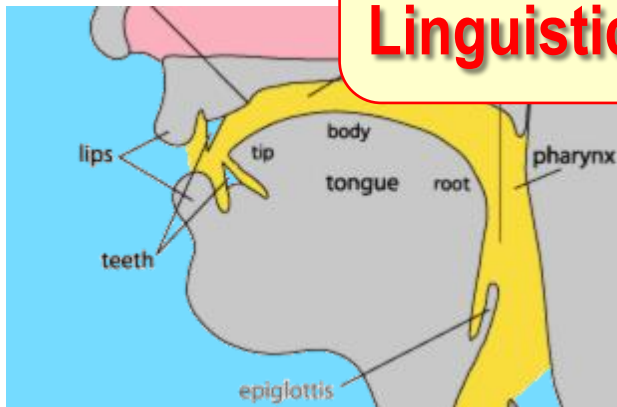


# Languages & Linguistic Theories



**Course Number:** 101:090:294:H6

**Course Index:** 21443

**Credits:** 3

**Meeting Times:** Mondays 11:30–02:30 (Periods 3 & 4)

**Meeting Place:** MU-208 (Murray Hall, Room 208)

**Prerequisites:** Enrollment into SAS Honors Program

**Instructor:** Alexander E. Pichugin

**Office Address:** Department of Germanic, Russian and East European Languages and Literatures  
15 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

**Office Phone:** 848.932.7781

**E-mail address:** pichugin@rutgers.edu

**Office Hours:** Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 a.m. & by appointment  
Scheduled meetings are given priority over walk-ins.

## Course Description

What are human languages? How did they originate? What are their functions? Why are there many languages spoken by humans? How different are human languages from animal or technological communication systems? Who are the speakers of all those languages? How are languages classified? What are language families? What is a language and what is a dialect? How do people study languages? What theories of language are most prominent in the history of human thought? How is language theorized now?

These and many other questions will be addressed in this interdisciplinary honors seminar, which is designed to engage students in the discussion and development of writing skills focusing on the connections between history, culture, and linguistics. It is intended for all students interested in languages, language theories, as well as the history and the present state of languages.

The seminar will concentrate on an exploration of some general theoretical questions about the nature of language, including questions of what language is, how it relates to cognition, how it is acquired by children and adults. Students will examine Saussure's structural approach to language, Skinner's behaviorist theory, as well as Chomsky's Universal Grammar in application to European Languages as well as discuss some linguistic universalia.

As a learning outcome of the seminar, students will develop their abilities to approach language both analytically and synthetically, exploring the connection between structure, history, and politics in critical and creative ways. As a practical outcome, the students will develop important skills in working with language facts by practicing oral and written interpretation, which will advance their ability to speak and write in general.

The seminar has no pre-requisites other than enrollment into the SAS Honors Program.

This seminar counts as English-language credits in German, whether for the 3 credits a student may count toward the Language & Literature degree or toward any reasonably related concentration declared by a student pursuing the German Studies.

### Core Curriculum Learning Goals

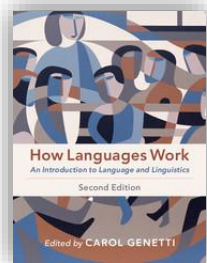
The seminar satisfies the following Learning Goal of the Core Curriculum:

#### [WCd] Writing and Communication in a Discipline

Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.



### Study Materials



- The main textbook for the Seminar is:  
Genetti, C. (Ed.). (2018). *How Languages Work: An Introduction to Language and Linguistics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9781108454513
- All other study materials or hyperlinks to online materials are provided on the Canvas website (<https://lt.rutgers.edu/canvas>).

### Course Website

Canvas (<https://lt.rutgers.edu/canvas>) is the main website for the course. Canvas contains the required course materials and assignments. It is also used for in-class assignments.

All students enrolled in this course should already have access to its Canvas website. Students who do not have access need to contact the instructor. Students should check the website frequently.

A desktop or laptop computer is recommended for completing course assignments – not a smartphone or tablet. Most browsers (e.g., Firefox, Chrome, Edge, Internet Explorer, Safari) can be used with Canvas. Students can also use mobile devices to access Canvas from an updated browser (i.e., latest two browser versions) on an Android or iOS device. The list of supported browsers can be found at <https://guides.instructure.com/m/67952/1/720329-which-browsers-does-canvas-support>. Rutgers Libraries have computers available for student use.

Students having any technical questions or issues with Canvas or needing technical assistance should contact the Rutgers Online Learning Helpdesk ([athelp@canvas.rutgers.edu](mailto:athelp@canvas.rutgers.edu) • 877.361.1134, available 24/7).

## Course Requirements

### **Class Participation and Discussion** • 1% × 12

In a course that is to a large degree based on class discussion, the contribution of each student consists in ideas that he/she articulates during class. Besides participating in the general discussion of readings assigned to the whole class, students will work in small groups as well as observe and comment on their classmates' presentations.

#### Class Participation Rubric

	Attentiveness	Contribution
Expectations are exceeded (90–100%)	The student always pays attention.	The student is always eager to contribute to class discussion, exercises, and group work. The student often asks questions. The student always volunteers answers.
Expectations are met (80–89%)	The student pays attention most of the time.	The student is usually eager to contribute to class discussion, exercises, and group work. The student occasionally asks questions and volunteers answers most of the time.
Expectations are barely met (70–79%)	The student sometimes pays attention.	The student is occasionally eager to contribute to class discussion, exercises, and group work. The student occasionally asks questions and sometimes volunteers answers.
Expectations are not met (< 70%)	The student rarely pays attention.	The student almost never contributes to class discussion, exercises, and group work. The student almost never asks questions or volunteers answers.

### **Homework Assignments** • 2% × 12

During the semester students will complete 12 short homework assignments based on the assigned readings. The assignments will be posted on Canvas. The assignments have to be completed by 11:59 on Monday preceding the class of the date indicated in the Syllabus.

### **Quizzes** • 2% × 12

During the semester students will write 12 short in-class quizzes addressing the topics and covered in the readings and class discussions. Quiz questions include multiple choice and short answer questions.

### **Presentation** • 15%





Each student will make a presentation based on three languages of their focus. The choice of languages for each presenter and the presentation dates will be determined in class; it should be two Indo-European languages and one language from another family. Each presentation consists of a 20-minute talk followed by a 10-minute question-and-answer session. The use of visual support is required. It is crucial that the presenters speak and not read; therefore, the students should take time to practice their presenting skills. By midnight before the day of the presentation, the presenter uploads the outline of the presentation (e.g., a PowerPoint file) on Canvas.

### **Term Paper** • 25%

During the first part of the semester students will explore their interests within the scope of the seminar and chose a topic for the Final Paper. It is expected that the topic of the Final Paper deals with one or several linguistic theories and/or language phenomena and uses the material from at least three languages. By Session 10 (April 02) students will upload a short description of the topic of their choice on Canvas. On session 10 (November 10) the choices of topics and the format of the paper will be discussed in detail. It is expected that the Final Paper adhere consistently to either the MLA or APA formatting style. The final paper has to be uploaded on Canvas by Session 14 (April 30).

## Assessment

### Grade Composition

Aspect	Percentage
 Class Participation (12)	12%
 Homework Assignments (12)	24%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quizzes (12)	24%
 Presentation	15%
 Term Paper	25%

### Grade Distribution

Grade	Points (%)
A	90–100
B+	85–89
B	80–84
C+	75–79
C	70–74
D	65–69
F	Below 65

## Communication with the Instructor

### @ E-Mail

The best way to contact the instructor outside the classroom is to email [pichugin@rutgers.edu](mailto:pichugin@rutgers.edu). Generally, e-mails are answered within two business days. The subject line should include *294 – FirstName LastName*, e.g. *294 – Michael Smith – Question re....* This will help direct the message to the correct folder for quick processing. If the subject line is not formatted this way, the message may be read with delay.

### Progress Reports

On the dates indicated in the Syllabus, students will write short progress reports, where they reflect upon the course and their individual progress. They will describe what they have learned, what more they would like to learn, what aspects of the course they like and dislike and why. The reports are not graded. They help the instructor better coordinate the students' expectations and progress with the learning goals of the course. The reports have to be completed on Canvas.

## Policies

### Academic Integrity

Violation of academic integrity is an extremely serious matter; it can lead to a student's failing the course and being referred to the University's Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action. When referring to ideas other than their own, students should always acknowledge their sources clearly and completely, whether they are quoting or paraphrasing. Note also that use of online translation services is not permitted as a tool for generating work submitted for course credit. Please see the University's policies on academic integrity at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu> and discuss with the instructor any questions about this and related issues.

### Attendance

All students must attend regularly and arrive prepared. If a student expects to miss one or two classes, he/she should use the University Self-Reporting Absence website (<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra>) to indicate the date and the reason for the absence. An e-mail notification is automatically sent to the instructor. Those who miss more than two class sessions without a compelling excuse should expect a one-step reduction in the course grade (i.e. an A becomes a B+, a B+ becomes a B). Every additional three absences may entail a further one-step grade-reduction. Three late arrivals count as one absence.

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## Assistance and Support Services

### Additional Assistance

Students are encouraged to come to their instructor's office hours with any questions and problems pertaining to class. Any student who needs additional help should contact the Learning Resource Center at <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/home>.

### Dean of Students

- <http://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu>

### Global/International Services

- <http://globalservices.rutgers.edu>

### Public Safety

- RUPD: <http://publicsafety.rutgers.edu/rupd>
- Department of Transportation Services: <http://rudots.rutgers.edu>

### Rutgers Health Services

- Student Health: <http://health.rutgers.edu>
- Student Medical Services: <http://rhsmedical.rutgers.edu>
- Pharmacy: <http://rhsparmacy.rutgers.edu>
- Health Outreach, Promotion & Education (H.O.P.E.): <http://rhshope.rutgers.edu>

### Disability Support Services

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of its educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, students with a disability have to familiarize themselves with procedures and policies regarding disability support services at the following website: <http://ods.rutgers.edu>. It is recommended that students seeking accommodations begin filing paperwork as soon as possible as the documentation review process may take up to 30 business days. Students are encouraged to speak with the instructor about these issues at the beginning of the term. All such conversations will be kept strictly confidential.

<https://ods.rutgers.edu> • 848.445.6800 • Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854

### Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include individual and group therapy, workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

[www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu](http://www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu) • 848.932.7884 • 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

### Just In Case Web App

This mobile application (<http://codu.co/cee05e>) helps access helpful mental-health information and resources in a mental health crisis on a smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

### Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty.

[www.vpva.rutgers.edu](http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu) • 848.932.1181 • 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

### Scarlet Listeners

This free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline provides students with a comforting and supportive safe space.

<http://www.scarletlisteners.com> • 732.247.5555

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## Course Schedule

= Textbook Chapters • = Readings on Sakai • = Homework Assignment • = Discussion Topic • = Quiz • = Presentation • = Progress Report • = Term Paper

#	Date	Homework	Class Work
1	Tu 01/22		Introduction • Syllabus • Canvas Languages and Theories
2	Tu 01/29	01. <i>Introduction: Language, Languages, and Linguistics</i> Assignment 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This session is shorter than usual: 11:30 – 01:00</li> </ul> What is Language? Major Linguistic Theories Quiz 01
3	Tu 02/05	12. <i>Language Change: The Dynamicity of Linguistic Systems</i> 13. <i>Language Contact and Areal Linguistics</i> Assignment 02	Language Change and Language Contact Quiz 02
4	Tu 02/12	02. <i>Phonetics: Physical Dimensions of Speech Sounds</i> Assignment 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This session is shorter than usual: 11:30 – 01:00</li> </ul> Phonetics and Phonology Quiz 03
5	Tu 02/19	03. <i>Phonology: Organization of Speech Sounds</i> 10. <i>Prosody: The Music of Language</i> Assignment 04	Phonetics and Phonology Quiz 04
6	Tu 02/26	04. <i>Morphology: What's in a Word?</i> Assignment 05 Progress Report 1	Morphology Quiz 05
7	Tu 03/05	05. <i>Word Classes: Evidence from Grammatical Behavior</i> Assignment 06	Morphology Quiz 06
8	Tu 03/12	06. <i>Syntax: Words in Combination</i> Assignment 07	Syntax Quiz 07 Presentations: Round 1
9	Tu 03/26	07. <i>Semantics: How Language Makes Sense</i> Assignment 08	Semantics Quiz 08 Presentations: Round 2
10	Tu 04/02	08. <i>Pragmatics: Inference for Language</i> Assignment 09 Choice of Final Paper topic due Progress Report 2	Pragmatics Quiz 09 Presentations: Round 3
11	Tu 04/09	09. <i>Discourse: Language Beyond the Sentence</i> Assignment 10	Discourse Quiz 10 Presentations: Round 4
12	Tu 04/16	11. <i>Language in the Social World</i> Assignment 11	Sociolinguistics and Language Policies Quiz 11 Presentations: Round 5
13	Tu 04/23	14. <i>First Language Acquisition</i> 15. <i>Second Language Acquisition</i> Assignment 12	Language Acquisition, Mono- and Multilingualism Quiz 12 Presentations: Round 6
14	Tu 04/30	Final Paper Due	Conclusion

**The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the Syllabus.**

The latest version of this Syllabus is available on [Canvas](#) → [Syllabus](#).