

Linguistics 455: Typology

University of Calgary
Winter 2011

Time: Tues. & Thurs. 9:30-10:45
Room: MS 319
Instructor: Elizabeth Ritter
Office: SS 822
Office hours: Tuesdays 11am -12 noon, or by appointment
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Course description: This course is an introduction to typology, the comparative study of the grammatical properties of the languages of the world, in the domains of syntax and morphology. Typologists try to discover the ways in which languages differ from each other, what the range of variation is, which grammatical properties are common and which are rare, and what properties (if any) are shared by all languages (universals). The course presents an overview of some of the main results of typological research, and familiarizes the student with grammatical phenomena that are “strange” from the point of view of English, but occur frequently in other languages. Students work intensively with a reference grammar of an unfamiliar language and write a typological profile of that language.

Prerequisites: Ling 203 and 301 (at least a C- in each course)

Course material:

Whaley, Lindsay J. 1997. *Introduction to Typology: The Unity and Diversity of Language*.

Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc. (**required**)

Data sets and supplementary readings will be made available through Blackboard. (**required**)

Reference works on reserve in the library.

Course work: There will be a midterm and a final exam dealing with the material from the textbook, readings and additional material discussed in class. **The final is cumulative**, i.e. it covers the whole course, including the material of the midterm. At the beginning of the course each student is assigned a descriptive grammar of a language that is unfamiliar to them. In homework assignments the student provides a typological description of selected aspects of the language, based on the information found in the grammar. This work culminates in a “typological profile” of the language, which incorporates the earlier assignments as well as additional information. An oral presentation of the typological profile will be scheduled in the last week of classes, and a written version will be due at the end of the term.

homework assignment 1	5%
homework assignment 2	10%
homework assignment 3	10 %
oral presentation	10%
written typological profile	20 %
midterm exam	20 %
final exam	25 %

Calculation of grades: For each piece of work the student will receive a numerical grade between 0 and 100. The weighted average of all grades received is calculated according to the weight distribution indicated above and converted to the final letter grade for the course according to the following scale:

A+	97-100	B+	84-87	C+	71-74	D+	56-61
A	92-96	B	79-83	C	66-70	D	50-55
A-	88-91	B-	75-78	C-	62-65	F	0-49

Assistance: You are encouraged to see me with any questions you may have concerning the course material. You can come to my office hours or set up an individual appointment. You can also phone or e-mail me to make an appointment, or to inform me of some organizational matter (for instance, absence because of illness). However, I do not answer questions about class content or about the language you are working on by e-mail.

Working with the grammars: Students should get the grammar of “their” language from the library at the earliest possible date. It is important to become familiar both with the grammar and with the language itself by actively studying the grammar on a regular basis throughout the term, and not just when assignments are due. Note that students can borrow library books for only two weeks at a time. **It is the students’ own responsibility to make sure the loan period of their grammar is renewed on time.**

Homework assignments and typological profile: Assignments are handed out approximately two weeks before they are due. All assignments must be typed. All linguistic data must be transcribed accurately and accompanied by glosses and translations, and the corresponding page numbers in the grammar should be provided. Grading of the assignments and the typological profile will be based not only on content, but also on writing (organization, style, spelling, etc). **Assignments may not be handed in by e-mail.**

Late assignments and missed exams: Late assignments are penalized by deducting 10 points (out of 100) for every day (or part thereof) the assignment is handed in past the due date, unless the student presents a valid written excuse supported by appropriate documentation. The typological profile is due on April 18th, and will not be accepted any later than April 22nd (with deduction of points if handed in after April 18th). A student will receive a grade of 0 (zero) if the typological profile is handed in after April 22nd. Students who miss the midterm will receive a grade of 0 (zero), unless they produce a valid written documented excuse, in which case the weight of the midterm will be transferred to the final exam (which then counts for 45%). Valid excuses for a late assignment or a missed midterm include birth, death, or marriage of a close family member, a relevant religious holiday on the day of the midterm, and serious illness or injury. In the latter case, the student is required to submit a completed Physician/Counsellor Statement form (available from the Registrar’s Office). The decision whether an excuse is valid is solely at the instructor’s discretion. The student should inform the instructor of the excusing circumstances as soon as they arise, if at all possible before the relevant deadline or exam date. A deferred final examination can only be granted by the Dean of Arts.

Tentative Schedule

Wk	Dates	Topic	Reading
1	Jan. 11	What is typology?	Whaley Ch 1, 2
	Jan. 13	Languages of the world Some statistics Problems estimating numbers Language Classification Language Endangerment How to use the ethnologue	Whaley p. xvii-xxiii; O'Grady & Archibald Chapter 8 Comrie, Krauss, Hale, Ladefoged
2	Jan. 18, 20	Language Universals Methodology	Baker Whaley, Ch. 3
3	Jan. 25, 27	Lexical categories & grammatical relations	Whaley Ch. 4

Jan. 27	ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE (language status, genetic affiliation)
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4	Feb. 1, 3	Word order	Whaley Ch. 5-6 Greenberg, Dryer
5	Feb. 8, 10	Morphology	Whaley Ch. 7, 8 section 1
6.	Feb. 15, 17	Nominal features, agreement, case	Whaley Ch. 9, section 2

Feb. 17	ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE (lexical categories, word order)
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7	Feb. 22, 24	Reading Week – No classes	
8.	Mar. 1	Ergativity	Whaley Ch. 9, section 1

Mar. 3	MIDTERM EXAM
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9.	Mar. 8, 10	Head vs. dependent marking	Nichols (1986)
10	Mar. 15, 17	Valence decreasing operations	Whaley Ch. 11, Sections 0-1.2
11	Mar. 22, 24	Valence increasing operations	Whaley Ch. 11, Sections 1.3-3

Mar. 24	ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE (morphology, case and agreement, ergativity)
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12	Mar 29, 31	Clause types, questions	Whaley Ch. 14
13	Apr. 5, 7	Subordinate clauses, Relative clauses	Whaley Ch. 15, 16
14	Apr. 12, 14	Student Presentations	

April 18	TYPOLGICAL PROFILE DUE (including valence, relative clauses)
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TBA	FINAL EXAM
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