

# Phonology

ENGL 5339/CMLL 5301/LING 5383 (Fall 2017)  
Texas Tech University



**Instructor:** Dr. Aaron Braver  
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**Office:** English & Philosophy Building, Room 312C

**Class Meetings:** T/Th, 3:30pm–4:50pm, English & Philosophy Building, Room 305

**Office Hours:** T/Th, 2:15pm–3:15pm  
Be sure to reserve a slot: <http://www.aaronbraver.com/officehours>

## About this course

Speech sounds are perhaps the most basic building blocks of spoken language, but how do they 'work'? This course is an introduction to the description and analysis of the sound patterns found in human languages. In this class, we will cover the key concerns of phonologists: the sound patterns found in the world's languages, the ways in which these patterns vary (or don't) across languages, and how speakers represent them mentally.

Linguistics is a formal, empirically-based, and scientifically rigorous discipline. This course will teach you to analyze phonological data like a scientist. We will examine data from many, many languages; your aim will be to find the patterns in these data, use a theory to capture those patterns, and then assess the validity of the theory. We will develop a set of analytical tools with which to describe and explain these sound patterns, and we'll also learn how to develop and present a formal linguistic analysis.

### By the end of this course, you should be able to...

- Use the International Phonetic Alphabet (both recognizing symbols and basic transcription)
- Recognize cross-linguistically common phonological phenomena
- Collect, describe, analyze, and report sound patterns
- Present a formal linguistic analysis

We will make use of a number of phonological theories over the course of the semester, beginning with the structuralist notion of the phoneme. This will be followed by rule-based analysis (along the lines of Chomsky and Halle's (1968) *Sound Pattern of English*), and finally Optimality Theory (Prince and Smolensky 1993, McCarthy and Prince 1993).

# Materials

## Required Course Textbook

Zsiga, Elizabeth C. (2013). *The Sounds of Language: An Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology*. Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN: 978-1405191036.

## Handouts

Handouts for (nearly) every class meeting will be posted on the course Blackboard site before class. It is your responsibility to bring these handouts with you to every class meeting, either in digital or dead tree format.

## Other Materials

All other materials will be made available on the course Blackboard site. Please contact me immediately if you do not have access to the site.

# Assignments and Grading

## Homework

Problem sets will be assigned (approximately) weekly. (We will discuss the format for writing up problem sets in class.)

Work must be typed and submitted as a PDF via the course Blackboard site (too many fonts go wrong in Word documents).

Your lowest homework score (excluding zeros for any assignment not turned in) will be dropped.

For all homework assignments, you may work in groups under the following conditions:

Groups can include up to three people, and no more. You may discuss the problem, debate solutions, and come up with answers together. Once you have finished working together, everyone must then go and write up their own assignment and hand it in separately.

If you and another person hand in nearly identical assignments (as adjudicated by me), I reserve the right to require you to work alone from then on.

You must, at the top of your assignment, write the names of all the people you worked with—even if you end up completely disagreeing with them.

## Individual Language Project

Each student will select a language to work on over the course of the semester, applying what you have learned in class to that particular language.

- Choose a language, have a grammar *in hand* Th, 9/28 (in class)
- Phonological sketch due (5–6 pages, double spaced) Th, 10/12 at 11:59pm
- Problem set proposal due (3–4 pages, double spaced) T, 10/31 at 11:59pm
- Problem set presentations Th 11/30 & T 12/5
- Problem set due F, 12/8 at 11:59pm

## Phonological Sketch

A brief report (5–6 pages, double spaced) on the phonology of your chosen language. What sounds does this language have? What phonological processes does it exhibit? Further details will be discussed in class.

## Problem Set

The final project consists of developing a phonology problem set based on data from your language. You will need to find phonological processes in the language, gather relevant data, and organize it coherently. You will also need to provide a 'teacher's guide' with your solution to the problem set. Further details will be discussed in class.

## Grade breakdown

Category	Percent	Numerical score	Letter grade
Homework assignments	40%	95–100%	A+
Phonological sketch	20%	90–94.99%	A
Problem set proposal	10%	85–89.99%	B+
Problem set presentation	5%	80–84.99%	B
Problem set project	25%	75–79.99%	C+
		70–74.99%	C
		65–69.99%	D+
		60–64.99%	D
		>60%	F

## Policies and expectations

### Attendance and punctuality

You are expected to come to (every) class and to participate fully in class discussions and exercises. Repeat tardiness may be counted as an absence.

If you know you will be absent, *email me ahead of time*. If the absence is documented and justifiable, it *may* be excused (at the discretion of the instructor).

Unexcused absences	Consequence
4	10 percentage points deducted from final course grade
≥5	Automatic F for the course

University policy (OP 34.19) requires that no penalty be imposed upon students who are absent from class because of religious observances, and allows for students to make up the work missed because of such absence. To exercise this right, *students must inform the instructor in writing prior to the absence*.

### **Late work**

Assignments must be submitted on time—this is at the start of class, unless otherwise specified. *Assignments turned in after the deadline will receive zero points*. There is no partial credit for late work.

### **Extraordinary circumstances**

Life is complicated—illnesses and injuries happen. If these or other life events are interfering with your ability to meet course requirements, please *let me know as soon as possible*.

### **Email**

Some course-related announcements will be made over email. These messages will be sent to your TTU address, which you should check at least daily. Failure to check your TTU email will not excuse you from any requirements assigned via email.

Please include the course number in the subject line of any emails you send me (as well as an actual subject). If you are sending from an account other than your TTU address, please include your full name in the message body.

### **Civility in the classroom and electronic devices**

Students are expected to maintain a polite, civil environment that is conducive to learning for everyone. This includes refraining from non-approved uses of electronic devices, or use of such devices that becomes distracting for other students. Breaches of decorum may result in expulsion from the classroom or consequences for your final grades.

### **Academic integrity**

Cheating and plagiarism will be treated very seriously. As a general policy, all such cases will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct with a recommendation for the fullest sanctions, as well as automatic failure for the course. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with TTU's statement on academic integrity, which is available at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/>

studentconduct/academicinteg.php, and related policies in the Student Handbook Part I, Section B, Subsection 1 (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/handbook/conduct.php>) and Part II, Section B (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/handbook/community.php>).

You are encouraged to form study groups outside of class to help you understand the course material and discuss readings. You may collaborate on homework assignments only as described above.

If you have any questions, please consult the instructor, a dean, or the University's academic integrity policy.

## **Accommodations for students with disabilities**

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements, should contact the instructor as soon possible to make the necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or call (806) 742-2405.

Note that it is your responsibility to provide your instructor with a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) within the first week of class, or within one week of receiving the LOA, so please bring me your LOA as soon as possible. Further, the LOA becomes effective only after it is signed by the instructor, and is *not* retroactive.

## **TTU resources for discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence**

Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations are not tolerated by the University. Report any incidents to the Office for Student Rights & Resolution, (806)-742-SAFE (7233) or file a report online at <http://titleix.ttu.edu/students>.

Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are:

- TTU Student Counseling Center, (806) 742-3674, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/> (provides confidential support on campus)
- TTU 24-hour Crisis Helpline, (806) 742-5555 (assists students who are experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor)
- Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center, (806) 763-7273, <http://voiceofhopelubbock.org> (24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence)
- The Risk, Intervention, Safety and Education (RISE) Office, (806) 742-2110, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/rise/> (provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness)

- Texas Tech Police Department, (806) 742-3931, <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ttpd/> (to report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus)

## Support for LGBTQIA students

I identify as an ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community, and I am available to listen and support you in an affirming manner. I can assist in connecting you with resources on campus to address problems you may face pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could interfere with your success at Texas Tech. Please note that additional resources are available through the Office of LGBTQIA within the Center for Campus Life, Student Union Building Room 201, <http://www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu>, (806) 742-5433.

## Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Please pay attention for announcements in class and via email.

### Introduction

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic(s)</u>	<u>Reading/Assignments</u>
T 8/29	Introductions What is phonology? Your phonological knowledge	·Zsiga preface (pp. xv–xvii)
Th 8/31	Phonetics vs. phonology Vocal tract anatomy	·Zsiga Ch. 1 (pp. 1–11) · <i>SPE</i> Ch. 1 §1, 2 (pp. 3–4)*

### The Sounds of Language

T 9/5	Tour of the vocal tract Larynx, glottis, glottal states Describing consonants	· <b>HW 1 (Introduction) due</b> ·Zsiga Ch. 3 (pp. 33–51)
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\* Advanced reading. \*\* Optional reading.

Th	9/7	Describing consonants (cont'd) Place of articulation Manner of articulation	
T	9/12	Describing vowels Transcription	·Zsiga Ch. 4 (pp. 55–71)
Th	9/14	Transcription (cont'd) <i>Presentations: Acquisition of phonetics</i>	

### Structuralism, Phonemes, and Allophones

T	9/19	Phonological knowledge vs. phonetic reality Phonological contrast Phonemes, allophones, and distribution	· <b>HW 2 (IPA and transcription) due</b>
Th	9/21	Phonemes, allophones, and distribution (cont'd) Rules Marked vs. unmarked Psychological reality of phonemes	

### Features, Classes, and Rules

T	9/26	Distinctive features, natural classes	· <b>HW 3 (Phonemes, allophones, and describing processes) due</b> ·Zsiga Ch. 12 (pp. 253–271) · <i>SPE</i> Ch. 1 §3 (pp. 5–6)* · <i>SPE</i> Ch. 7 §1.1, 2–3, 4.6, 4.7–5.2, 5.4, 7 (pp. 293–295, 298–303, 315–322, 324–326, 329)*
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Th	9/28	Two levels of representation Moving towards Generative Grammar Feature geometry	· <b>Choose language and bring grammar for phonological sketch assignment</b> ·Zsiga Ch. 13 §13.0–13.3 (pp. 275–284)
T	10/3	Rules and rule formalisms <i>Presentations: Acquisition of features and natural classes</i>	· <b>HW 4 due (Features and natural classes)</b> ·Zsiga Ch. 13 §13.0–13.3 (pp. 275–284)

### Alternations and the Generative Approach

Th	10/5	Phonological alternations Morphophonology Rule ordering	·Zsiga Ch. 11 (pp. 221–246)
T	10/10	Rule ordering (cont'd) <i>Presentations: Acquisition of alternations</i>	· <b>HW 5 (Rule notation, distinctive features, underspecification) due</b>

### Suprasegmental and Prosodic structure

Th	10/12	Syllables and syllable structure Syllabification	· <b>Phonological sketch due</b> · <b>HW 5 (Rule notation, distinctive features, underspecification) due</b> ·Zsiga Ch. 15 §15.0–15.1.3 (pp. 330–338) ·Blevins (1996) §0–2 (pp. 206–212)* ·Hayes §13.1–13.3, 13.5–13.6.4 (pp. 250–254, 256–262)**
T	10/17	Syllables and alternations Sonority Sonority Sequencing Principle (SSP) Hiatus	· <b>HW 6 (Phonological alternations and underlying forms) due</b>

Th	10/19	Quantity Moras	·Zsiga Ch. 15 §15.1.4 (pp. 339–341)
T	10/24	Tone Obligatory Contour Principle	· <b>HW 7 (Syllable structure) due</b> ·Zsiga Ch. 17 (pp. 375–397) ·Hayes §15.1–15.2.7 (pp. 291–300)**
Th	10/26	Autosegmental phonology Semitic morphology	· <b>HW 8 (Quantity, moras, and tone) due</b> ·Zsiga Ch. 13 §13.4–13.5 (pp. 284–299) ·McCarthy (1981)**
T	10/31	Stress	· <b>Problem set proposal due</b> ·Zsiga Ch. 16 (pp. 353–370) ·McCarthy (1982)** ·Hayes §14.1–14.5 (pp. 271–287)**
Th	11/2	<i>Presentations: Acquisition of suprasegmental structure</i>	· <b>HW 9 (Autosegments, Semitic morphology, and stress) due</b>

### Beyond SPE

T	11/7	Targets and repairs Conspiracies	·Zsiga Ch. 14 §14.0–14.1 (pp. 304–308) ·Kisseberth (1970)
Th	11/9	Optimality Theory	·Zsiga Ch. 14 §14.2–14.4 (pp. 314–324) ·Kager §1.1–1.2.1, 1.2.3–1.3.2 (pp. 1–6, 8–18)* ·McCarthy (2008) Ch. 1*
T	11/14	Optimality Theory (cont'd) Neutralization—complete and incomplete	·Lass 1984 Ch. 3 (pp. 39–54) ·Trubetzkoy (1939) §V (pp.228–239) ·Port and O'Dell (1985)

Th 11/16 Neutralization (cont'd) ·Kharlamov (2014)  
·Braver (2014)  
·Kim and Jongman (1996)\*\*

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T 11/21 *Presentations:*  
*Acquisition of neutralization or*  
*approaches to acquisition in OT*

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Th 11/23 No class — Thanksgiving break

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T 11/28 In-class workshop: ·HW 10 (Optimality Theory) due  
Problem set project

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Th 11/30 Problem set day 1

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T 12/5 Problem set day 2

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F 12/8 Problem set due at 11:59pm

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