

LING 454

Summer 2012

“Methods in Comparative Linguistics”
(Introduction to Historical Linguistics)

1 Official description

LING 454 Methods in Comparative Linguistics (5) VLPA Aldridge, Handel, Shapiro
Method and theory of historical and comparative linguistics. Problems of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic change and reconstruction. Prerequisite: either LING 200, LING 201, ANTH/LING 203, or LING 400.

2 Prerequisite

LING 200 or equivalent, passed with 2.0 or better grade.

3 Why study historical linguistics

Synchronic analyses vary in abstractness, and there are few if any reliable checks on the validity of abstract analyses. The facts of historical change are undeniable, and are not subject to doubt as with synchronic analysis.

Historical linguistics is more challenging than synchronic linguistics, because it requires knowledge of more than one synchronic system. LING 454 therefore should be an advanced class, but for historical reasons at UW, 454 has only the barest of prerequisites. Nonetheless, this class is designed to challenge advanced as well as beginning students.

4 Learning goals for LING 454

- learn about historical linguistics concepts and terminology
- increase skill at identifying and analyzing patterns in historical linguistic data
- learn facts about historical change in different language families

5 Administrative details

Class web site: <http://courses.washington.edu/lingclas/454/index.html>

5.1 Instructor information

| | |
|--------------|---|
| professor | Sharon Hargus |
| office | A211 Padelford |
| office phone | 206 685-4263 |
| e-mail | sharon@uw.edu |
| web site | http://faculty.washington.edu/sharon/ |
| office hours | after class and by appointment |

I have voicemail. I have a mailbox, located in the departmental office in A210 Padelford. If necessary, this is the best place to leave written material for me.

5.2 Department information

The main office is normally open 8 am-5 pm daily, but sometimes closed for short times during the day. The door to A210 is locked when the office is closed. There is a mail slot near the door.

The Linguistics Department web site is: <http://depts.washington.edu/lingweb/>

If you go to the main office, you will encounter one or both of the Department of Linguistics staff:

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Office Assistant | Joyce Parvi |
| office | A210 Padelford |
| office phone | 206 543-2046 |
| e-mail | phoneme@uw.edu |

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Administrator | Mike Furr |
| office | A210H Padelford |
| office phone | 206 685-7467 |
| e-mail | furr@uw.edu |

5.3 Disability accommodations

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 206-543-8924 (V/TTY). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need in this class.

5.4 Requirements and grading

5.4.1 Assignments

Final grades will be based on scores on the following assignment categories:

| | <i>beginning UG linguistics students</i> | <i>advanced* UG or graduate students</i> |
|---------------|--|--|
| homework (5) | 30% | 22% |
| midterm | 25% | 22% |
| final | 35% | 28% |
| presentation | | 19% |
| participation | 10% | 9% |

*having taken 4 or more classes in Linguistics

Homework: Unless otherwise announced, homework must be turned in at the class upload site by a particular time. All homework must be typed. Data should be presented using standard linguistics symbols (IPA, for spoken languages).

Exams: The exams will be closed book, closed note. Paper will be provided for you to write on.

Presentation: Advanced students should select a topic in a language of language family they know something about. Near the end of the quarter, advanced students will

make a presentation on their topic to the remaining students in the class. Original research is not required. In fact, in most cases, the presentation requirement will be satisfied with a literature survey. The typical presentation will be on some aspect of linguistic change in a language family not emphasized in this class (Indo-European, Athabaskan, Sahaptian). The presentation has three intermediate deadlines: presentation topic (one paragraph to one page, identifying likely sources of information), presentation outline, meeting with professor (it is the student's responsibility to remember to schedule an appointment), and the final grade for the presentation will include a component for timely completion of these intermediate steps.

Participation in class. This is not an on-line class. The participation component will be based on:

positives

- coming to class having done the reading (I can tell)
- asking thoughtful questions during lecture
- making thoughtful additions to GoPost
- helping another student (e.g. overcoming technology issues) (But if you are the recipient of help and want to reward someone, you must let me know.)
- helping the instructor (e.g. reminding of due dates, helping with technology)
- providing oral questions and/or written feedback to students making presentations

negatives

- consistently failing to follow directions on assignments
- asking (during class or via e-mail) about procedural matters that have already been explained
- interrupting the flow of class (frequently arriving late, asking too many questions—especially ones not related to the lecture topic)
- other disrespectful or disruptive behavior during lecture
- never asking questions during lecture

5.4.2 Grading and Gradebook

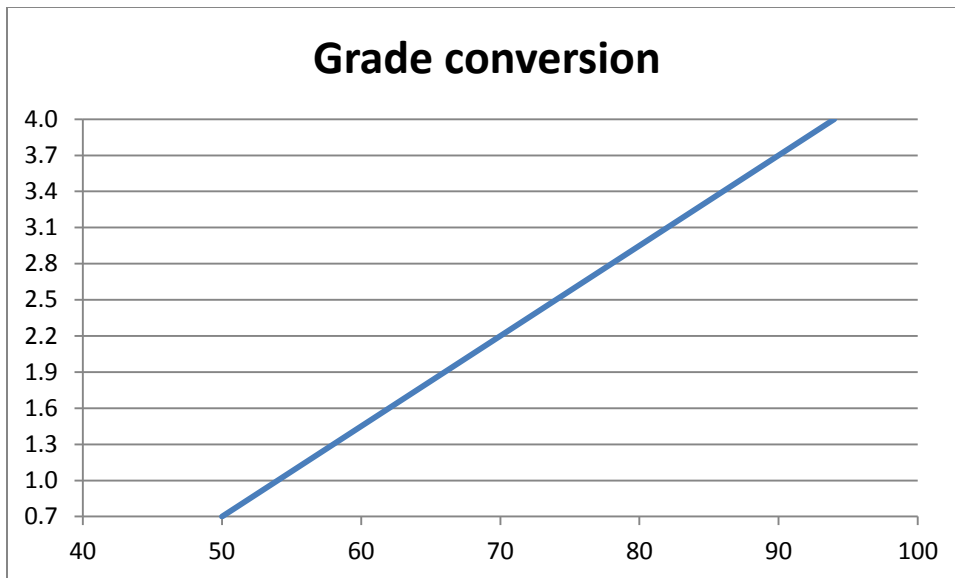
The assignments will each be worth a certain number of points. These may or may not be the same as the points listed for each assignment in Gradebook. Before points for assignments are posted in Gradebook, they may be converted to a smaller or larger number of points, to match those shown in Gradebook. If conversion occurs, I will try to remember to include both point totals on your assignment.

In calculating final grades, point totals will be converted to 4.0, 3.9 etc. via the following linear scale.

$$\text{grade} = \text{weighted points} * .075 - 3.05$$

I.e.

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 94% and above | 4.0 |
| 50% and below | 0.0 |
| 49-93% | interpolated |



According to the system, every student could in principle receive a 4.0 in this class. (Note that this is not “grading on a curve”.)

5.5 *Class policies*

5.5.1 Late assignments

Late homework may or may not be accepted. If it is accepted, it will be penalized 10% per hour turned in late. Homework cannot be turned in late as an e-mail attachment.

5.5.2 Electronic devices

Electronic devices (phones, laptops) may be used in class only for the purposes of note-taking or looking at web sites relevant to the class (when directed to do so).

5.5.3 Lectures and class time

Attending a lecture is not like watching TV, where you can do essentially anything while you watch and the TV does not know or care. Certain kinds of activities during class lectures are considered rude and disrespectful to the instructor. The following are examples of unacceptable and acceptable activities during class lectures:

| <i>unacceptable</i> | <i>acceptable</i> |
|--|---|
| passing notes | taking notes |
| eating noisily (or noisily preparing to eat) | eating quietly |
| talking to neighbor (during lecture) | talking to neighbor (during group activity) |
| using laptop or phone for e-mail, Facebook, surfing, texting, finishing homework for another class, etc. | using laptop or phone when instructed to do so |
| reading a book or newspaper | knitting |
| walking out during the middle of lecture without telling lecturer in advance | walking out during the middle of lecture, having warned lecturer in advance |

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| wearing headphones in ears | wearing earrings |
|----------------------------|------------------|

This is not an exhaustive list, but since you are enrolling in a 400-level college course, you are expected to be able to generalize from these examples. If in doubt, ask.

Also, while you are expected to contribute to class discussion, this does not mean you should ask an open-ended, deeply philosophical question every 5 minutes. If your questions are disruptive to the class, I may tell you to hold your questions during lecture.

6 Readings

Our textbook is Campbell 2004. Additional readings may be posted later on the class GoPost.

7 Schedule of topics covered in class

The schedule, including exam dates and homework due dates, is subject to change.

| <i>week</i> | <i>date</i> | <i>lecture topic</i> | <i>reading</i> | <i>assessment</i> |
|-------------|-------------|---|----------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 6-18 | Survey of students. Syllabus. Review of introductory concepts. | ch. 1 | |
| 1 | 6-19 | Sound change | ch. 2 | |
| 1 | 6-20 | Sound change | | |
| 1 | 6-21 | Sound change | | |
| 1 | 6-22 | Sound change | | presentation topic due* |
| 2 | 6-25 | Borrowing | ch. 3 | HW 1 due |
| 2 | 6-26 | Analogical change | ch. 4 | |
| 2 | 6-27 | Comparative method | ch. 5 | HW 2 due |
| 2 | 6-28 | Comparative method | | |
| 2 | 6-29 | Comparative method | | |
| 3 | 7-2 | Comparative method | | |
| 3 | 7-3 | Linguistic classification | ch. 6 | HW 3 due |
| 3 | 7-4 | HOLIDAY | | |
| 3 | 7-5 | | | Midterm |
| 3 | 7-6 | Internal reconstruction | ch. 8 | presentation outline due* |
| 4 | 7-9 | Internal reconstruction | | |
| 4 | 7-10 | Semantic change | | HW 4 due |
| 4 | 7-11 | Semantic change | ch. 9 | |
| 4 | 7-12 | Syntactic change | | |
| 4 | 7-13 | Syntactic change | ch. 10 | presentation meeting due* |
| 5 | 7-16 | Linguistic prehistory | | HW 5 due |
| 5 | 7-17 | Presentations. Review | ch. 15 | |
| 5 | 7-18 | | | Final exam |

8 References

Campbell, Lyle. 2004. *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction*. Cambridge: MIT Press.