

Native Languages of North America

LING 145 | Winter 2014 | <http://people.ucsc.edu/~ardeal/145/>

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Office hours Tuesday 3:45-4:45, Friday 2:30-3:30, in Stevenson 233

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Syllabus

Course topic and goals

This class is about the native languages of North America, broadly construed, with an emphasis on three groups of questions:

1. Linguistic relationships.

Are the native languages of North America related to one another? Are they related to languages outside of North America? Are they related to English?

2. Aspects of grammar.

What linguistic patterns are found in North American languages? How are these languages similar and different compared to one another and to languages found outside this area?

3. Language in culture, language endangerment and revitalization.

What do American languages tell us about the connection between language and culture? Why are many languages of the Americas endangered, and how does this connect with cultural facts? What are the prospects for the survival of American languages?

We will construct our answers on the basis of what we learn by reading, by writing and solving problems, and by discussions as a group. The course requirements are centered around these three ways of knowing.

Course requirements

Reading. We read not only to encounter facts, but also to engage with the thinking of other scholars. There is a reading assignment due each Thursday, as listed on the schedule below. Some of the readings are drawn from textbooks and handbooks; others are articles written for an audience of professional linguists. One is a documentary film. I expect you to read (or watch) carefully and fully, allowing yourself time to think and react. I may give in-class quizzes on material from the readings, and the readings will play an important role in your essay assignments (see below).

Writing and solving problems. The writing process is part of the thinking process. It is not something that is done once all the thinking is over; it is part of the thinking itself. For this reason, we take your writing very seriously in this class, and we expect you to do the same.

Starting in the second week, a piece of written work will be due each Tuesday. The written work comes in two varieties, which differ primarily in scope. One variety is what I call a "home-work": the solution to a problem, written up in a short piece of prose. The other variety is what I call an "essay", and is a more in-depth endeavor. There are three essay assignments, falling at the end of each of the three major pieces of the course. Essay prompts will ask you to engage with an expanded set of questions, drawing on the various readings. You should allow yourself at least a week to work on each essay.

The final paper project (due Thursday, March 20) will be an expansion and substantial revision of one of the three essays, improving on the original draft and incorporating material from new sources. Every student will need to meet with me or with Nick to discuss their plan for this revision.

Discussion. I expect you to attend all class meetings and all meetings of your assigned section, and to participate in discussion in both.

How you will be assessed

Your written work will be assessed on substance and presentation – factors that work together in writing that is *clear*, *well-supported*, and *persuasive*. The various ingredients to the final assessment are apportioned as follows:

42%	Homeworks (6 at 7pts each)
48%	Essays and final paper (4 at 12 pts each)
10%	Participation, reading quizzes, etc.

Timely work policy

Written work should be ready to be turned in at the beginning of the class period at which it is due. Work after this is late, and will not be accepted.

Collaboration and academic honesty

I encourage you to discuss the course material with other students and to work together. However, you must always write up your work entirely on your own. This should be no surprise, in view of both common sense and the University's policy on academic integrity:

"All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC."

DRC accommodation

If you think you may need a disability accommodation, you should contact me privately within the first two weeks of the quarter to discuss specifics and submit your Accommodation Authorization.

Schedule.

This schedule is provisional and may change slightly. Be aware that reading assignments *must be completed by the Thursday* of the week indicated and writing assignments *must be completed by the Tuesday* of the week indicated.

Dates	Topics	Reading (due Thurs.)	Writing (due Tues.)
Part I. Relationships between languages.			
W1 (Jan 7, 9)	Language groups and linguistic history. Reconstructing languages of the past.	Campbell 2004, ch. 5 (The comparative method and linguistic reconstruction)	Course survey
W2 (Jan 14, 16)	Classifying languages into language families. Linguistic clues to migration and diffusion.	Campbell 2004, ch. 6 (Linguistic classification) AND ch. 15 (Linguistic pre-history)	HW 1
W3 (Jan 21, 23)	A tale of two hypotheses: Amerind and Dene-Yeneseian	Campbell 2004, ch. 13 (Distant genetic relationship)	Essay 1
Part II. Aspects of grammar.			
W4 (Jan 28, 30)	Phonological patterns. Vowels and consonants. Inventories and harmony.	Bright 1984	HW 2
W5 (Feb 4, 6)	Morphological patterns. Reduplication, noun incorporation, and their place in linguistic theory.	Gerds 1998	HW3
W6 (Feb 11, 13)	Syntactic patterns. Word order and polysynthesis.	Baker 2001, ch. 4 (Baking a polysynthetic language)	HW 4
W7 (Feb 18, 20)	Semantic patterns. Modal words and scalar implicatures.	Deal 2011	Essay 2

Part III. Culture, endangerment and revitalization.

W8 (Feb 25, 27)	Language and culture. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and American languages. Color words.	Kay and Kempton 1984	HW 5
W9 (Mar 4, 6)	Loss of language. What are language endangerment and language death, and why are these taking place?	McCarty, Romero-Little, Warhol, and Zepeda 2014 AND Labillois 1996	HW 6
W10 (Mar 11, 13)	Languages reclaimed. Language revitalization.	Makepeace 2010 **Note: film**	Essay 3

References

- Baker, Mark C. 2001. *The atoms of language*. Basic Books.
- Bright, William. 1984. Sibilants and naturalness in aboriginal California. In *American Indian linguistics and literature*, 31–54. Mouton.
- Campbell, Lyle. 2004. *Historical linguistics: an introduction*. MIT Press, 2nd edition.
- Deal, Amy Rose. 2011. Modals without scales. *Language* 87:559–585.
- Gerdts, Donna. 1998. Incorporation. In *The handbook of morphology*, ed. A. Spencer and A.M. Zwicky, 84–100. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Kay, Paul, and Willett Kempton. 1984. What is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis? *American Anthropologist* 86:65–79.
- Labillois, Roméo. 1996. Will the Micmac language survive? In *Quebec's aboriginal languages: history, planning and development*, ed. Jacques Maurais, 262–269. London: Multilingual Matters.
- Makepeace, Anne. 2010. *We still live here, âs nutayuneân*. Bullfrog films.
- McCarty, Teresa L, Mary Eunice Romero-Little, Larisa Warhol, and Ofelia Zepeda. 2014. Genealogies of language loss and recovery—native youth language practices and cultural continuance. In *Indigenous youth and multilingualism*, ed. Leisy T Wyman, Teresa L McCarty, and Sheilah E Nicholas, 26–47. New York: Routledge.