

Instructor



Dr. Ander Beristain



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Office: 2515 Lee Hall



Office hours: TBA

Course description

In this course, we will explore sound patterns and processes of the world's languages. Students will first be introduced to the history of phonology as a science. Topics such as abstraction, contrast, and predictability will be covered, as well as observing how phonotactics and alternations work cross-linguistically. Students will be introduced to the rule-based approach, as well as (briefly) to the constraint-based approach. The effects that the syllable, stress, tone, and intonation have over phonological rules will be covered, finishing up with how dialectal variation and second and heritage languages inform phonology. Students will produce creative exercises such as a set of phonological problems and their own research proposal as part of their grade. Students will be introduced laboratory methodologies to study phonology.

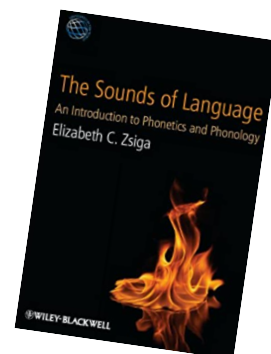
Prerequisites: EN/AN 4403 (Introduction to Linguistics) or consent of instructor.

Required texts

Textbook: *The Sounds of Language: An Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology* (1st edition), 2013, Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN: 9781405191036.

You are welcome to use either a **hard copy** or an **electronic version** of the textbook.

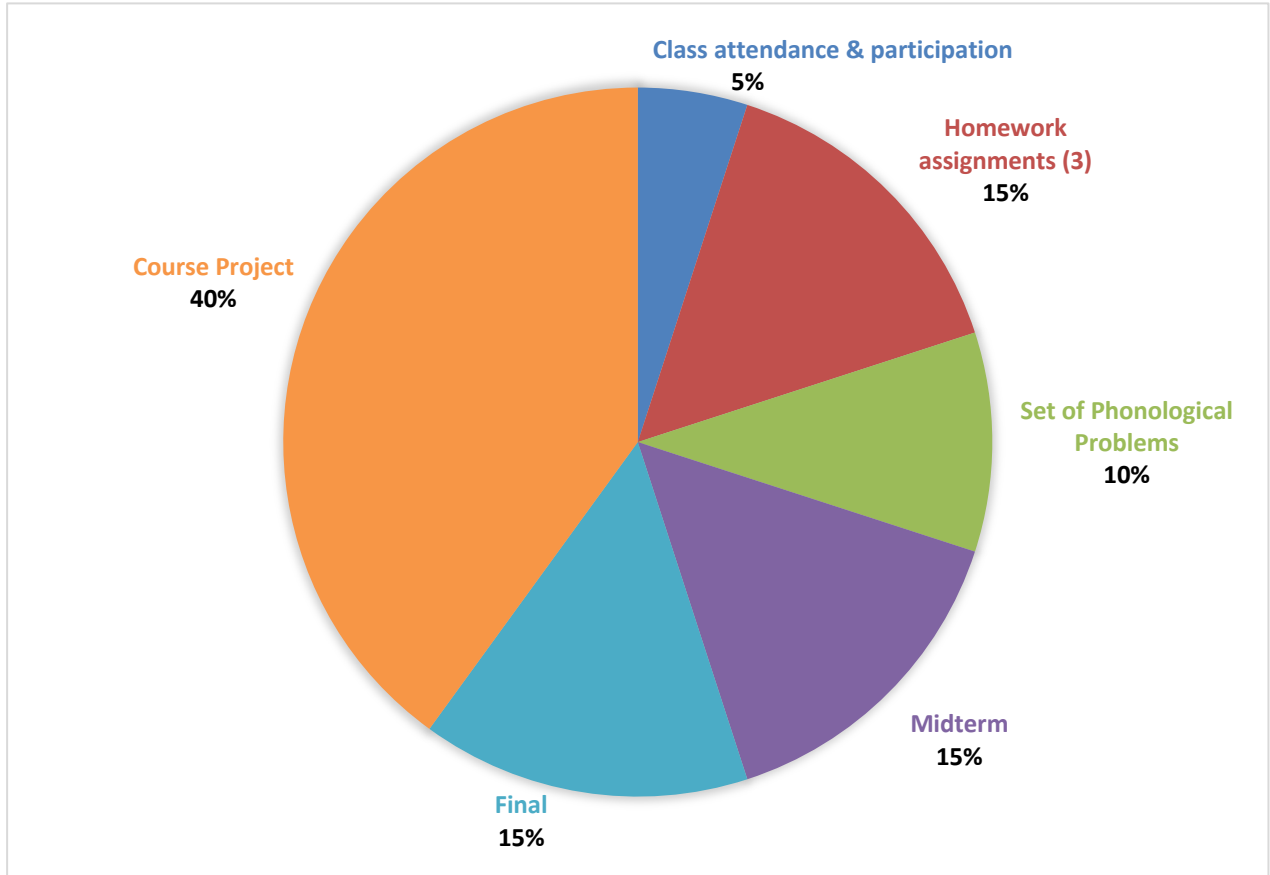
Please have your book available during class meetings, as we will use it frequently for reference and for practice exercises. The readings listed on the course schedule are to be done before class on the day they are listed.



Grading scale

90.0 – 100	A	4.0
80.0 – 89.9	B	3.0
70.0 – 79.9	C	2.0
60.0 – 69.9	D	1.0
0.00 – 59.9	F	0

Grading breakdown



Class attendance & participation (5%)

Class attendance and participation will start counting after Week 3 of class. This section is a face-to-face instructional class. Per Academic Operating Policy 12.09 (see <https://www.policies.msstate.edu/sites/www.policies.msstate.edu/files/1209.pdf>), students are expected to attend all class meetings in person. Should a student expect a university-excused absence from a class, the student should contact the course instructor of record to inform them of the absence and the reason for it. If you arrive later than 10 minutes (unless it is justified) you will be marked as absent.

You will be able to obtain **5 points per day**. The following rubric will be employed to evaluate your class participation:

5 points (if ALL of the following are true)

- Arrives for class on time.
- Participates actively both in group work and in whole-class discussions.
- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the assigned readings.

3 point (if ANY of the following is true)

- Arrives no more than 10 minutes late for class.
- Has a passive attitude when working in groups (other group members do most of the work).
- Is only partially familiar with the key concepts in the assigned readings.
- Participation is mostly limited to personal experiences or anecdotes.

0 points (if ANY of the following is true)

- Arrives more than 10 minutes late for class.
- Works on assignments for other classes or is otherwise distracted on activities not related to the class, such as texting.
- Does not demonstrate any familiarity with the assigned readings.
- Does not volunteer or contribute to the class discussion.

Homework assignments (15%)

There will be **three** written homework assignments assigned over the course of the semester (each one corresponding to a different discipline within phonology). Details of the assignments will be announced in class and posted in Canvas.

Assignments will be turned in electronically as a **PDF** document through **Canvas**. Homework will be due **Sunday at 11:55 PM** after the unit is over. Specific deadlines are listed on the course calendar. Please do not send homework via email.

Assignments will be graded on a **ten-point scale**. Late homework will be accepted until the beginning of the next class meeting and will be marked down one point (i.e., one letter grade). I

consider homework an opportunity to figure things out and to practice, so grading on homework is quite lenient. *10*: perfect; *9.5*: very good; *9*: complete, but with some errors; *8 or lower*: some major problems and/or incomplete. These grades are not parallel to what the same work would earn on a test.

Set of phonological problems (10%)

Each student will be responsible to submit a full set of phonological problems of a language of their choice. Students will be exposed to a diverse repertoire of languages throughout the semester. Then, students will choose one given language and prepare a set that includes various phonological problems. Students will also include the answer sheet to that set of problems. There will be a class day which we will devote to complete the set of problems in groups.

Midterm (15%)

The written exam will cover the materials we have explored in class until the day of the exam. It will consist of multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, questions to develop the understanding of phonology, and solving a set of phonological problems.

Final (15%)

The final exam will be **cumulative**. It will consist of multiple-choice, yes/no type, short answer, and paragraph long answers. No make-up tests will be given unless there are compelling circumstances to warrant it. In this case, you must notify me in advance of the test time, or as soon as humanly possible thereafter.

Course Project (40%)

There will a course project each student will have to conduct and it will be divided into **4 parts**. This project will be a research proposal about the phonological characteristics of a language. Utilizing the theoretical knowledge students acquire in the classroom, students will propose a project to be conducted in the future. More details will be provided in class. Below are each of the components of the project:

- **Part 1:** Project abstract/summary (5%)
- **Part 2:** Individual meetings (5%)
- **Part 3:** 10-15' Oral presentation (10%)
- **Step 3:** Full research proposal (20%)

Course schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings DUE	Assignments DUE
1	R 8/17	Course Introduction: What is phonology?		
2	T 8/22	Abstraction, contrast, predictability I	<i>Ch. 10</i>	
	R 8/24	Phonotactic constraints	<i>Ch. 11</i>	
3	T 8/29	Alternations		(Att. + Part. Start counting)
	R 8/31	Distinctive features	<i>Ch. 12</i>	
4	T 9/5	Derivational phonology	<i>Ch. 13</i>	
	R 9/7	Writing rules		
	*S 9/10	--	--	Homework #1
5	T 9/12	Constraint-based phonology	<i>Ch. 14</i>	
	R 9/14	Solving phonological problems		
6	T 9/19	Review for Midterm		Bring questions
	R 9/21		MIDTERM	
	*S 9/24	--	--	
7	T 9/26	The syllable	<i>Ch. 15</i>	
	R 9/28	The prosodic hierarchy		
8	T 10/3	Stress	<i>Ch. 16</i>	
	R 10/5	Tone	<i>Ch. 17</i>	
	*S 10/8	--	--	Homework #2
9	T 10/10	Intonation		
	R 10/12		Fall Break: NO CLASS	
10	T 10/17	Diachronic change and historical reconstruction	<i>Ch. 18.1, 18.2</i>	
	R 10/19	The History of English	<i>Ch. 18.3</i>	

	*S 10/22	--	--	Abstract
11	T 10/24	Meetings: No class		
	R 10/26	Meetings: No class		
12	T 10/31	Phonological variation	<i>Ch. 19</i>	
	R 11/2	Phonological acquisition in childhood	<i>Ch. 20</i>	
13	T 11/7	L2/Bilingual phonology	<i>Simonet article</i>	
	R 11/9	Phonological problems: In groups		Set of Phonological problems
	*S 11/12	--	--	Homework #3
14	T 11/14	Presentations		Presentation file via email
	R 11/16	Presentations		
15	T 11/21	Presentations		
	R 11/23	Thanksgiving: NO CLASS		
16	T 11/28	Review for Final		
	R 12/1	Finals' Week starts: NO CLASS		
	*S 12/3	--	--	
17	*TBA		FINAL	Exam
	M 12/4	Submit Research Proposal		