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Spring 2-1-2019

### MCLG 300.01: Language in the Real World - Introduction to Applied Linguistics

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Requena, Pablo E., "MCLG 300.01: Language in the Real World - Introduction to Applied Linguistics" (2019). *Syllabi*. 10316.

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# MCLG300: LANGUAGE IN THE REAL WORLD: INTRODUCTION TO APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Class time: MWF 9:00-9:50am  
Instructor: Dr. Pablo E. Requena  
Email: pablo.requena@umontana.edu  
Office: LA 429  
Office hours: MWF 8-9am, 11-noon (and by appointment)



## Course Description<sup>1</sup>

Many problems we encounter day-to-day have to do in one way or another with language. From addressing friends to writing academic texts, and from learning to write to using voice recognition technology to search the Internet, a lot of what we do in our private and professional lives has to do with language. Resolving language-related problems/issues in the real-world is a complex and dynamic task that requires not only knowledge about what language is and how it works, but also the use of interdisciplinary resources. Applied linguistics has developed into a problem driven and real-world based field that addresses language-based problems in real-world contexts. In this course you will explore language problems: (a) In human development and across the lifespan, (b) in education, (c) in society, and (d) in professional and institutional settings. This course challenges us all to find the role that language plays in different spheres of life and also to discover particular challenges in each context and see how applied linguistics addresses them.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course you will be able to:

1. Look up, read, summarize, and present research on language-related problems. By the end of this class you should be able to find sources, read about a topic, organize ideas, summarize. In short, you should be able to become a more autonomous learner. There will be a lot of reading in this class! (But also a lot of thinking and discussion)
2. Identify and describe a number of language-related problems in the real-world. By the end of the semester, you will have identified and discussed a lot of language-related problems. You will have read at least 2 sources about each one so as to be able to say something about it.
3. Anticipate and reflect on language-related problems in your future professional environment and do a project in one particular area of interest.

## Materials

1. Moodle website for class will include readings, announcements and updates in course schedule (if necessary), gradebook, and reading materials.

<sup>1</sup> Image credit: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Appliedlinguistics8.png>

## Course Requirements and Grading

### Grading scale:

Letter grade	Points	Letter grade	Points
A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	0-59

Now, let's see which are the graded assignments and requirements:

- **Class Project (40 points of final grade):** You will work on a language-related problem of your choice (thinking about your future career in the professional world or a language-related problem you found interesting from the ones studied in this course). After identifying a language-related problem, you will search for studies that have addressed that issue and summarize their findings (and open questions for further research). You will submit a brief written report summarizing the literature you reviewed. Also answering: Can you think of other examples/contexts where that problem also occurs?, Can you think of an insightful question within the problem you selected for which you haven't found any studies and it would be interesting to do research on? Can you identify what skills someone needs to have (or develop) in order to successfully deal with the language-related problem you selected? If the language-related problem is too specific and no research is found, you will still be able to do the reflection section of the project about it, but you will be asked to frame the problem in a wider context for the literature review and propose a research study. The report will be assessed by the appropriateness and clarity of your brief lit review (20 points) and the depth of your reflection on the language-related problem (20 points).
- **Presentations (30 points of final grade):** You will give three research presentations where you summarize a study/chapter. You are expected to read the article/chapter several times until you not only understand it fully, but also extract the main information for your presentation. You will be asked to put together a PPT presentation (no Prezi or other type) that will then be uploaded to Moodle. The PPT presentation should NOT be cut and paste from the article/chapter. It should be well-thought, concise (keep chunks of text to a minimum), relevant (don't forget important info), and brief. Your presentation should follow the sections of the reading. If you have to miss a presentation you are supposed to give (only in case of serious emergencies, for which you must provide documentation), you must call/email in advance so as to reschedule the presentation. If unable to reschedule, make-up presentations will be essay-based.
  - a) *First presentation (10 points of final grade)*
  - b) *Second presentation (10 points of final grade)*
  - c) *Third presentation (10 points of final grade)*
- **Discussion Questions (20 points of final grade):** You should submit a discussion question on Moodle related a selected reading for each class (you will not submit questions to you're the readings for none of the three presentation you will give). Discussion questions should ask a probing, insightful question that reflect careful engagement with the reading material and topic at hand. Avoid questions that go outside of the reading, such as "What would the situation be in another context such as Y?" (unless you want to submit a second question). Your question should be ABOUT the text we read. For example, about the

methods used and their relationship to the results obtained or about the previous literature used to frame the present study (in a research study). In chapters that review several studies, appropriate questions could have to do with trends in what the studies reported show, or the way that the author presents the existing research. If you have a cool idea for a future study that you think could be interesting to through around, you may submit that as a second question together with your reading question (e.g., “After reading this text, I wonder if one could study how X gets manifested in a different population such as Y where.... Is different?”). Your discussion questions must be submitted on time, by **no later than 11:59pm the day before class when the text will be addressed** (this will give your classmate time to look at them prior to their presentations). Late discussion questions will be given a 0. Grading for discussion questions will be

+ = 100%    ~ = 70%    - = 50%    0 = 0%

- **Active class participation (10 points of final grade):** Your participation is key to the success of this course. Your participation grade is based on the quality of daily in-class participation, an important component of this course. In order to receive full credit in this area, students must **regularly** demonstrate knowledge of the readings by answering questions in class, consistently participate in in-class activities and discussions in a way that shows unwavering focus and dedication, and refrain from distracting, disrespectful, or otherwise objectionable behaviors (like using a cell phone).

## Other Policies and Information

**E-mail/Moodle:** All students must frequently access their email, and the Moodle site for this class.

**Extra credit:** There will not be any opportunities for extra credit in this class.

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:** All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. See:

[http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student\\_conduct.php](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php)

**Special Considerations and/or Disabilities:** The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

**Office hours:** One of the best ways to take full advantage of learning in this course is by coming to my office hours. I am anxious to guide you in your academic pursuits. Take advantage of the hours listed above or email me for an appointment if those times do not work for you. If you come for help with the course materials, please bring your notes and prepare your questions in advance.

**Cell-phone, Tablet, and Laptop Use:** You may not use cell phones in class, and I would prefer that you do not use laptops or iPads either. Checking email, texting, Facebook, etc. is distracting for you and for me. Besides, note taking on the computer would be very difficult in this class since you will be a lot of special symbols not readily available in computer keyboards (i.e. it’s much faster by hand).

## Course Contents

### **UNIT 1: Foundations**

- 1.1 What is language? (Different conceptualizations)
- 1.2 Areas of linguistic analysis (Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, etc.)
- 1.3 What is knowledge of language?
  - Try to answer by looking at how language is used (Corpus Studies)
  - Try to answer by looking at how language is processed (Psycholinguistics)
- 1.4 What is Applied Linguistics? (Development of the field)

### **UNIT 2: Language problems in human development and across the lifespan**

- 2.1 L1 development problems (Constructivist view)
- 2.2 Language pathology (Aphasias, dyslexias, SLI)
- 2.3 Bilingual L1 acquisition (Bilingualism as the L1)
- 2.4 Language and cognition (Memory, Attention, Cognitive advantages of bilingualism)
- 2.5 Language problems in aging populations (Word finding failures, processing and production)

### **UNIT 3: Language problems in education**

- 3.1 Literacy problems (orthography development in oral languages, typing vs. hand-writing, new scripts, multiliteracies, multimodal communication)
- 3.2 Learning problems due to language (ELLs, standardized testing and ELLs, dual-language programs, language loss)
- 3.3 L2 learning problems (skills, awareness, automaticity, aptitude, motivation, affect, study abroad)
- 3.4 L2 teaching problems (resources, training, practice, interaction, motivation, outcomes)

### **UNIT 4: Language problems in society**

- 4.1 Language contact problems (bilingualism, codeswitching, *Spanglish*, shift, spread, loss, maintenance, pidgin, creole, social and cultural interactions)
- 4.2 Language inequality problems (ethnicity, class, region, gender, age), Language stereotypes, Language and Power
- 4.3 Language policy and planning problems (status planning, multilingualism, political factors)
- 4.4 Language use in private settings (genres, youngspeak, texting, conversation analysis, humor)
- 4.5 Language in the workforce (language attitudes, language as a gatekeeping mechanism, migrant workers)

### **UNIT 5: Language problems in institutional settings**

- 5.1 Language & science and academia
- 5.2 language & law
- 5.3 Language & politics
- 5.4 Language & health
- 5.5 Language & media
- 5.6 Language & business
- 5.7 Language & computer science and technology (Artificial Intelligence, Machine Translation, Natural Language Generation, voice recognition, automatic tagging of corpora, innovation)
- 5.7 Translation and Interpretation problems (medical contexts, international relations, etc.)