

## LINGUISTICS 531 / Fall 2010

### Survey of Aboriginal Languages of North America

- **Instructor:** Darin Flynn
- **Course description:** "A survey of the indigenous languages of the Americas, including classifications of language families and structural analysis of selected languages." (U of C calendar)
- **Course prerequisites:** Linguistics 203 and either Linguistics 301 or 303.
- **Class time, location:** Mondays 2–4:50pm, SB 105

(Don't worry: I don't do 3-hour lectures! Classes will include **audiovisual edutainment, guest presentations from elders (e.g., Blackfoot, Nakoda, Dene) and linguists, and inquiry-based exercises**, e.g., transcription, analysis, and discussion.)

- **Office hours, location:** Wednesdays 2–3pm or by appointment, SS 806
- **Telephone:** 220-6110, or Department: 220-5469 (leave message)
- **E-mail:** dflynn@ucalgary.ca (send your questions, if you like)
- **Course content:** The study of languages spoken by the descendants of the original inhabitants of North America has made a number of significant contributions to the development of linguistics. In practically every book that the student of linguistics reads, the impact of work in this area is evident. It would be no exaggeration to say that the lasting and profound influence of such eminent pioneers of linguistics as **Franz Boas, Edward Sapir, and Leonard Bloomfield** is due in large part to the seminal work they did on structurally diverse Aboriginal languages in North America, especially in Canada.

For linguists, the value of current research on North American Aboriginal languages stems primarily from the light that it can shed on the **nature of human linguistic competence**. Besides refuting the popular misconception that these languages are somehow primitive, this work has also uncovered certain **structural and semantic phenomena** that are not found in more widely studied languages such as English, French, Mandarin, and so on. Another compelling reason for the study of Aboriginal

languages is that it can yield clues (sometimes the only ones available) to help resolve problems in **archaeology** and **anthropology** (especially **ethnohistory**) relating to the origin and migration of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. It is also important to recognize that Aboriginal languages in North America are in a grave state of **decline**, such that an **urgency** underlies their study, whether theoretical or historical.

This course has three components. First we will address **historical** and **geographic** questions: How many Aboriginal languages are there? How are they related genetically? How are they distributed? Next, we will survey the **structural characteristics** of these languages. Some of the structures to be discussed are quite widespread, while others are unique to certain languages or language families. Finally, we will focus on **sociolinguistic issues** including language contact, language endangerment, language documentation (including writing systems), language rights (including Bill S-237 in Canada), language revitalization, linguists' ethics, etc.

As described below, **your research papers** for this course will focus on language families and isolates located in the **United States**, while **my classes** will focus on ones that are represented in **Canada**, viz.:

- *Language families:*

**Algonquian** (actually **Algic**), **Eskimo-Aleut**, **Iroquoian**,  
**Siouan**, **Salishan**, **Wakashan**, **Tsimshianic**, and **Tlingit-**  
**Athabaskan** (actually **Dené-Yeniseian**).

- *Isolates:*

**Beothuk**, **Haida**, and **Ktunaxa**.

- *Creoles and mixed languages:*

**Chinook Jargon** and **Michif**.

- *Pidgins:*

**Inuktitut Trade languages**, **Plains Sign Talk**, **Haida-English Pidgin**.

- **Grading system:** 2 assignments (due **Oct. 4** & **Nov. 1**) @ 10% each
  - Test (**Nov. 22**) 20%
  - Class participation 10%
  - Class presentation (**Nov. 29** or **Dec. 6**) 10%
  - Research paper (due **Dec. 15**) 40%
  
- **Re: assignments:**
  - These are due **October 4** and **November 1**. I will give you at least a week to complete each assignment.
  - All must be submitted electronically (preferably **pdf** or **Word** document) by midnight of the due date to me @ [dflynn@ucalgary.ca](mailto:dflynn@ucalgary.ca). No late assignments will be accepted.
  - The file name of each assignment must be in the following format: ast#-lastname-preferredemailaddress, for example: ast2-smith-jsmith@shaw.ca.
  - Moreover, all phonetic characters must be typed in a well-known phonetic font.
  - **Computers:** If you don't own a computer (or if you don't like your computer) you can do your assignment on a U of C workstation, say, in the TRI-Lab (SS 018) or in the IC (2<sup>nd</sup> flr. McKimmie). Note that you probably won't be allowed to install any special font in your workstation, but on PCs at least you'll find all phonetic characters in **Lucida Sans Unicode** (or else in **Arial Unicode MS**, which is normally installed with Word XP). Word 2007 is installed with fonts that have ALL phonetic symbols (**Times New Roman**, **Arial**, etc.). Another good font on PCs for phonetic symbols is **Segoe UI**. Windows' new default fonts, **Calibri** and **Cambria**, as included in Windows 7, are also IPA-compliant.
  - **Re: test:** This test on Canada's Aboriginal languages will be given on **Nov. 22**.
  - **Re: research paper:** My classes, assignments and test will focus on language families and isolates that are represented in **Canada**. Your research paper will expand our survey by focussing on language families and isolates located in the **United States** (page numbers refer to our text, Mithun, 2001):

**Alsea** (p. 341-3), **Atakapa** (p. 344-5), **Caddoan** (p. 369-74), **Cayuse** (p. 375-6), **Chimakuan** (p. 377-9), **Chimariko** (p. 380-1), **Chinookan** (p. 382-6), **Chitimacha** (p. 387-8), **Chumashan** (p. 389-92), **Ciahuilteco** (p. 393-4), **Coosan** (p. 396-9), **Esselen** (p. 411-3), **Kalapuyan** (p. 431-3), **Karuk** (p. 435-7), **Keres** (p. 438-40), **Kiowa-Tanoan** (p. 441-7), **Klamath-Modoc** (p. 448-51), **Maiduan** (p. 455-8), **Molala** (p. 459-60), **Muskogean** (p. 461-6), **Natchez** (p. 467-69), **Palaihnihan** (p. 470-2), **Pomoan** (p. 473-6), **Sahaptian** (p. 477-81), **Salinan** (p. 482-4), **Shastan** (p. 498-500), **Siuslaw** (p. 510-3), **Takelma** (p. 514-8), **Timacua** (p. 519-21), **Tonkawa** (p. 522-4), **Tunica** (p. 532-4), **Utian** (p. 535-8), **Uto-Aztecan** (p. 539-48), **Wappo** (p. 554-6), **Washo** (p. 557-9), **Wintuan** (p. 560-3), **Yana** (p. 564-6), **Yokutsan** (p. 567-70), **Yuchi** (p. 571-3), **Yuki** (p. 574-6), **Yuman-Cochimi** (p. 577-82), **Zuni** (p. 583-6)

I expect the final research paper to be in the range of **20 pages with double spacing**. In addition to an introduction and conclusion, it should have three main sections:

- i) a geographic, historical and social survey of the language family/isolate, including available genetic information and a map (about 5 pages);
- ii) a survey of its linguistic structures (esp. phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics), highlighting typologically unusual ones (at least 5 pages);
- iii) a detailed description and analysis of a selected problem in the language family/isolate. This problem may be morpho-syntactic (if you've taken LING 301), phonological (if you've taken LING 303), or even historical (if you've taken LING 353)<sup>1</sup> (about 5 pages).

Here is the timeline for writing your research paper:

Sept. 20: Come to class with one choice *and one alternate* from the above list.<sup>2</sup> We will figure out conflicting choices in class.

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<sup>1</sup> If your focus is historical, I highly recommend Lyle Campbell's (2000) *American Indian languages: The historical linguistics of Native America*.

<sup>2</sup> Several language families and isolates are off-bounds, because too little is known of them, e.g., **Adai** (p. 327), **Cromecudan** (p. 395), **Cotoname** (p. 395), **Karankawa** (p. 434).

Mid Sept. – mid Oct.: Get into your research! Most relevant sources of information on your chosen family/isolate are cited in your text, but the library may not hold some critical ones, which you will then need to order ASAP through Document Delivery Services, to avoid too much delay in your research.

Oct. 18: Bring a one-page report on your chosen language family/isolate, in which you cite the main sources you have consulted, describe what you are focussing on, and suggest why it's interesting or where your investigations might lead. Indicate clearly in your report whether you have found sufficient and good information to be able to write a research paper. If not, you will need to pick a new family/isolate from the remaining choices (above list).

If your 1-page report raises potential problems for writing a research paper I'll ask for an appointment with you Oct. 25 – Nov. 8.

Nov. 29 & Dec. 6: Your class presentation will provide an overview of your final research paper; this will generate some feedback on your topic from other students.

Dec. 15: The final version of your paper is due.

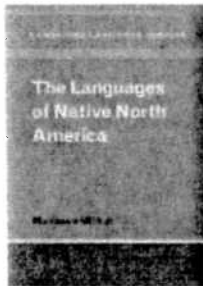
- **Assignment of grades:** Course grades will be assigned on a distribution that is NOT more restrictive than this:

A+ 97-100%    B+ 84-88%    C+ 69-73%    D+ 54-58%

A 93-96%    B 79-83%    C 64-68%    D 50-53%

A- 89-92%    B- 74-78%    C- 59-63%    F 0-49%

- **N.B.:** The **undergraduate advisor** for 2010-2011 is Dr. Robert Murray. He can be reached at [ling.undergrad@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ling.undergrad@ucalgary.ca).
- **Text:** *The Languages of Native North America*, by Marianne Mithun (Cambridge University Press, 2001, 795 pages). Please purchase from U of C bookstore.



- Background general reading:
  - Battarbee, Keith. 2007. Aboriginal languages in 21st-century Canada. In Martin Howard (ed.), *Language issues in Canada: Multidisciplinary perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 40-63.
  - Cook, Eung-Do & Darin Flynn. 2008. Aboriginal languages of Canada. In William O'Grady & John Archibald (eds.), *Contemporary linguistic analysis: An introduction*. Toronto: Pearson Longman.

- **Schedule:**

*read*

- Sept 13
- Introduction
  - Quick survey of North American languages, focus on Canadian families

- **Mithun 1-12**
- Battarbee, Keith. 2007. Aboriginal languages in 21st-century Canada. In Martin Howard (ed.), *Language issues in Canada: Multidisciplinary perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 40-63.
- Cook, Eung-Do & Darin Flynn. 2008. Aboriginal languages of Canada. In William O'Grady & John Archibald (eds.), *Contemporary linguistic analysis: An introduction*. Toronto: Pearson Longman.

- Survey of **Eskimo-Aleut**, focus on Inuktitut
- 20 min clip from *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)* and *Finding our Talk*, Season I, Episode 4: *The Power of Words – Inuktitut*
- **Mithun p. 400-10**; also 593-8 (Inuktitut trade languages)
- Patrick, Donna. 2003. Part of chapter 5 “Ethnography of language use” of *Language, politics, and social interaction in an Inuit community*. Berlin: Mouton. 153-177.

Sept  
20

- **Beothuk**
- Survey of **Algic**
- 20 min video clip chosen from *Finding Our Talk* episodes on Algic, listed here FYI:
  - Season 1, Episode 2: *Language Immersion – Cree*
  - Season 1, Episode 3: *The Trees Are Talking – Algonquin*
  - Season 1, Episode 5: *Words Travel On Air - Attikamekw/Innu*
  - Season 1, Episode 6: *Language in the City - Ojibway/Anishinabe*
  - Season 1, Episode 8: *Plain Talk – Saulteaux*
  - Season 1, Episode 9: *Breaking New Ground - Mi'kmaw*
  - Season 1, Episode 11: *The Power of One – Innu*
  - Season 1, Episode 12: *Syllabics: Capturing the Language – Cree*
  - Season 2, Episode 2: *Gentle Words – Maliseet*
- **Mithun 368**
- 327-40**
- also: 1, 7, 15, 25, 70, 72, 76, 79, 98, 133, 172, 240, 267, 313, 322, 323, 369, 590, 605

- Season 2, Episode 3: *The Spirit of Stories – Ojibway*
- Season 2, Episode 4: *Language of the North – Naskapi*
- Season 2, Episode 10: *Words from Our Scholars – Cree*
- Season 2, Episode 11: *Words from our Elders – Blackfoot*
- Season 3, Episode 1: *Anishnabe*
- Season 3, Episode 2: *Mi'gmaq*
- Season 3, Episode 3: *Abenaki*

Sept • **Algic** ctd.

27

• **Michif**

- 20 min video clip from *Finding Our Talk*, Season 1, Episode 7: *Getting Into Michif – Michif*

- **Mithun 599-602 (Michif)**
- National Aboriginal Health Organization – Métis Centre. 2009. *Michif language background paper*. Ottawa, ON: Métis Centre.

Oct. • **Iroquoian**

4

- 20 min video clip from *Finding Our Talk* episodes on Iroquoian, listed here FYI:

- Season 1, Episode 1: *Language Among the Skywalkers – Mohawk*
- Season 1, Episode 10: *A Silent Language - Huron/Wendat*
- Season 2, Episode 1: *A Brighter Future – Mohawk*
- Season 2, Episode 9: *Our Music is Our*

**418-30**

also: 15, 17, 23, 25, 42, 44, 57, 58, 69, 72, 88, 100, 111, 213, 230, 254, 313, 320



*Language: Onedia*

- Oct. • **Siouan** 501-9  
13<sup>3</sup>
- 20 min clip from new video on history of Dakotas of SK, plus *Finding Our Talk*, Season 2, Episode 7: *Buffalo People - Dakota* also: 8, 10, 19, 25, 32, 42, 44, 70, 72, 115, 121, 195, 213, 271, 273, 278-80 (**men's/women's language**), 292-4 (**Plains Sign Talk**), 320, 322
- Oct. • **Ktunaxa** 452-4  
18
- *Finding Our Talk*, Season 3, Episode 4: *Ktunaxa* also: 487
  - First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council. 2010. *Report on the status of BC First Nations languages*. Brentwood Bay, BC: FPHLCC.
- **Salishan** 485-97
- *Finding Our Talk*, Season 1, Episode 13: *A Remarkable Legacy - Saanich* also: 8, 15, 17, 19, 42, 48, 54, 60, 64, 72, 90, 93, 95, 134, 157, 194, 273, 275, 306, 315, 321, 378, 550
- Oct. • **Salishan ctd.**  
25
- *Finding Our Talk*, Season 2, Episode 6: *Our Past Our Language – Secwepemc*
  - Visiting specialist on Salish languages, Karsten Koch

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<sup>3</sup> The university is closed Monday, October 11 (for Thanksgiving) so we will need to reschedule class from that day to a couple of hours on Wednesday, October 13 (or some other day to be agreed on).

Nov • **Wakashan**

1

- **Mithun 549-53**
- **Anonby, Stan J. 1999.**  
Reversing language shift:  
Can Kwak'wala be revived?  
In Jon Reyhner, Gina  
Cantoni, Robert N. St. Clair,  
& Evangeline Parsons Yazzie  
(eds.), *Revitalizing Indigenous  
languages*. Flagstaff, AZ:  
Northern Arizona  
University. 33-52.

also: 8, 10, 15, 17-20, 25, 42, 48,  
54, 60, 72, 106, 109, 134, 149, 156,  
158, 185, 189, 306, 315, 378, 487,  
587-9 (**Chinook Jargon**)

**525-31**

also: 8, 17, 19, 42, 44, 54, 89, 146,  
194, 209, 310, 315

Nov • **Tsimshianic**

8

- Note: I know less about Tsimshianic so we may start next class' (very important) family in the second half of today's class.

- Mithun 346-67

Nov • **Dené-Yeniseian**

15

- 20 min video clip from *Finding Our Talk* episodes on Dene, listed here FYI:
  - Season 2, Episode 5: *Language of the Caribou People – Gwitchin*
  - Season 2, Episode 8: *Healing Power of Words – Dene*
  - Season 2, Episode 13: *The Dreamers - Dane-Zaa*

- Blair, Heather, Sally Rice, Valerie Wood, & John Janvier. 2002. Daghida: Cold Lake First Nation works towards Dene language revitalization. In Barbara Burnaby & John Reyhner (eds.), *Indigenous languages across the community*. Flagstaff, AZ: Northern

Arizona University. 33-52.

also: 8, 16, 17, 26, 28, 44, 104,  
106, 107, 128, 152, 248, 299, 313,  
322, 325, 487

- **Tlingit**

8, 15, 17, 25, 162, 276, 286, 315,  
347, 360

Nov • **Haida**  
22

**414-7**

also: 9, 17-9, 114, 119, 121, 123,  
157, 213, 276, 287, 315, 326

**(Haida-English Pidgin)**

- Test

Nov • **US families**  
29

Student presentations

Dec. • **US families ctd.**  
6

Student presentations

Dec. • **Paper due**  
15

**Important information:**

1. It is expected that students will attend class.
2. Students are expected at all times to do their own work (see section "Scholastic offenses" in the 2010–2011 Calendar)
3. Assignments must be handed in on time. Missed or late assignments will receive a grade of zero.

4. All exams must be written on scheduled dates, no later, not earlier. An exam can be missed only if valid documentation is provided within one week of the missed test. Valid reasons for missing a test include birth, death, marriage, or serious illness or injury applying to you or a member of your immediate family.
5. Exams and assignments written in pencil cannot be regraded.