
<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 2px;">Aug 21st</div> 1 Introduction & Overview How to read an academic article. How to write a précis.	2 23rd Evidence in Phonology Ohala (1986)
3 28th Generative Phonology: Goldsmith & Laks (to appear)	4 30th Rules v Constraints: Odden (2007)
<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 2px;">Sep 4th</div> 5 Optimality Theory: McCarthy ch 1 (all)	6 6th Optimality Theory: McCarthy ch 2 (§2.0 - §2.3)

TUESDAY		THURSDAY	
11th	7	13th	8
Optimality Theory: McCarthy ch 2 (§2.4 - §2.8)		Optimality Theory: McCarthy ch 2 (§2.10 - §2.12) <i>(skip §2.9)</i>	
18th	9	20th	10
Optimality Theory: McCarthy ch 4 (§4.1 - §4.5)		Optimality Theory: McCarthy ch 4 (§4.6 - §4.8)	
25th	11	27th	12
Optimality Theory: McCarthy ch 6 (all)		Cognitive Phonology: Kristiansen (2006)	
Oct 2nd	13	4th	14
Laboratory Phonology Pierrehumbert, Beckman & Ladd (2000)		Frequency/Exemplar Theory: Bybee (2006)	
9th	15	11th	
Frequency: Hay, Pierrehumbert & Beckman (2003)			
16th	16	18th	17
Probabilistic Phonology: Pierrehumbert (2002)		How to write up an analysis. Discussion of Final Projects McCarthy chapter 3 (all)	
23rd	18	25th	19
Optimality Theory & Variation: Coetzee (2006)		Frequency or Grammar?: DuPoux et al (1999) Vitevitch, Luce, Pisoni, & Auer (1999)	
30th	20	Nov 1st	21
Frequency & Variation: Clopper, Pierrehumbert, Tamati (2010)		Articulatory Phonology Hall (2010) <i>Abstract Due</i>	
6th	22	8th	23
Coarticulation & Phonology Ohala (1993)		Perception of Coarticulation: Beddor, McGowan, Boland, Coetzee, Brasher (to appear)	
13th	24	15th	25
Coarticulation, Variation, & Sound Change: Beddor (2010)		<i>Kevin Gone (AAA Conference)</i>	
20th	26	22nd	
Final Presentations (4 x 15)			

TUESDAY		THURSDAY	
27th	27	29th	28
Final Presentations (4 x 15)		Final Presentations (4 x 15)	