

Attention!

This is a representative syllabus.

The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

Ling 3000: Writing for Linguistics

Sample Syllabus

Instructor:

Office:

Email:

Office Hours:

Class Meeting Time:

Class Meeting Location:

Course Description

This course focuses on how to make good arguments (about language). Linguists write in a variety of styles, for different purposes and audiences, and subfields differ in how they construct arguments. In this course we will examine a range of ways in which linguistic arguments are constructed and you will practice making both written and oral arguments. You will also learn to construct relevant arguments for different target audiences, ranging from linguists and broader academic audiences to the general public. While this course focuses on argumentation in linguistics, the ability to communicate technical information to different audiences is an important skill in many professions and areas of study. Broadly speaking, the goal of this course is to help you develop writing and communication skills that can be applied to any future endeavor – academic or otherwise – while also learning about disciplinary norms in linguistics.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the structure of arguments in different subfields of linguistics;
- Articulate linguistic arguments, both in writing and orally;
- Communicate about linguistic topics to both specialist and public audiences;
- Give constructive feedback to their peers on constructing linguistic arguments, and successfully incorporate feedback from peers and the instructor.

Prerequisites

- English 1110, or credit for the Foundations: Writing and Information Literacy GE, or equivalent
- Ling 2000 or 2000H or English 3271

General Education Information

This course does not fulfill General Education (GEL, GEN) requirements.

Linguistics Major/Minor Information

This course fulfills the Advanced Writing requirement for Linguistics majors (students who started at OSU Autumn 2022 or later). Linguistics majors who started at OSU before Autumn 2022 and Linguistics minors can use this course as a major/minor elective.

Credit Hours and Work Expectations

This is a 3 credit-hour course. According to Ohio State bylaws on instruction (go.osu.edu/credithours), students should expect to spend around 3 hours per week on direct instruction (= 2 x 80 minutes in the classroom) plus 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of C average.

Course Requirements

Required Texts

The following book is required:

- Pinker, Steven. 2014. *The sense of style: The thinking person's guide to writing in the 21st century*. New York: Viking.

Other readings and course materials will be made available through this course's Carmen page. See the Course Schedule for links to course materials for a given day.

Assignments

There is an old joke: "How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, practice, practice." The same is true of (scholarly) writing: To become a skilled writer, there is no substitute for practice, practice, practice. In this course you will get writing practice -- lots of it!

You will also analyze examples of scholarly writing in linguistics. In addition to helping you become a better *writer*, this will hopefully also help you to become better at *reading* technical papers and deepen your understanding of the field of linguistics.

There are three kinds of assignments in this class:

Class Participation

It is important to attend and actively participate in class every day. There will be some lectures but we will spend a lot of the class time discussing and experimenting with writing techniques, and analyzing the properties of good (and bad) writing. Class is thus an opportunity to work on your writing skills in a low-stakes way. Other assignments (homework, papers) build on this day-

to-day work, so putting forward effort in class -- including being willing to experiment and possibly *fail* at writing well -- will lay the foundation for success in this course (and in your future writing endeavors!). Participation will be graded daily; your two lowest participation grades will be dropped.

Homework

Beyond practice, practice, practice, one of the best ways to learn to write well is to analyze other people's writing -- both good and bad. What works? What doesn't work? Homeworks will be short (a page or less), frequent assignments in which you examine some aspect of scholarly argumentation, practice some specific writing technique, or reflect on your own writing habits and goals. Many of the assignments will build on in-class activities and will give you the chance to practice a specific writing technique that you will use in the paper assignments. Assignment sheets will be posted the class before the deadline.

The homework assignments are designed primarily to be formative (i.e., designed to help you develop your skills through practice) and will therefore be graded based primarily on effort.

Papers

You will produce **three** larger pieces of writing in this course, each in (at least) a draft and then a revised version:

- Data description paper
- Argument summary paper (also sometimes called a *précis*)
- Public "paper"
 - For this assignment you have the choice of creating a YouTube-style video or a podcast episode. It thus has an oral argument component, and may have a visual component, but is not a paper in a traditional sense.
 - You will turn in a literature review before your draft. This is designed to make sure you have a foundation of knowledge to base your video or podcast on. This assignment will thus be turned in in three stages.

The papers will be fairly short (a few pages), but will be expected to be high-quality, polished pieces of argumentation that apply the writing principles introduced/analyzed/practiced in class and in homeworks. An assignment sheet will be posted about 2 weeks before each draft deadline.

The paper assignments are both formative (i.e., designed to help you develop your skills through practice) and summative (i.e., designed to assess what you have learned). They will thus be graded based on both effort and quality/success.

Grading

Course requirements will be counted towards your final course grade as follows:

Requirement	Points
Class Participation (including in-class writing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest two grades dropped 	20
Homework	30
Papers (3)	50
Total	100

Grading Scale

		87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+		
93-100	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	60-66	D	0-59	E
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-				

Course Schedule

Dates	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
Module 1: What does it mean to write like a linguist?			
Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to the course and how you can succeed in it • Getting to know each other • How linguists write (and present): Genres and audiences 		
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes a good paper good (and a bad paper bad): Scientific writing as thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Pinker (2014) Ch. 1: Good writing • Optional: Woodford (1967): Sounder thinking through clearer writing 	Homework 1
Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes a good paper good (and a bad paper bad): Scientific writing as conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McEnery (2014): The craft of writing effectively (video lecture) 	
Day 4	No class – Labor Day		

Day 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop: Analysis of an example paper in draft and final versions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pinker (2014), Ch. 2: A window onto the world Example: paper excerpt v. 1 Example: paper excerpt v. 2 	Homework 2
Day 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What makes a good paper good (and a bad paper bad): The basic of style in scientific writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macaulay (2011), Ch. 4: Mechanics (pp. 67-72) Gopen and Swan (1990): The science of scientific writing 	
Day 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop: Style practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pinker (2014), Ch. 4: The web, the tree, and the string 	Homework 3
Module 2: Describing linguistic examples and making generalizations			
Day 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linguistic conventions: Glossing and transcription 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macaulay (2011), Ch. 4: Mechanics (pp. 58-63) Leipzig Glossing Rules 	
Day 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structuring discussion of linguistic generalizations and examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bickford (1998): Guide to writing a grammar sketch Sims (2020): Some tips for writing up linguistic analyses Sims (2022): Annotated morphological problem set write-up 	Homework 4
Day 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop: Analysis and practice at structuring discussion of linguistic generalizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example: Sande (2022), Section 5 (pp. 8-12, Lexical Tone) [remaining sections are optional] Bauer (2007): Notational conventions 	
Day 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop: Peer reviewing Using feedback to improve your writing 		Paper 1 Draft
Module 3: Understanding evidence and argumentation in linguistics			
Day 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elements of argumentation in formal subfields (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics): Hypothesis comparison as argument structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beavers & Sells (2013): Constructing and supporting a linguistic analysis (pp. 397-409, 417-420) [remaining sections are optional] 	
Day 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elements of argumentation in formal subfields: Evaluation metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pinker (2014), Ch. 5: Arcs of coherence 	Homework 5
Day 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop: Analysis of hypothesis structure and evaluation metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example: Zwicky & Pullum (1983): Cliticization vs. inflection: English N'T 	Paper 1 Revision
Day 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elements of argumentation in formal subfields: Grammar-internal vs. grammar-external explanation 		
Day 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop: Elements of a précis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Russell (1988), Ch. 3: How do you write a précis Russell (1988), Ch. 4: Guidelines for précis writing 	
Day 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elements of argumentation in experimental subfields (phonetics, psycholinguistics, (variationist) sociolinguistics, computational linguistics): Connecting hypotheses, predictions, and methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example: Clopper & Tamati (2014): Effects of local lexical competition and regional dialect on vowel production 	Homework 6

Day 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of argumentation in experimental subfields: Structure of paper sections 		
Day 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Peer reviewing 		Paper 2 Draft
Module 4: Finding and joining scholarly conversations (literature reviews)			
Day 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying conversations: Linguistic research questions • Identifying sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunderland (2010): Research questions in linguistics (p. 9-17) [remainder of the chapter is optional] 	
Day 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Research questions • Assessing credibility of sources through lateral reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ohio State Libraries (2015), Ch. 6: Evaluating sources 	Homework 7
Day 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Using AI-based tools (e.g. ChatGPT) for literature reviews 		Paper 2 Revision
Day 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citations and references 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unified style sheet for linguistics • Wray et al. (1998), Ch. 22: Plagiarism and how to avoid it 	
Module 5: Communicating with non-experts about language and linguistics			
Day 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles of data visualization 		Homework 8
Day 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public communication: Core principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example: Campbell-Kibler (2013): Accents – where and why (TEDxOSU talk) • Wagner & McKee (2023), Ch. 2: You can be the expert • Wagner & McKee (2023), Ch. 5: Creating relevance by generating interest 	Paper 3 Lit Review
Day 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Practicing public communication principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wagner & McKee (2023), Ch. 9: Incomplete ≠ incorrect • Pinker (2014), Ch. 3: The curse of knowledge 	
Day 27	No Class -- Thanksgiving		
Day 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Oral presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring your script for Paper 3 to class (nothing to turn in) 	
Day 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student presentations (peer reviewing) 		Paper 3 Draft
Day 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student presentations (peer reviewing) 		
Day 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' choice of topic 		
Finals Week	No Class		Paper 3 Revision

Full references for assigned readings are given at the end of this document.

Resources for Success

Information designed to help you succeed in this course (and in *all* of your courses) is available [here](#). Check it out!

How Should I Contact the Instructor? How Can I Receive Course Announcements?

If you need to talk to me about anything related to this course, please come to office hours or contact me via email or message me through Carmen ('inbox' tool). I try to reply to messages within 24 hours on weekdays, and during the next business day for messages received on weekends and holidays.

Course announcements will be made in class and will also be posted to the Carmen page for this course using the Announcements tool. I recommend that you set your notification preferences (go.osu.edu/canvas-notifications) in Carmen to automatically receive notifications at least daily.

Other Course Policies

Ohio State's Academic Integrity Policy

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity

There has been a significant increase in the popularity and availability of a variety of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Sudowrite and others. These tools will help shape the future of work, research and technology but when used in the wrong way, they can stand in conflict with academic integrity at Ohio State.

All students have important obligations under the Code of Student Conduct to complete all academic and scholarly activities with fairness and honesty. Our professional students also have the responsibility to uphold the professional and ethical standards found in their respective academic honor codes. Specifically, students are not to use unauthorized assistance in the laboratory, on field work, in scholarship or on a course assignment unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor. In addition, students are not to submit their work without acknowledging any word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of writing, ideas or

other work that is not your own. These requirements apply to all students undergraduate, graduate, and professional.

To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each individual instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.

Accessibility Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If you are isolating while waiting for a COVID-19 test result, please let me know immediately. Those testing positive for COVID-19 should refer to the [Safe and Healthy Buckeyes site](#) for resources. Beyond five days of the required COVID-19 isolation period, I may rely on Student Life Disability Services to establish further reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

Religious Accommodations

It is Ohio State's policy to reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of all students. The policy permits a student to be absent for up to three days each academic semester for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief.

Students planning to use religious beliefs or practices accommodations for course requirements must inform the instructor in writing no later than 14 days after the course begins. The instructor is then responsible for scheduling an alternative time and date for the course requirement, which may be before or after the original time and date of the course requirement. These alternative accommodations will remain confidential. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all course assignments are completed.

Your Mental Health!

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the

aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614- 292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273- TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Diversity as a Core Value

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Course Technology

While this an in-person course, you will need to be able to navigate course technology. You can access the course website through Carmen (OSU's course management system): <https://carmen.osu.edu>. All course-related materials except the textbook will be available on Carmen. This is also where you will turn in written assignments.

You will need to use [BuckeyePass](https://buckeyepass.osu.edu) (buckeyepass.osu.edu) multi-factor authentication to access your courses in Carmen. To ensure that you are able to connect to Carmen at all times, it is recommended that you do each of the following:

- Register multiple devices in case something happens to your primary device. Visit the [BuckeyePass - Adding a Device](https://go.osu.edu/add-device) (go.osu.edu/add-device) help article for step-by-step instructions.
- [Install the Duo Mobile application](https://go.osu.edu/install-duo) (go.osu.edu/install-duo) on all of your registered devices for the ability to generate one-time codes in the event that you lose cell, data, or Wi-Fi service.

If none of these options will meet the needs of your situation, you can contact the IT Service Desk at [614-688-4357 \(HELP\)](tel:614-688-4357) and IT support staff will work out a solution with you.

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** <http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice>
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **Email:** 8help@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

Access to Software

- **Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus:** All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus through Microsoft's Student Advantage program. Each student can install Office on five PCs or Macs, five tablets (Windows, iPad® and Android™) and five phones.
- Students are able to access Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and other programs, depending on platform. Users will also receive 1 TB of OneDrive for Business storage.
- Office 365 is installed within your BuckeyeMail account. Full instructions for downloading and installation can be found <https://ocio.osu.edu/kb04733>.

References for Assigned Readings

Bauer, Laurie. 2007. *The linguistics student's handbook*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Beavers, John and Peter Sells. 2013. Constructing and supporting a linguistic analysis. In Robert Podesva and Devyani Sharma (eds.), *Research methods in linguistics*, 397-421. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bickford, J. Albert. 1998. *Morphology and syntax: Tools for analyzing the world's languages*. Dallas, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Campbell-Kibler, Kathryn. 2013. Accents – where and why? (TEDxOSU talk). Video available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv6tBcJfY0>

Clopper, Cynthia and Terrin N. Tamati. 2014. Effects of local lexical competition and regional dialect on vowel production. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 136(1): 1-4.

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Linguistic Journal Editors. 2007. *The unified style sheet for linguistics*. Washington, D.C.: The Linguistic Society of America. Available online: <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/unified-style-sheet>

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- McEnery, Larry. 2014. *The craft of writing effectively.* Video available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtIzMaLkCaM>
- Ohio State University Libraries. 2015. Choosing & using sources: A guide to academic research. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University. Available online: <https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/choosingsources/front-matter/introduction/>
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- Spillman, Bob and Ian Parberry. 2000. How to present a paper: A speaker's guide. Unpublished ms., Millipore Corp. and University of North Texas. Available online: <https://www.sfu.ca/~jeffpell/Ling480/ParberryMembrane.pdf>
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- Wray, Alison, Kate Trott, and Aileen Bloomer. 1998. *Projects in linguistics: A practical guide to researching language.* London: Arnold.
- Zwicky, Arnold M. and Geoffrey K. Pullum. 1983. Cliticization vs. inflection: English N'T. *Language* 59(3): 502-513.