INTRODUCTION TO THE SYLLABUS. The course that this syllabus accompanies was taught at a large public university in England in a department which offers BA degrees in Linguistics and in English Language. The course was offered as an elective to first- and second-year undergraduate students specializing in either subject. It attracted 100–120 students each time it ran, of whom approximately 75% were in their first year.

The course ran for twelve weeks, with weekly 50-minute lectures and fortnightly 50-minute small-group discussion sections. All told, there were about eighteen hours of class time associated with this course.

Learning outcomes for the course were as follows:

1. Students will become keen observers and analysts of the structure and use of the names and the language that they encounter in daily life.
2. Students will gain familiarity with specific concepts from phonetics, phonology, morphology, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics.
3. Students will become comfortable analyzing linguistic data.
4. Students will become comfortable analyzing and interpreting quantitative data.

End-of-semester anonymous course evaluations indicated that the course was successful, with an average of 95% of students across three years of teaching responding "Agree" or "Mostly agree" to the statement "Overall, I would rate this [course] as being excellent." The success of the course was also evident in the number of students who went on to continue their study of names through independent research projects: every year the course was taught, at least one final-year BA thesis or class research project would expand on a topic from the course. These student research projects included a survey-based study of whether baby name choice correlates with education level among English mothers, an experiment into people's judgments of the gender of nonce names, and a study of how speakers from different backgrounds socially evaluate traditional vs. novel names. Finally, freeform student comments such as the following indicated that the learning objectives (LOs) were met:

- "It is a fascinating subject that made me think more about everyday names that surround us." "The content of the course is very interesting and practical. I mean I really appreciate that university can provide such a funny course with insight into daily life. It not only teaches us important knowledge related to academic theories, but also help[s] us to develop our ability to find the beauty and interest [in] life." (LO 1)

- "This course has given us a nice intro to working with data, manipulating statistics and analysing language on a small scale. The lectures have encompassed many areas of linguistics (e.g. phonetics) and ha[ve] helped me to consolidate the things we have been learning outside of this class [i.e., in other linguistics courses]." (LOs 2, 3, 4)
- "I feel I have learnt more practical skills from this class than any other — I feel like I am a bit better a linguist now tha[n] I would have been without." "I have learnt new skills to do with data analysis, as well as skills with [E]xcel." (LOs 3, 4)
- "[It has] helped me with doing hands-on lingu[i]stic analysis." (LO 3)
- "I think that the opportunities to become more famil[iar] with Excel were fantastic, especially since English Language students wouldn't have necessarily had previous experience with this." (LO 4)

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The Linguistics of Names
Course Information and Syllabus

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Overview

This course is intended as a general introduction to linguistic analysis through the study of personal, product, and place names. Throughout the course, we will use linguistic data to assess whether names constitute a special component of language, or whether they behave linguistically like non-name words. Topics to be covered include trends in naming and their connection to the diffusion of linguistic innovations, the phonological processes involved in nickname formation, sound symbolism (the association of sound with meaning), place names and their connection to settlement history, sociodemographic correlates of name choice, and names and the mind/brain. Students will gain hands-on experience working with linguistic data as they analyze patterns in names.

Assignments & grades

The final grade will be based on the following components:

- Five **homework assignments,** worth 10% each. Homeworks will frequently employ inquiry-based learning: that is, they will require students to carry out a miniature study of novel data and relate their findings to concepts presented in lecture.
- A **final exam,** lasting 1.5 hours during the exam period, worth 50%.

Syllabus

Week 1	
Lecture 1	Introduction, overview. What will we be studying? How will we be studying it? Reasons to believe names may (not) be a special component of language.

Week 2	
Lecture 2	Describing vowels, consonants, and syllables. Name bingo.
Discussion 1	Name blends (Sample Assignment 1).

Week 3	
Lecture 3	Names & sound symbolism.
Homework 1	Benedict Cumberbatch parody names (Sample Assignment 2).

Week 4	
Lecture 4	Rhythm & prosody in naming.
Discussion 2	Rhythm & prosody in naming in the Facebook corpus.[1]

Week 5	
Lecture 5	Nickname formation: Truncation and affixation.
Homework 2	Dutch nickname formation (Sample Assignment 4).

Week 6	
Lecture 6	Nickname formation, continued: Reduplication.

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[1]This exercise has not been provided in the Supplementary Material because it was based on data that is not available for public circulation.

Discussion 3	Nicknames & child language (Sample Assignment 5).

Week 7

Lecture 7	Names & morphology.
Homework 3	Zulu names and nouns (Sample Assignment 3).

Week 8

Lecture 8	Names & morphology, continued: Morphology/phonology mismatches.
Discussion 4	Place names & settlement history.

Week 9

Lecture 9	Psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, & names.
Homework 4	Replicate a psycholinguistics experiment.

Week 10

Lecture 10	Names & gender.
Discussion 5	Names & gender over time (Sample Assignment 6).

Week 11

Lecture 11	Innovations, diachronic change, & names.
Homework 5	Exploring trends in baby name data (Sample Assignment 7).

Week 12

Lecture 12	Naming & identity. Sociodemographic correlates of names.
Discussion 6	Review for final exam.

Exam period

Final exam