LING 431: Investigations into an Unfamiliar Language

Instructor: Adam McCollum
Class Meetings: Monday & Thursday 8:10-9:30
Classroom: https://rutgers.zoom.us/j/91427706479?pwd=T0tNeER3aFpDQmNMYVZtbGtBTk5LZz09

Office Hours: Monday 12-1:00, Thursday 12-1:00 or by appointment
Zoom Personal Meeting Room: https://rutgers.zoom.us/my/agm132
Physical office: 18 Seminary Place, Room 303
      To find the department (https://goo.gl/maps/SgSkvjBTp2hEvgYv8)
      To find my office once you get to the department, just find some stairs and start going up. When you develop a nosebleed you know you're close.

Email: adam.mccollum@rutgers.edu
Website: canvas.rutgers.edu

This course will be meeting on Zoom throughout the term. Due to the interactive nature of this class, we will be meeting synchronously on Mondays and Thursdays from 8:10-9:30. That being said, all class sessions will be recorded and available if you cannot make it to class.

A few comments:

- Our class meetings will happen on Zoom. The Zoom link for class is:
  https://rutgers.zoom.us/j/91427706479?pwd=T0tNeER3aFpDQmNMYVZtbGtBTk5LZz09

- Office hours will also be held over Zoom. The link to my virtual office hours is different:
  https://rutgers.zoom.us/my/agm132

- We will be using breakout rooms in Zoom to do some of our group work during the term. If you have questions about these, let me know.
  - Youtube video on breakout rooms: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbPpdyn16sY
  - https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115005769646-Participating-in-breakout-rooms

- If you'd like to maintain a bit more privacy, you may want to use a virtual background. Here is a link explaining how to do this (whether you want to use one of Zoom's backgrounds, or upload one of your own): https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/210707503-Virtual-Background

- If you have any financial concerns and/or issues with internet or technology support (including devices such as ipads or laptops), you should contact the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu.

In most other linguistics courses, you are presented data from some language(s) and asked to analyze some aspect of it. In this course, however, it is our collaborative task to collect, organize, analyze, and store data from a language that none of us know. This task is traditionally associated with travel to some distant locale, often called 'fieldwork.' Our field site is here at Rutgers, which allows us to explore linguistic field methods without some of the issues that plague the fieldworker (e.g. malaria, dietary issues, etc). Our investigation is thus a shared journey of discovery in partnership with a native speaker, who will lead us into the beauty of their language as we learn about its phonetics and phonology, morphology and syntax, and discourse structure.

Learning outcomes:
1. Discover the structure of an unfamiliar language through interaction with a native speaker
2. Develop the skills and sensibilities of a fieldworker
   2.1 Skills
       2.1.1 Engage language holistically. You're no longer looking at just the syntax of relative clauses, or the phonology of stop consonants, but rather the whole kit and caboodle.
       2.1.2 Develop skills in the linguistic software application ELAN, which is useful for fieldwork
       2.1.3 Learn how to plan for, execute, and critique data collection
       2.1.4 Collaboratively manage a diverse array of data to create a single corpus
   2.2 Sensibilities
       2.2.1 Grow your awareness and appreciation of linguistic diversity
       2.2.2 Contextualize language within culture
       2.2.3 Understand the ethical issues related to fieldwork
3. Sharpen analytical skills developed in previous linguistics courses through analysis of primary data

Resources:
- There is no textbook for this course. There will be occasional assigned readings, but they are available on the course website.
  - There are a handful of books that could come in handy throughout the term. If you're struggling, or alternatively, if you're loving the content so much you can't get enough, here are some recommendations for outside reading:

    - Claire Bowern's textbook, *Linguistic Fieldwork: A Practical Guide*
      https://www.amazon.com/Linguistic-Fieldwork-Practical-Claire-Bowern/dp/0230545378/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=claire+bowern&qid=1597078825&sr=8-1

    - Chelliah & de Reuse's Handbook of Descriptive Linguistic Fieldwork
      https://www.amazon.com/Handbook-Descriptive-Linguistic-Fieldwork-Shobhana/dp/9048190258/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=chelliah+de+reuse&qid=1597324662&sr=8-1

    - Paul Newman & Martha Ratliff's Linguistic Fieldwork
      https://www.amazon.com/Linguistic-Fieldwork-Paul-

Newman/dp/0521660491/ref=sr_1_9?dchild=1&keywords=linguistic+fieldwork&qid=1597324831&sr=8-9

- Peter Ladefoged's Phonetic Data Analysis: An Introduction to Fieldwork and Instrumental Techniques
https://www.amazon.com/Phonetic-Data-Analysis-Introduction-Instrumental/dp/0631232702/ref=sr_1_23?dchild=1&keywords=linguistic+fieldwork&qid=1597324970&sr=8-23

- Thomas Payne's Describing Morphosyntax: A Guide for Field Linguists
https://www.amazon.com/Describing-Morphosyntax-Guide-Field-Linguists/dp/0521588057/ref=sr_1_36?dchild=1&keywords=linguistic+fieldwork&qid=1597324882&sr=8-36

- *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Fieldwork*
https://www.amazon.com/58f8026f-0658-47d0-9752-f6fa2c69b2e2/qualify?ref_=us_lt35_ilm_na&pd_rd_w=VMCJF&pf_rd_p=66bb825a-6a4a-4f9c-934b-2d649645de16&pf_rd_r=FNZAGE2F8CEG5C7HCAVQ&pd_rd_r=9c889289-2b02-4031-ba2d-5e719a6e49f5&pd_rd_wg=4r2f9

- o Here is an interesting Youtube video that illustrates some of the joys and challenges of fieldwork, especially more culturally-contextualized fieldwork.
    - Monolingual Fieldwork demonstration by Daniel Everett:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYpWp7g7XWU

- We will be using one software application throughout the course, ELAN, as well as a little corpus builder and interface, Kwaras.
  - o ELAN: https://archive.mpi.nl/tla/elan/download
    - Please download version 5.9
  - o Kwaras: You do not need to download anything to use Kwaras, although here is the GitHub (https://github.com/ucsd-field-lab/kwaras) and some other information on Kwaras (https://sites.google.com/view/gcaballero/kwaras)

- We will use Canvas for this course. There you'll find this syllabus, updates and announcements, lecture notes and slides, helpful links and further readings, daily quizzes, instructions for written assignments, and so on. If you have a content-related question, it is often beneficial to post it there so everyone can benefit from our virtual interaction.

- Attending office hours is not mandatory, but is strongly recommended and encouraged.
  - o The point of office hours is to get further clarification on course material or to discuss other matters pertaining to the course. If you don't understand something, if you have an idea, if you disagree with or are intrigued by something I've said or that you've read — come talk to me! I have set time aside to meet with you; you are not interrupting when you come to see me during those times.
  - o It may feel unnecessary (at best) or scary (at worst) to come talk to me during office hours. Please try to overcome these feelings and give it a chance! You'll be glad you did.

Requirements:

- Regular attendance is extremely important. There are two obligatory sessions of 80 minutes each per week. I expect that you won't miss class unless you have an exceptionally good reason.
    - There's nothing like missing a class to make you feel lost, confused, and out of it. Not only do you miss the material, but you get less out of the next class too, sometimes leading to a downward spiral.
    - Coming to class will make your life easier and happier: the material makes more sense, assignments and in-class work are easier, etc. If you miss class, it hurts your learning and your grade.
    - If you have to miss a class for any reason, please don't ask me what you missed. Find out what happened in class from the course website or from a classmate, look the material over carefully, and only then come to me with any specific remaining questions you may have.
    - If you anticipate that you will be absent for whatever reason, particularly religious or medical reasons or for an emergency, you must notify me in writing as soon as possible AND report your absence via this link https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/
        - You will still be responsible for the readings for that day.
        - Any unexcused absences will result in a 0 for in-class assignments missed.

- Participation is important! Speak up, ask questions, confirm your understanding — but remember to give others a chance to do the same. In principle, each one of you deserves no more and no less than an equal share of time and attention. Take advantage of this, but try also not to abuse it.

- Since this course really depends on interaction with a speaker of another language, it is imperative that we practice courteous interactions with the speaker and with one another. I will take the lead during early elicitation sessions, but will begin transferring responsibility to you throughout the course. By the end of the term, you will complete a group assignment without significant assistance from me.

Evaluations and Assessments:

Regular meetings with me	5%
Proficiency in ELAN and Kwaras	5%
Contribution to class project	10%
Quizzes	10%
Written assignments	30%
Group project	40%

      Composed of:

Plan	5%
In-class elicitation	5%
Additional elicitation	5%
Final write-up	20%
Reflection	5%

- Regular meetings with me (5%):
  - This course is much more applied than most other courses in the department. Further, finding our way to accurate generalizations about the language under study will often be a slow, messy process. I believe it's important to make sure we're all working through this awesome experience together, and that no one has been left behind. To help me keep track of this, I'll be setting up small group meetings every other week or so. I'll be meeting with small groups (sign up for the time that works best for you). These meetings are not to quiz you, but rather to give you a chance to rejoice, vent, disagree with me, and generally express how you're doing, what you like, and what you don't like about class. If there are things that are difficult or frustrating, I can't guarantee that I can change them (e.g. if you can't hear the difference between two sounds, there is only so much I can do to help), but if there are things I can do, please let me know.

- Proficiency in ELAN and Kwaras (5%)
  - One important part of contemporary fieldwork and language documentation is proficiency in the software and technologies that have are useful for this sort of work. To help you get started in these, and to prepare you for our class project, you'll need to demonstrate that you can properly segment audio data in ELAN and use Kwaras to search and manage our corpus of data. This assignment will be given in the first week or two of class, as you'll need to master these skills fairly quickly so you can use them throughout the semester. I will devote in-class time to this, as well as provide you with a video tutorial.

- Quizzes (10%):
  - You will take at least two short quizzes each week. These will only involve a few questions. These will give me a chance to assess how well you're progressing as a fieldworker and analyst, and will give you an opportunity to ask for review or clarification of any topics you're struggling to understand. *If reading has been assigned, expect material from the reading to show up on your next quiz.* Quizzes are due before the next class meeting. I will drop each person's lowest grade.

- Contribution to class project (10%)
  - Throughout the term we will be developing a dictionary and database of the language. Each elicitation session will be recorded, and one person will be responsible for segmenting, transcribing, and uploading data from the day's session to our shared project. I will do the first day's work to give you an idea of what I'm looking for. I anticipate that each person will have one day's data to work on. If this feels overwhelming, it's more manageable than you think, and will really help you get acquainted with the language. I'll share details and the workflow for doing this later.

- Written assignments (30%):
  - There will be three homework assignments during the course. These will be descriptions of some portion of the language's grammar. In general, there will be one write-up for the phonetics and phonology, one for the morphology, and one for the syntax of the language. *These are not group projects and should be completed on your own. If you need help, you should come to me.*

  - Each person will pick a topic they're interested in based on where we are as a class. Each student should write about a different topic. As an example, after working on the language's syntax for a while, one person may write about how the language negates clauses, while another writes about how the language asks yes/no questions, while still another writes on relative clauses in the language. The most important part of these write-ups will be your use of the data we collect in class. Almost every paper in linguistics hinges upon data. The way that data is presented and describes forms an integral part to linguistic analysis. You will need to draw numerous examples from elicitation and synthesize them into a coherent description of some element of the language's grammar.

- Group project (40%)
  - You will be part of a group (3-4 students to a group), and will collect data on a specific aspect of the language that you're interested in. The data collected (both during one regular class meeting, and time outside of class arranged with the speaker) will then be used to write up a final paper. Like your written assignments throughout the term, it will be most important to present and explain the data you've collected, turning it into a (hopefully) coherent picture of some part of the language's grammar.
  - Your group project has five components:
    - Plan (5%): Your group will need to meet with me to discuss what you want to work on, and how you want to collect data.
    - In-class elicitation (5%): Your group will lead data collection during part of one of our class sessions.
    - Additional, outside-of-class elicitation (5%): You'll arrange to meet with the speaker at some other time to collect more data for use in your project.
    - Paper (20%)
    - Final reflection (5%): This is supposed to be a short (probably 1½ - 3 pages single spaced) reflection on your project but also our general class project on the language. What have you learned? What was really fun? What was really challenging? These are the sorts of questions that you can address in this paper.

- **Extra credit:** You have the opportunity to raise your final grade by up to 2 points through experimental participation.
  - Some faculty and graduate students in the Department of Linguistics do experimental research on language. This research depends on the participation of undergraduate participants.
  - You have the option of participating in Linguistics experiments during the semester. Each experiment usually takes between 20 and 45 minutes.
  - You will get **1 point credit for every half hour** of experimental participation. It does not matter what subfield of Linguistics this experiment is in, but it must be in Linguistics.

- o Experiments are offered through the Linguistics department experiment management system (sona): http://rutgerslinguistics.sona-systems.com/ . Towards the beginning of the semester, your name and email will be added to the experiment system. You will be issued an anonymous id to participate in experiments through this system. Once Linguistics experiments are posted, you can sign up online. Note that this system is different from the psychology pool, and you should not use a psychology ID to log in to the system.
- o Any student enrolled in a Linguistics undergraduate course is eligible to participate in Linguistics experiments, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, language status, or impairments, disorders, or disabilities (as long as his/her instructor provides the opportunity). You cannot be denied participation for any of these reasons.
- o You have the right to not participate in experiments to earn extra credit. You may speak with me about possible research alternatives, such as reading a pre-approved scholarly article in linguistics and writing a 2-page paper summarizing it.
- o If you are taking multiple Linguistics courses that allow for experimental participation to count towards extra credit, you are responsible for making sure you have assigned the credit correctly through the experiment system online. This is not your instructor's, the experimenter's or the experiment system administrator's job!
- o If you sign up for, but fail to show up for, two or more experiments, you may be barred from further participation and restricted to research alternatives as described above, so please note the time and location of your experiments, and take your schedule and transportation time into account. Many experiments have restrictions on how late you may cancel online.

Grading policy:
- The following is the percentage-to-letter-grade system I will employ for this course.

90.0-100	A	75.0-79.9	C+
85.0-89.9	B+	70.0-74.9	C
80.0-84.9	B	60.0-69.9	D
		Below 60	F

- Your level of engagement and participation in the course will be taken into account when grades fall in a gray area; these considerations may nudge a borderline course grade up or down. So, if only for the sake of your course grade, you are strongly encouraged to attend and to participate in class.

Review & grade correction policy:
- We all make mistakes. I make lots of them. So, please take the time to look over your graded work carefully as soon as possible after it is shared with you. In addition to helping ensure that you get the credit you deserve, this checking will improve your retention of the material. However, there is a statute of limitations: all suspected issues with a graded assignment must be brought to my attention **within one week** of the grade for the assignment having been shared with you.
- Note that by asking for any of your work to be re-reviewed and re-graded, you assume a risk: that I will notice a problem that had not been noticed before and that I may actually end up giving you a lower grade than you were originally awarded. So while I encourage you to bring any necessary

issues to my attention, for your own sake you should do so only when you're fairly confident that you really did receive less credit than you deserved. (For example, you may want to compare your work and your grade with those of one or more of your classmates first.)

General ground rules:
- We should all strive to abide by the Golden Rule, "treat others like you wanted to be treated."
- *The classroom is a place for learning, exploration, and discovery. It is not primarily a place to feed the ego, make a name for yourself, or construct an identity. You are more than the grades on your transcript. Your identity is not on the line in this class. That means you have the freedom to forget yourself and engage the material. You have the freedom to try hard, to discover, to struggle, to be wrong, and to be frustrated.*
    - Some issues in this course could seem controversial to you, or perhaps difficult to reconcile with your experience and ideas. You should feel free to question any claims made in class or in the readings, or to make claims of your own, but if you do, please be civil and be prepared to support your opinion.

- **Communications policy**. All communications must be courteous and respectful. I'm happy to take time to help you with anything related to the course, but only if you are polite with your requests for that time and acknowledge it with a simple thank-you. (There are lots of "how to write an email" things out there; here's a good one: http://phdcomics.com/comics.php?f=1795
    - Even if you communicate with me properly, please don't expect to receive a reply to any email outside normal working hours (M–F, approximately 8–4) or within 24 hours of sending your email.
    - I do not send you quizzes at 7 pm and expect you to turn them in by midnight, so please do not expect the same of me. I will do my best to reply to emails and canvas postings promptly, but know that just as you have more going on in your life than this particular course, so do I.

- **Late work policy.** During the course you may submit **one** assignment late without penalty. If you need an extension, you must notify me **at least 24 hours before the assignment is due**. Additionally, I will ask you to give me a modified date and time for your assignment.
    - Otherwise, all late assignments will be penalized according to how late the assignment is submitted. Concretely, turning in your assignment a day late would be much better than turning it in a week late. Relatedly, it is always better to submit a late assignment than to take a 0 for not submitting anything at all.
    - If you are absent without an excuse, you will get a 0 for all in-class assignments missed.

- **Academic integrity** policy. You are expected to know and follow the Rutgers University policy on Academic Integrity: https://nbprovost.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-students
    - Cheating, plagiarizing, presenting someone else's work as your own, and not properly acknowledging another student's contribution will not be tolerated. Nor will sharing the content of this course's assignments outside of the class.
    - All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs.
    - As defined by the University, plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both

direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Some common examples of plagiarism are:

- Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution.
- Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one's own words another person's written words or ideas as if they were one's own.
- Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.
- Incorporating into one's work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources without proper attribution

  o As another example, it is unacceptable to work on a written assignment as a group by creating a google document where you share parts of the writeup.

- **Collaboration policy**. You are welcome — in fact, you are encouraged — to discuss what we're learning in class with your fellow students. Find a study buddy, or (better) form a study group. So long as you are abiding by the academic integrity policy above, all is well.

- **Electronic device policy**. You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet during class for the express purposes of (a) taking course-content-related notes, or (b) for occasionally looking up course-content-related material on the web. You are not welcome to use any other kind of electronic device in class (especially a smartphone), nor are you welcome to use a laptop or tablet in class for some reason other than (a) or (b). Such other uses are a distraction to you and to your fellow classmates. Any abuse of this policy will result in the revocation of this privilege, for yourself and possibly for the entire class.

  o All research on the subject seems to show that (i) humans think we're good at multi-tasking, and (ii) humans are bad at multi-tasking. Your phone and social media can wait until after class.

  o Research also shows that taking notes by hand helps you to learn better, even putting aside the fact that devices tempt us with distractions. Unless you need to take notes on a device, try it by hand.

- **Disability access**. Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs.

  o In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines.

  o If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form (https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration).

  o Full disability policies and procedures are at https://ods.rutgers.edu/

  o Contact information: (848) 445-6800

    - Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854

- **Title IX statement**. Rutgers faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. Rutgers has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The University strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the University. Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to Policy 10.3.12) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, relationship violence, stalking or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the University's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of resources in Appendix A to University Policy 10.3.12. For more information about your options at Rutgers, please visit endsexualviolence.rutgers.edu.

- **Student-Wellness Services:**
  Just In Case Web App
  http://codu.co/cee05e

    Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD

- **Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS):** (848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/ http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/
  - o CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

- **Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA) :** (848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.vpva.rutgers.edu/
  - o The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

- **Scarlet Listeners:** (732) 247-5555 www.scarletlisteners.com

    Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

https://rutgers.campuslabs.com/engage/account/create?returnUrl=/organization/scarletlisteners

https://www.facebook.com/scarletlisteners/

Course schedule:

Day	Date	Topic	Reading (due the following class)	Assignment
Thurs	9/3	Syllabus and introduction	Newman & Ratliff 2012 ch. 1 (Hyman)	
Tues	9/8	Big picture issues; Phonetics and phonology	Newman & Ratliff 2012 ch. 9 (McLaughlin & Sall)	
Thurs	9/10	Ethics; phonetics		
Mon	9/14	ELAN & Kwaras; phonetics	Bowern 2008 ch. 3	ELAN & Kwaras assignment
Thurs	9/17	Elicitation: Word list		
Mon	9/21			ELAN & Kwaras assignment due
Thurs	9/24			
Mon	9/28		Bowern 2008 ch. 6	
Thurs	10/1	Morphology lecture		
Mon	10/5	Elicitation: Phrases and sentences		
Thurs	10/8			
Mon	10/12			Deadline to sign up for a topic for Assignment 1
Thurs	10/15		Bowern 2008 ch. 7	
Mon	10/19	Syntax lecture		Assignment 1 due
Thurs	10/22	Elicitation: More sentences		
Mon	10/26			
Thurs	10/29		Bowern 2008 ch. 9	Deadline to sign up for a topic for Assignment 2
Mon	11/2	Discourse and pragmatics lecture		
Thurs	11/5	Elicitation: Narrative		Assignment 2 due
Mon	11/9			
Thurs	11/12			
Mon	11/16		Chelliah & de Reuse 2011 ch. 8	Deadline to sign up for a topic for assignment 3
Thurs	11/19	Elicitation for group projects		
Mon	11/23			Assignment 3 due
Mon	11/30	TBD		
Thurs	12/3	TBD		
Mon	12/7	TBD		
Thurs	12/10	Final class meeting		
Mon	12/14			Final papers due at noon
Mon	12/21			Reflections due at noon