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# LING 484.01: North American Indigenous Languages and Linguistics

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# North American Indigenous Languages and Linguistics

**LING 484/584**

*The University of Montana*

Autumn 2013

Instructor: Dr. Leora Bar-el

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

*"The loss of Native American languages is a cultural tragedy of almost unimaginable dimensions, but it also puts at grave risk our ability to ever understand fundamental aspects of how we as humans are organized and function. In a very real sense, we will not be able to understand how English works until we understand how Meskwaki, and Mohawk and Navajo work..."*  
(Goddard 2004: 8)

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### **Instructor information**

✉ <leora.bar-el@mso.umt.edu>

☎ 243-2387

📍 Social Science 210

Office hours: Wednesdays 10:00am-12:00pm, or by appointment

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### **Course meeting times and venue**

Tuesdays and Thursdays

11:10am-12:30pm

Liberal Arts 335

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### **Course objectives**

This course is an overview of the languages of Native North America from a linguistic perspective. It has been suggested that "[n]early 300 distinct mutually unintelligible languages are known to have been spoken north of the Rio Grande" (Mithun 1999: 1). These languages constitute more than 50 language families and differ in interesting ways from more well-known languages of the world, and among themselves. In this course we will look at a variety of grammatical features (e.g., phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics) of Indigenous languages of North America and the ways in which some of them are described and analyzed by linguists. We will also touch on the issue of language endangerment and language revitalization.

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### **Prerequisites**

LING 470 is a prerequisite for this course.

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### **Moodle**

This course has an online supplement Moodle site, which can be accessed at: <http://umonline.umt.edu/> (follow the Moodle login links). Lecture slides, worksheets, homework, assignments, sound/video files, links, etc. will be posted there for downloading. Links to Student Resources and Tech Support [http://umonline.umt.edu/tech\\_support/](http://umonline.umt.edu/tech_support/) are available at the login page. Please inform me if you have any problems accessing the site.

## Course Structure

**Class meetings** will include reading (text and article) discussions, data sets, guest lectures, student presentations, and other linguistic training. Powerpoint slides will be posted on the course Moodle site for downloading.

Throughout the course we will be **reading** and **discussing** chapters from the course textbook (Mithun 1999) as well as additional articles that focus on an aspect of the textbook readings. Articles are available for downloading from the course Moodle site (see schedule below for a reading timetable).

Over the course of the semester, you will complete **two assignments** that will involve examining data from different Indigenous languages of North America (see schedule below for due dates).

During the term we will be reading and discussing articles that provide an in-depth examination of grammatical properties in specific languages. You are required to submit **three article summaries** over the course of the semester. You can choose from five of the assigned articles (see details below).

We will have **three guest talks** during the semester that focus on writing skills, research skills and topics relating to Indigenous languages of Montana.

You are required to write a **research paper**. For this project, you will (i) submit an **outline** of your paper, (ii) give an in-class **presentation** of your paper, (iii) write a five-page **draft** of your paper and take it to the Writing Centre for feedback, (iv) **revise and submit** your research paper (see details and due dates below).

## Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- (a) identify a variety of linguistic properties that are characteristic of Indigenous languages of North America
- (b) critically read, summarize and discuss claims and arguments from primarily linguistic literature
- (c) give a presentation of your own linguistic research
- (d) develop and write a linguistic research paper

## Assessment (undergraduate)

Participation	10%
Assignments (2 x 5% each)	10%
Article summaries (3 x 10% each)	30%
Research paper outline	5%
Research paper draft (Writing Center)	5%
Research paper presentation	10%
Research paper	30%

- Participation includes attendance, introductory questionnaire, readings, in-class worksheets/discussions, answering/asking questions in-class, etc.
- Assignments will be posted on our course Moodle site approximately one week before the submission deadlines. They are due at the **beginning of class** on the date specified in the schedule below. We will review the answers in class, so bring an extra copy of your assignment to class to refer to during our review.
- Article summaries are due at the **beginning of class** on the day that the article is scheduled to be discussed (see schedule below).
- Your research paper outline is due at the beginning of class on **Thursday October 24**.
- A 5-page research paper draft must be completed and taken to the Writing Center for review/feedback **prior to submission of your paper to me**.
- Research paper presentations will take place in the **final three weeks of classes**. A presentation schedule will be circulated later in the term.
- Research papers are due in my office by 10:00am on **Tuesday December 10**.

**Assessment (graduate)**

Participation	10%
Assignments (2 x 5% each)	10%
Article summaries (3 x 10% each)	30%
Research paper outline	5%
Research paper draft (Writing Center)	5%
Research paper presentation	10%
Research paper	25%
Research paper abstract	5%

In addition to the undergraduate requirements listed above, graduate students taking this course are required to write a conference-style abstract of their final paper which must be submitted by **10am Wednesday December 11**. Furthermore, graduate student research papers have longer page requirements and are expected to be of a more advanced nature. Further information will be circulated to graduate students later in the term.

- **REMINDERS:** Plagiarism is an offence and is not tolerated. You are welcome (and encouraged) to discuss assignments, articles, etc. together with classmates, but you **must** write up your work **on your own**. Always keep a copy of your submitted work.

**Grading criteria**


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A 90-100%	B 80-89%	C 70-79%	D 60-69%	F Below 60%
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**Required text**

Mithun, Marianne. 1999. *The Languages of Native North America*. Cambridge University Press.

**Additional required readings**

- Required article readings listed on the schedule can be found on our course Moodle site (under the *Articles* folder in the central column of the main page).
- Additional readings may be circulated throughout the term. They will either be available for downloading on Moodle, or on reserve in the library.
- Make sure you have the assigned readings done BEFORE the relevant classes. Even if you do not understand all the material, it will be to your advantage to at least be familiar with the topic before we cover it in class.

**Other useful sources**

Sturtevant, William C. (series editor). *Handbook on Native American Indians*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution. Volumes 4-15, 17 are available for use in the Mansfield library.

Campbell, Lyle. 1997. *American Indian Languages: the historical linguistics of Native America*. New York: Oxford University Press. [This book is on reserve in the library but is restricted to library use only. Note that this resource is also available as an Electronic Book]

- There are numerous other sources cited in these books, as well as plenty of books, book series, journals, etc. which focus on Indigenous languages of North America (e.g., the *International Journal of American Linguistics* – electronic copies available via the UM library website <http://www.lib.umt.edu>, *University of British Columbia Working Papers in Linguistics* – a list of volume contents is available from their website <http://www.linguistics.ubc.ca/UBCWPL/> and I have several of these volumes). I will point you to any other relevant materials during the course but I also urge you to do your own searches. Julie Edwards (Associate Professor at the Mansfield Library) will be speaking to our class about library resources and developing effective searching skills.



## Library Reserves

- This course has a Library Course Reserves webpage. From the Mansfield library main page: [www.lib.umt.edu](http://www.lib.umt.edu), go to the Reserves tab, scroll down to LING 474 or LING 584 (both links go to the same page) and follow the link for a list of books on reserve for this course. Books on reserve are available from the Information Centre on the main floor of the library (Level 3).
- There is one copy of Mithun's *The Languages of Native North America* available on 24 hr checkout.
- A copy of Campbell's *American Indian Languages: the historical linguistics of Native America* is available for library use only; the library also has an electronic copy that you can connect to from the library website.

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## Course Policies and Procedures

- **Attendance:** You are expected to attend every class and be an active participant. If you miss a class, inform me by e-mail as early as possible. I also urge you to contact a classmate to catch up on what you missed. An attendance sign-in sheet will be circulated in each class. It is **your** responsibility to make sure that you sign the sheet so that you are registered as being in class.
  - **Respect:** Arrive to class on time. We will begin class promptly at 11:10am. You are responsible for all material covered, including announcements, questions/answers, etc., that may occur at the beginning of class. If you are late, please be courteous to your fellow classmates and me – avoid being disruptive. You can catch up on what you may have missed **after class**. If you anticipate being late to class regularly (e.g., due to a work schedule, a class on the other side of campus), contact me as soon as possible.
  - **Student Conduct Code:** You are expected to be familiar with the *University of Montana Student Conduct Code*. "Being a student at UM presupposes a commitment to the principles and policies embodied in this Code." The Conduct code is downloadable from the following website: [http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student\\_conduct.php](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php). You are also expected to be familiar with the University of Montana Academic Policies and Procedures: <http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default.html>.
  - **E-mail:** Throughout the semester, course information will be circulated by e-mail to your UM e-mail address. Make sure that you check that e-mail account often. **You are responsible for ensuring that you are able to receive any course information circulated by e-mail.** If you have any concerns, please speak to me.
  - **Course Accommodations Statement (DDS):** If you are a student with a disability who will require reasonable program modification in this course, please meet with Disability Services for Students in Lommasson 154 for assistance in developing a plan to address program modifications. If you are already working with Disability Services your responsibilities are to contact me to discuss reasonable modifications that may be necessary. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at <http://life.umt.edu/dss/>.
  - **Technical Requirements:** Using the Moodle learning environment requires your computer to be set up to view and download documents (.ppt, .doc, .pdf), webpages, etc. More information can be found on the UMOOnline Systems Requirements page: [http://umonline.umt.edu/tech\\_support/system\\_requirements.php](http://umonline.umt.edu/tech_support/system_requirements.php). Contact UMOOnline: 406-243-4999; [http://umonline.umt.edu/tech\\_support](http://umonline.umt.edu/tech_support) for assistance.
  - **Submitting assignments:** Assignments must be submitted as a **hard copy** at the **beginning of class on the day they are due** (see proposed schedule below). Assignments will be posted on our course Moodle site as both .doc and .pdf files. Download the .doc file, complete the assignment electronically and then submit a printed copy in class. If you have any formatting/font concerns, use the .pdf version of the assignment as reference; however, hand-written assignments will not be accepted. **Double-sided copies are strongly preferred where possible. IMPORTANT:** see section below on fonts. **REMINDER:** bring an extra copy of your assignment to class that you can refer to during in-class assignment review.
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## Fonts

- North American Indigenous Languages use several different orthographies, thus special fonts are needed to create and view some documents in this course. Whenever possible, I use **DoulosSIL** in this course, a free font available for both Mac and PC operating systems. You may want to use this font in your own work. The font can be downloaded from the following site:

[http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site\\_id=nrsi&item\\_id=DoulosSIL\\_download#1fd0063a](http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=nrsi&item_id=DoulosSIL_download#1fd0063a)

Instructions on how to download and install the fonts will vary depending on your computer and operating system. Some advice is available from the link below:

[http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site\\_id=nrsi&item\\_id=DecompressUtil](http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=nrsi&item_id=DecompressUtil)

For your reference, further information on phonetic fonts and the web can be found at the following sites:

<http://www.alanwood.net/unicode/>

<http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/wells/ipa-unicode.htm>

If you are having any trouble downloading fonts/viewing files, please ask!

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## Article summaries

- You are required to submit **three** article summaries over the course of the term. You can choose from the following five articles: *Koch & Matthewson 2009*, *Gillon 2009*, *Bar-el et al. 2004*, *Armoskaite 2010*, and *Matthewson 2006*.
- In your article summary you should identify the central research question/issue being addressed in the paper, the author's proposal(s), the arguments that the author presents in support of the proposal, and where appropriate, the implications of the proposal.
- Your summaries must be submitted as a **typed hard copy** at the beginning of class on the day they are scheduled to be discussed (see schedule below). **Hand-written copies are not permitted**. Your summaries can be a **maximum** of two pages, and must be double-spaced, 12-point font (use standard fonts: e.g., Times, Times New Roman, Arial), with 1-inch margins. Double-sided copies are strongly preferred where possible.

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## Research paper outline

- You are required to submit a one-page outline of your proposed research paper topic at the beginning of class on **Thursday October 24**. A list of references (other than those articles we have discussed in class) which you have consulted or plan to consult for your essay should be included. Further details will be available in our **in-class mini-workshop** on research papers and outlines.

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## Research paper

- Your research paper is expected to identify a central research question and to make an original contribution. In other words, your paper cannot be limited to a summary of the literature, but must make a proposal/claim with appropriate argumentation. You should consult materials other than just those we cover in class. Mithun has an extensive reference list, and you can also look at the references from other articles covered in class, do your own search through the literature, ask a fellow classmate, ask me, etc. Julie Edwards (Associate Professor at the Mansfield Library) will be speaking to our class on **Thursday October 10** about library resources and developing effective research skills.
  - A mini **in-class workshop** on writing research papers and giving presentations is scheduled for **Tuesday November 12** where further information about your research papers/presentations will be disseminated.
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**Research paper draft**

- You are required to write a 5-page draft of your research paper and take it to the Writing Center for feedback <http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter/>. This will involve booking an appointment at the Writing Center, which should be done in advance. This draft and review is a requirement of the course and will count towards 5% of your final grade. You will submit a form signed by a Writing Center tutor confirming your review appointment when you submit the revised version of your research paper to me.
- Jacob Hansen, Associate Director of the Writing Center will speak to our class on **Thursday September 5** about the Center will to provide some advice about writing which will be tailored to the requirements of our course.
- Please note that you are encouraged to visit the Writing Center for feedback on any of your work for this class or other classes!

**Research paper presentation**

- The last five classes of this course (November 21, 26, December 3, 5) are set aside for research paper presentations. You will be required to give a short presentation of your research (approx. 15 minutes). Your paper need not be in its final state for the presentation. The purpose of the presentation is not only to gain experience giving a presentation, but also to get feedback from your peers and me that you can incorporate into your paper.
- You are required to prepare a short **handout and/or powerpoint slides** and bring copies for the class.
- Respect your fellow students: you are expected to attend each presentation and to arrive to class on time; you will be asked to complete a peer feedback form for each of your classmates.
- A presentation schedule will be circulated later in the term (see also note above re: workshop)

**Proposed Schedule (subject to change)**

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Readings**	Notes***
1	Tues	Aug. 27	Course overview; Introduction		
	Thurs	Aug. 29	Introduction (cont'd); Language endangerment	Mithun Introduction; Goddard 2004; Krauss 2007	<b>Questionnaire due</b>
2	Tues	Sept. 3	Relations among languages	Ch. 6	
	Thurs	Sept. 5	<i>Guest talk</i> : Jacob Hansen (Writing Center)	Tough 2000	
3	Tues	Sept. 10	Phonetics and phonology	Ch. 1 (§1.1-1.6)	
	Thurs	Sept. 12	Orthographies, transcription conventions	Ch. 1 (§1.7); Hinton 2001	<b>Bring descriptive grammar to class</b>
4	Tues	Sept. 17	Morphology: roots, affixes, etc. Interlinearization	Ch. 2 (§2.1-2.3)	
	Thurs	Sept. 19	Morphology: lexical categories	Ch. 2 (§2.3) <b>Koch &amp; Matthewson 2009*</b>	Koch & Matthewson 2009 summaries due
5	Tues	Sept. 24	Categories: person, number, gender	Ch. 3 (§3.1-3.3)	
	Thurs	Sept. 26	Obviation	<i>TBA</i>	<b>Assignment 1 due</b>

6	Tues	Oct. 1	Categories: classifiers, manner, control	Ch. 3 (§3.4-3.6)	
	Thurs	Oct. 3	Categories: space Deixis in Salish	Ch. 3 (§3.7) <b>Gillon 2009*</b>	Gillon 2009 summaries due
7	Tues	Oct. 8	Categories: time, modality	Ch. 3 (§3.8-3.9)	
	Thurs	Oct. 10	<i>Mini-workshop</i> : Research papers and outlines <i>Guest talk</i> : Julie Edwards (Mansfield Library)		
8	Tues	Oct. 15	Tense in Ktunaxa Tense/Aspect in Cree	Laternus 2011 Wolvengrey 2006	
	Thurs	Oct. 17	Tense/Aspect/Modality in Salish	<b>Bar-el et al. 2004*</b>	Bar-el et al. 2004 article summaries due
9	Tues	Oct. 22	TBA	TBA	
	Thurs	Oct. 24	TBA	TBA	<b>Research paper outlines due</b>
10	Tues	Oct. 29	Syntax: predicates/arguments, word order	Ch. 4 (§4.1-4.2)	
	Thurs	Oct. 31	Syntax: grammatical relations, case Transitivity in Blackfoot	Ch. 4 (§4.3) <b>Armoskaite 2010*</b>	Armoskaite 2010 summaries due
11	Tues	Nov. 5	Semantics: transitivity, culmination and control in Salish		
	Thurs	Nov. 7	Semantics: presupposition in Salish	<b>Matthewson 2006*</b>	Matthewson 2006 summaries due
12	Tues	Nov. 12	<i>Mini-workshop</i> : Giving presentations and writing research papers		
	Thurs	Nov. 14	Language revitalization	Hinton 2011	<b>Assignment 2 due</b>
13	Tues	Nov. 19	<i>Guest talk</i> : Susan Penfield		
	Thurs	Nov. 21	Student presentations		Schedule TBA
14	Tues	Nov. 26	Student presentations		Schedule TBA
	Thurs	Nov. 28	<b>No class – Thanksgiving</b>		
15	Tues	Dec. 3	Student presentations		Schedule TBA
	Thurs	Dec. 5	Student presentations; Wrap-up		Schedule TBA

\* Articles for your article summaries must be chosen from the five **highlighted** articles in the *Readings* column.

\*\* “Ch.” refers to chapters/sections from *The Languages of Native North America* (Mithun); other listed readings are articles available for downloading from our course Moodle site.

\*\*\* You are only required to submit **three** article summaries over the course of the semester (see above)



## Required Readings

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- Armoskaite, Solveiga. 2010. On intrinsic transitivity of Blackfoot  $\sqrt{\text{verbs}}$ . *Proceedings of the 15<sup>th</sup> Workshop on Structure and Constituency in Languages of the Americas, University of British Columbia Working Papers in Linguistics Volume 29*, Beth Rogers and Anita Szakay (eds.). 60-69.
- Bar-el, Leora, Carrie Gillon, Peter Jacobs, Linda Watt and Martina Wiltschko. 2004. Subject clitics and their Effect on Temporal Interpretation: A Case Study of Skwxwú7mesh and Stó:lo Halq'eméylem. *University of Montana Occasional Papers in Linguistics No. 17: Studies in Salish Linguistics In Honor of M. Dale Kinkade*. Donna Gerdtz and Lisa Matthewson (eds.). University of Montana.
- Gillon, Carrie. 2009. Deictic Features: Evidence from Skwxwú7mesh. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 75: 1-27.
- Goddard, Ives. 2004. Endangered Knowledge: What we can learn from Native American Languages. *AnthroNotes* 25(2): 1-8.
- Hinton, Leanne. 2001. New Writing Systems. In Leanne Hinton and Kenneth Hale (eds.), *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice* Chapter 19. San Diego: Academic Press. 239-250.
- Hinton, Leanne. 2011. Revitalization of Endangered Languages. In Peter Austin and Julia Sallabank (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages* Chapter 15. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 291-311.
- Koch, Karsten and Lisa Matthewson. 2009. The lexical category debate in Salish and its relevance for Tagalog. *Theoretical Linguistics* 35: 125-137
- Krauss, Michael. 2007. Status of Native American Language Endangerment. In *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages*. Gina Cantoni (ed.). Northern Arizona University. 15-20
- Laternus, Rebecca. 2011. Future Expressions in Ktunaxa. *Papers of the 46<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Salish and Neighbouring Languages, University of British Columbia Working Papers in Linguistics Volume 30*, John Lyon and Joel Dunham (eds.). 157-163.
- Matthewson, Lisa. 2006. Presuppositions and Cross-Linguistic Variation. *Proceedings of the North East Linguistics Society* 36. GLSA: University of Massachusetts.
- Tough, Frank. 2000. Guide to Critical Reading: Analyzing Journal Articles. *Expressions in Canadian Native Studies*. Ron F. LaLiberte et al. (eds.) Saskatoon: University Extension Press. 553-556.
- Wolvengrey, Arok. 2006. Prospective Aspect in the Western Dialects of Cree. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 72(3): 397-407