

Field Methods**G61.0044/V61.0044
Grad/Undergrad****Spring 2007**

Instructor: Chris Collins, cc116@nyu.edu
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Language: Chuukese
Consultant: Ms. Loretha Rhaym Robert

Time: M/W 9:30-10:45
Place: Silver, 515

Prerequisites: An introductory linguistics class in either syntax (Grammatical Analysis) or Phonology (Phonological Analysis).

Requirements:	Regular Field Reports (one every two weeks)	40%
	Paper Proposal (mid-semester)	10%
	Final Paper	40%
	Attendance	10%

Note: Attendance is *absolutely crucial* in a field methods course. There is no way to catch up on what was done, and there is no text book to read. Students are expected to rotate the responsibility of transcribing at the board. Attendance includes your weekly session outside of class with the consultant.

Objectives:

This course is a hands-on approach to learning linguistics. Every year, a different language is chosen to investigate. Here are the objectives:

- a. Students will learn how to work with a native speaker informant in order to find out about a language that they have never studied before, and in many instances, that they may not have even heard of before. Most often, the language chosen will be understudied.
- b. Students will learn how to organize their data from the bottom up, starting with phonetics and phonology, and moving on to morphology, syntax and semantics.
- c. They will learn how to evaluate data, and come up with generalizations based on data which is sometimes messy and unstructured. This course serves as the transition from the problem set world of introductory linguistics courses, to the real world of linguistics research.
- d. They will learn how to think about a research proposal, and how to turn that research proposal into a set of questions which can be asked of a native speaker informant (who may not have any linguistics background).
- e. They will learn how to connect theory and data and to give theoretically informed analyses to the data they have gathered.
- f. Lastly, they will learn how to write a research paper in their field of interest (e.g., syntax, phonology, or sociolinguistics), based on the data that they have gathered.

Small Group Sessions

Every student is required to meet once a week with the consultant in connection with their own research, starting in the first week of class if possible. At the beginning of the semester, students will work in pairs, each student working for half an hour. Around mid-term, and near the end of the semester, people can request additional time of the consultant as needed. We will set up regular weekly meeting times in the first class.

Assignments (regular field reports)

You will be required to turn in a report that is roughly 3 to 5 pages long every two weeks. The report will always be due the Tuesday after the two week period. E.g., the first report is due Tuesday of the third week of class. In the report, you will be required to give the transcribed data and describe any generalizations that you or the class uncovered. The report will include data from the in-class sessions and from your small group sessions. If there is a large amount of data, please make use of an appendix.

Assignments should be written on a word processor, and all phonetic symbols should be written in the International Phonetics Alphabet. The following handout (link available on BlackBoard) explains how to install and use phonetic fonts in common word processors:

http://homepages.nyu.edu/~mg152/teaching/word_processing_instr.pdf

Depending on the interests of the class, we may use the phonetics analysis program Praat to do transcription. This program can be downloaded at:

<http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/>

Final Paper and Paper Proposal

You will be required to write a final paper. The paper should be approximately 15-20 double spaced pages long. You will work on your papers throughout the second half of the semester. This includes: (a) choosing a topic, (b) writing a paper proposal (3 pages double-spaced), (c) finding references and reading background literature, (d) collecting data. The proposal should describe the linguistic phenomenon that you want to investigate with some preliminary data. Part of the grade of the final paper will be based on the quality and clarity of the writing (e.g., well-formed sentences, well-formed paragraphs, numbering conventions, sentence glossing, etc.). However, most of the grade will be based on your ability to analyze the linguistic data and report it in a way that is accessible to others, and that addresses a theoretical topic. As part of the requirements for this course, you should arrange to see us at some point in the semester about your paper.

A more detailed schedule with deadlines will be distributed in class and on BlackBoard.