

**SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**PRINCIPLES OF SPANISH LINGUISTICS**

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Office hours: Monday 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This class involves a study of the science of language. Language is one of our most distinctive characteristics as humans, and it is also one of the most frequently misunderstood. The of this class is to take a look at the objective facts about human language. Except in case of severe brain damage, speaking a language is something that seems effortless and intuitive for all adults. Similarly, any child can learn to speak any human language if (s)he is exposed to that language from an early age, with almost no explicit teaching. And yet a close look at any human language shows that it is an extremely sophisticated system. This suggests that there is something special about the human mind that enables it to learn and use language. Linguistics is a science which aims to discover how human languages work, and what it is about humans that makes them able to learn and use language. The study of linguistic knowledge is divided into several areas: the study of sounds and their patterns (Phonetics and Phonology), words (Morphology), sentences (Syntax) and meanings (Semantics). Linguistics also study how linguistic knowledge is applied in social situations in different cultures (Sociolinguistics), how people learn languages (Language Acquisition), and how language is processed in the human brain (Neurolinguistics). We will be covering all these areas in the course. Prerequisite: SPN 361, 368, or the consent of the Coordinator or Chair. Credit 3.

**GOALS OF THE COURSE:**

The study of linguistic knowledge is divided into several areas: the study of sounds and their patterns (Phonetics and Phonology), words (Morphology), sentences (Syntax) and meanings (Semantics). Linguistics also study how linguistic knowledge is applied in social situations in different cultures (Sociolinguistics), how people learn languages (Language Acquisition), and how language is processed in the human brain (Neurolinguistics). The student will be able to understand these areas at the completion of the course. The questions that we will be concerned with include: What are the units of human languages? What is it about humans that gives us this special ability to master language? What are some of the properties that are common to all human languages? What is the difference between formal written 'standard' English and colloquial forms of the language? How do children learn language? and What circumstances lead to language disorders?

By the end of the course the students will:

1. recognize and analyze the phonetic and phonological systems of Spanish and be able to transcribe phonetically and phonemically.

2. understand the process of word formation and its function into bigger units such as the sentence and the discourse.
3. develop their abilities in Spanish after analyzing in depth syntactic structures and types of sentences.
4. distinguish semantic relations between sentences and discourses.
5. understand the concept of synchronic and diachronic variation in Spanish and recognize each Spanish dialect.

## **ESSENTIAL COURSE (IDEA) OBJECTIVE**

*GAINING FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE (TERMINOLOGY, CLASSIFICATIONS, METHODS, TRENDS)*

## **IMPORTANT COURSE (IDEA) OBJECTIVES**

LEARNING FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES, GENERALIZATIONS, OR THEORIES

DEVELOPING SPECIFIC SKILLS, COMPETENCIES, AND POINTS OF VIEW NEEDED BY PROFESSIONALS IN THE FIELD MOST CLOSELY RELATED TO THIS COURSE

## **COURSES MATERIALS:**

Milton Azevedo. 2009. Introducción a la lingüística española. Upper Saddle River: Pearson. THIRD EDITION

In addition, we will make extensive use of on-line materials.

## **COMPUTATION OF YOUR GRADE:**

4 Tests: 40%  
Midterm Exam 20%  
Final Exam: 20%  
Assignments: 10%  
Actividades (Discussions): 10%

## **ACTIVIDAD (DISCUSSIONS):**

There are regular Actividad exercises for this course. All Actividades are graded on a Check/Check-minus basis. However, you should take these exercises seriously, as they will prepare you for the Assignments, as well as the Tests and Exams in the course. They are worth 10% of your grade. **All actividades must be done in the DISCUSSION section as indicated in the COURSE SCHEDULE.**

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

There are regular homework Assignments for this course. All Assignments are graded on a Check/Check-minus basis. However, you should take the homework Assignments seriously, as they will prepare you for the Tests and Exams in the

course. They are worth 10% of your grade. **All assignments are due as indicated in the COURSE SCHEDULE.** Your answers must be submitted in Microsoft Word format through the DROPBOX system. Answers will be posted soon after. You should check your answers with the ones that I will provide for you.

### **TESTS & FINAL EXAM:**

There will be four tests, spaced roughly at the end of the major areas of linguistics, a midterm and a finalexam. The tests and the exam will all be cumulative. These are worth a total of 80% of your grade. The tests and exams will be based on class lectures and notes, homework assignments, and readings. More specific guidelines will be given in class, but you should know that it is not enough to simply memorize facts from the textbook. **All tests and exams are due as indicated in the COURSE SCHEDULE.** Your answers must be submitted in Microsoft Word format and must be done through the DROPBOX system.

### **COLLABORATION:**

You can learn a lot from working through problems with others, and for this reason collaboration on homework assignments is encouraged in this class. But, collaboration can only work if you do so responsibly, and follow acceptable practices of academic honesty. If you work in a group, you should do the following: (1) write up your assignment by yourself, even if you have worked on it as part of a group; and (2) if you work as part of a group, you must write this at the top of your assignment, and give the names of the people you worked with.

### **PARTICIPATION:**

You will get far more out of this course, both in terms of learning and grades, if you participate actively in the course. If you actively think and talk about the topics covered in the course your chance of remembering and understanding is greatly increased. The participation component of the course grade is an opportunity to receive credit for taking this initiative in your learning. It is not a stick to beat you with for not showing up at class, nor is it automatic credit. Active participation involves: (1) attending classes and the discussion section that you are registered for; (2) reading and thinking about assigned readings before the class in which they are discussed; and (3) coming to discussion sections prepared to ask questions, contribute ideas, and listen to other students ideas

## **GENERAL COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES AND DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES POLICIES**

### **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the University. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with

disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. The students should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until the student registers with the counseling Center.

### **VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.

### **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

### **COURSE RULES OF CONDUCT**

Please refer to: [http://www.shsu.edu/students/StudentGuidelines2007\\_2008.pdf](http://www.shsu.edu/students/StudentGuidelines2007_2008.pdf)

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Please refer to Academic Policy Statement 810213.

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is

above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of f resource materials.

YOUR ENROLLMENT IN THIS CLASS CONSTITUTES YOUR LEGAL AND MORAL OBLIGATION TO THE HONORCODE. Because this course is a listening, speaking, reading, and writing one, I encourage you to work together. HOWEVER, plagiarism--copying others' work with out crediting them for it--is legally and ethically unacceptable--AND GROUNDS FOR FAILURE, NOT JUST IN THE ASSIGNMENT, BUT IN THE CLASS. Paraphrases, as well quotes, must be documented. See the article, Plagiarism, posted in documents in Blackboard.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

This is an UNIVERSITY-LEVEL ACADEMIC COURSE WITH APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS. You earn your grade on that basis. You do not receive university credit for "ethnic consciousness" or language ability per se. Academic credit is based upon your intellectual and academic efforts, willingness and ability to reflect upon and respond to requirements of the class.

## **INTERACTION**

RESPECT FOR OTHERS' VIEWS AND SPACE, not necessarily in agreement with one's own, is required on the part of every participant, including what is expressed, shared, etc., in the course of class interaction.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS IN GENERAL, particularly in the case of disagreement about class management issues, is required on the part of every participant. Presentation style is important. Treat others as you would have them treat you!

## **PERFORMANCE CONCERNS**

Faculty are committed to facilitating each student's performance. Students must be committed to maximizing their own performance.

This is a dual responsibility.

Please evaluate your personal class progress at least weekly, beginning at the first of the semester, and particularly after your first grade. Take responsibility and action right away! Do not wait until mid-semester and certainly do not wait until late in the semester to act on your concerns.

If you are concerned about your progress, please follow this chronological format:

1. Are you personally spending (minimum) equal time in outside-class preparation as you spend in the classroom itself? (Very many students need more preparation time for language acquisition classes; you may personally need more and you may need study-strategy assistance! Ask for help!)

2. Have you contacted the SAM Center about study-skills suggestions/workshops in general?
3. Are you following the suggested syllabus scenarios to incorporate the target language into your life and maximize your experience?
4. Have you contacted your professor via personal appointment to discuss specific actions which will help you improve your performance?
5. Have you arranged study sessions with other students in the class?
6. Have you contacted the Writing Center and scheduled personal tutoring (free)?

## **GENERAL STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL MATERIAL, in books, presented in class, etc., whether you are listening or not.

YOU ARE PERSONALLY & SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR ACTIVITIES (ASKING QUESTIONS OR DOING HOMEWORK) IN ORDER TO MEET YOUR PERSONAL EXPECTATIONS AND DESIRE FOR SUCCESS/GRADE. Probable daily time needed for homework outside class will be a minimum of one to two hours per hour spent in class (3-6 hours per week). "Homework" is largely left to your discretion--you must assess how well you understand and how much practice, reading or written work outside of class you need. You are responsible for anything and everything in the syllabus, book or said in class. You are expected to highlight reading and take notes in class. You are expected to keep in contact with the professor and other students as personally needed.

## **GENERAL FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

I INTEND TO BE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS, ADVISE, ETC., DURING AND OUTSIDE OF CLASS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE but please set prior appointment times via email. Please also either honor your appointment or call to cancel. I will afford you the same courtesy if I have an unavoidable conflict.

Email is always better than telephoning.

I INTEND TO RETURN ASSIGNMENTS WITH COMMENTARY AND/OR GRADES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, usually within a week.

## **INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS**

Students will be asked to complete an anonymous formal course/instructor evaluation form towards the end of the semester. Students are encouraged to "buddy" with other students to get class notes/assignments. Always refer to your syllabus.. It is the student's responsibility to request and turn in make-up work, which normally must be completed within one week after returning. Permitting make-up work, granting full or partial credit, etc. are at the discretion of the professor according to university guidelines.

## **DEADLINES**

Syllabus assignments will be performed or handed in at the corresponding class. Daily grades will be assigned at the professor's discretion. In case of serious illness

or death in the family, advance or concurrent notice of your absence is required. Call or email and leave a message and, if possible, send your corresponding assignment with another student.

NO LATE PAPERS OR EXAMS WITHOUT WRITTEN EXCUSE (DOCTOR, HOUSEMOTHER, MORTICIAN, ETC.) AND USUALLY MUST BE MADE UP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER ABSENCE.