

Supplement B: Syllabus for a phonetics course with skills grading—some information redacted

Rather than me going through the roster, then giving you time to introduce yourselves to each other, then going over the syllabus, I think it will be more efficient and less boring to do it all at once.

Your job: Tear off this front page, then work with two of your neighbors to fill it in (both sides—no need to turn it in). Meanwhile, I'll circulate and interrupt your group to meet you individually.

1. What are your two neighbors' names?
2. Find one thing you have in common with each of them (you're both from Oakland, you both have a younger brother in high school, your favorite sports team is the Raiders, your favorite language is Indonesian, the last thing you cooked was pasta...get as creative as you need to!)
3. Before you look at the syllabus, what pressing question(s) do you have about the class?
4. When are homeworks due?
5. What do you have to do to get a B on the "skills" portion of the course?
6. What happens if you miss a quiz?
7. Why are there so many quizzes?

SYLLABUS

Time

Place

Web

Prof.:

T.A.:

Mailbox

Phone

Student hours

Email

What you need to remember from [Intro Ling]

- Consonants: place, manner, voicing
- Vowels: height, advancement, rounding
- IPA symbols and sound names for General American English
- Phonemes vs. allophones; broad vs. narrow transcription

Your textbook reviews this material in chapters 1-2

What to expect in [this course]

- How speech sounds of the world's languages are produced by the body, and their acoustic properties
 - involves learning elementary acoustics and using software
- Two practical skills: producing these sounds, and transcribing them using the International Phonetic Association alphabet (IPA).
- Extra detail on the sounds of English
- Individual project: learn in depth about the sounds of an unfamiliar (to you) language
- Discussion sections are crucial—they're where you'll get practice in production and acoustics
- Compared to other linguistics courses, there are more memorization and more physical skills

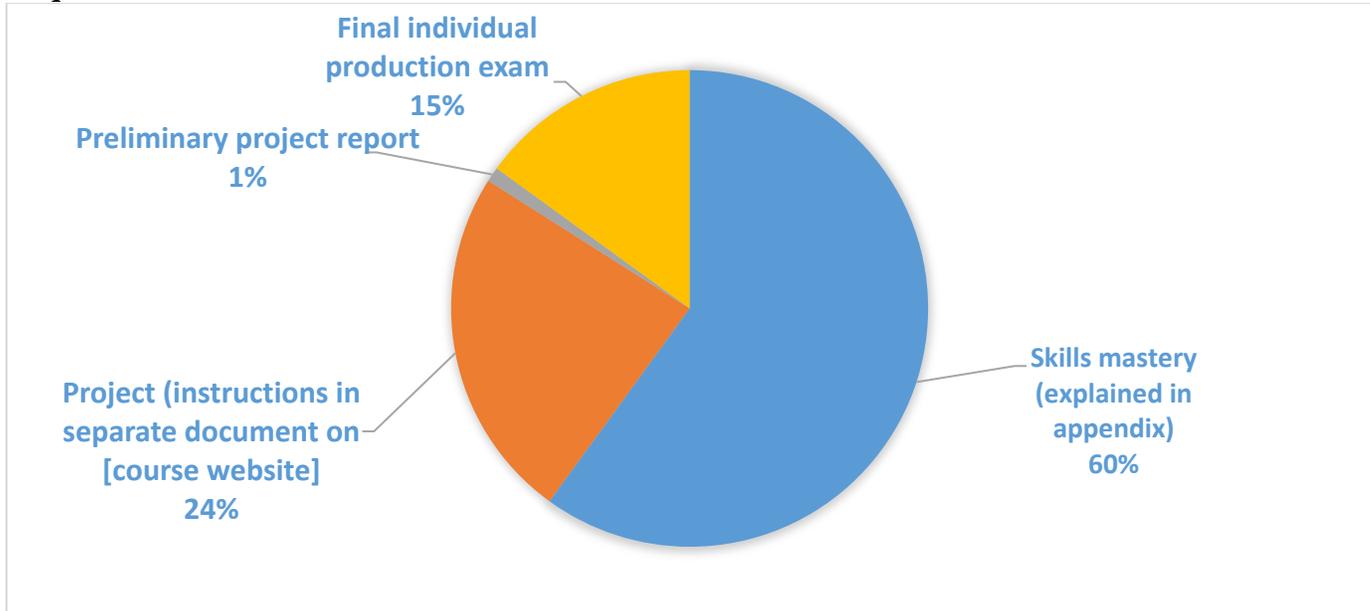
Why take this course?

- Foundation for studying the sound side of linguistics (phonetics and phonology)

- You also need this course to do any linguistic fieldwork
- If you're interested in semantics, you need phonetics to study intonation
- Individual project is good practice in eliciting data from a speaker, comparing it to a published source, and explaining your findings
 - all are important skills in linguistics and other endeavors
- Other places you can use phonetics
 - *language learning*: honing your pronunciation
 - *language teaching*: helping your students attain good pronunciation
 - *acting and singing*: mastering pronunciation of different languages/dialects/accents. IPA notation is sometimes used in those fields
 - *speech technology*: you can't teach computers to talk or listen without basic phonetics; same goes for engineers in telephonic and other audio technology (e.g., what frequencies are most important?)
 - *speech therapy*: treating children, brain-injured adults, laryngectomy patients, singers and others with injured voices; a course like this is usually a prerequisite for master's programs to become a clinician
 - *general knowledge*: People love to talk about accents and pronunciations—after this course, you'll have the tools to do so productively

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Requirements



Policy stuff

There are two philosophies of grading: an assessment of how well you've mastered the material vs. an incentive system to make you do things that will help you master the material.

I'm going with the "assessment" model, so there are no explicit grades for **attendance**.

If you miss class, it hurts your learning, which hurts your grade

Homeworks will be due in class. If you have to miss class, turn in the homework by 2:00 that day to your TA's mailbox in [department office] (ask the office staff to stamp the time on it).

Late homework can't be accepted without a valid, *documented* reason (illness, emergency)—get a doctor's note, police report, towing receipt, death certificate, etc.

This is mostly for the sake of fairness in grading, but also partly for your own good and partly to preserve your TA's sanity.

Quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class. To avoid losing class time, I will have to be strict about collecting the quizzes when time is up, even if you were late. Arrive on time to class so that you get the full time to work on the quiz!

We'll use the course website. Handouts and links will be posted there, as well as assignment instructions and online practice quizzes. I've tried to clearly mark what **material you're responsible for** and what is supplemental or reference material.

What happens **if you miss a quiz**? Don't worry about it! You can try those same skills again in the future.

Suspected cases of **plagiarism or other cheating** will be sent directly to the Dean of Students; I believe it is fairer for them to talk to the student and weigh the evidence than for me to. See project instructions for tips on how to avoid plagiarism.

Secrets of success

♥ *Always come to class and section* ♥

There's nothing like missing a class to make a person feel **lost, confused**, and out of it. Not only do you miss the material from the day you were gone, 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**: assignments will be easier, no staying up late to cram for quizzes (probably), paper will go smoothly; you'll be better prepared for future courses; you'll get to enjoy knowing phonetics in daily life.

Section is unusual and essential in this course: it's only 10 students, and this is where you practice sound production (for the final oral exam)

Talk to [instructor] and [teaching assistant]

...if you don't understand something, you have an idea, you disagree with something you've read, you're intrigued by something you've read, etc.

Don't be shy about using our **student hours**, especially since section time is devoted mainly to practice rather than discussion. Student hours are time that we have set aside to meet with you; you are never interrupting when you come to see us during those times!

♥ *Put away your devices* ♥

All the research seems to show that (i) humans think we're good at multi-tasking, and (ii) humans are **bad at multi-tasking**. Just put your phone away inside your bag; it will be waiting for you 50 minutes later.

I'm not going to make a rule against **laptops** in class, because you might have a good reason for using one (wrist/hand injury, dysgraphia, trying a new note-taking method), but if you are using it for notes just because it seems better, research says **taking notes by hand** makes you learn a lot more (plus a laptop is a huge temptation to distraction, and distracting to your neighbors too).

Spend time studying independently—practice, practice, practice

Learning to make and perceive speech sounds is a lot like learning a language, a musical instrument, or a sport. It requires lots and lots of **practice**.

In addition to assigned readings and homework and working on the project, you need to **schedule substantial time** a few days a week to quiz yourself or each other on IPA symbols, practice sounds using online materials, etc.

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Textbook: Rogers, Henry. *The Sounds of Language*.

Course outline

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>topics</i>	<i>reading</i>	<i>items due / quizzes</i>	<i>project</i>
1	Apr 3	Basic acoustic phonetics	preface, ch. 7, up to p. 137		find your speaker
	Apr 5				
	section	computer lab in [library]: basic acoustics			
2	Apr 10	Airstream mechanisms and phonation types	ch. 12, 13	T: in-class quiz	read source article turn in progress report
	Apr 12			R: progress report HW #1A , transcription/ segmentation	
	section	production practice: phonation and airstream mechanisms			
3	Apr 17	Place of articulation	ch. 10	T: in-class quiz	prepare draft recording script, check it over with speaker
	Apr 19				
	section	production practice: place of articulation			
4	Apr 24	Manner of articulation	ch. 11	T: in-class quiz	prepare final recording script
	Apr 26			HW #1B , more transcription/ segmentation	
	section	production practice: manner of articulation			
5	May 1	More acoustic phonetics	ch. 7, pp. 137-end ch. 8	T: in-class quiz	prepare final recording script
	May 3				
	section	computer lab in [library]: acoustics			
6	May 8	Vowels, glides, and secondary articulations	ch. 9 review ch. 10 pp. 203-206	T: in-class quiz	make recording
	May 10				
	section	production practice: vowels, glides, and secondary articulations			
7	May 15	Gestural scores Syllables and suprasegmentals	ch. 14	T: in-class quiz	transcribe recording
	May 17			HW #2 , acoustics	
	section	production practice: everything so far			
8	May 22	Language demo	<i>none</i>	T: in-class quiz	transcribe recording
	May 24	Phonetic categories in the mind			
	section	production practice: suprasegmentals			
9	May 29	English consonants in depth	ch. 3 ch. 4 Appendix D	T: in-class quiz	write paper paper due Fri. Jun 9, 5 PM
	May 31	English vowels in depth		HW #3 , transcription	
	section	production practice: English details			
10	Jun 5	English dialects	ch. 6 ch. 5	T: in-class quiz	
	Jun 7	English words and sentences			
	section	production practice: putting it all together			
exam week	Jun 11- 15	individually scheduled production exams			

**We'll add Thursday quizzes
later in the quarter, if students want**

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Appendix: explanation of skills grading for [this course]

These are the skills to be mastered in this course. For each skill, the table below lists how many times you have to get a question of that type correct (fully correct—no partial credit) to indicate mastery. Why do you have to demonstrate your ability multiple times? Because these skills can cover a lot of ground. For example, in 2.1, we want to make sure you can perceive various distinctions in place, manner, voicing, etc.: answering just a couple of questions right doesn't probe very much of this space.

Category	Skill number and name	Skill description	# of times needed to show mastery	Where you can demonstrate it
Phonetic symbols (IPA)	1.1 DefineSymbol	Define a phonetic symbol	15	quizzes
	1.2 GiveSymbol	Give the phonetic symbol that fits a definition	10	quizzes
Transcription	2.1 TranscribeMulti	Answer a multiple-choice transcription question	25	quizzes
	2.2 TranscribeC	Free-transcribe consonants	10	quizzes
	2.3 TranscribeV	Free-transcribe vowels	5	quizzes
	2.4 TranscribeTone	Free-transcribe tones	5	quizzes
	2.5 TranscribeKnown	Free-transcribe whole words in a known system: nonsense English words, or words in a language you've had a chance to hear baselines for	30	quizzes homework 3 language demo
Understanding articulation	3.1 ReadVocalTract	Identify what a drawing of the vocal tract depicts (which place, manner, or IPA symbol)	5	quizzes
	3.2 GesturalScore	Translate a gestural score into IPA, or match it to a drawing of the vocal tract	5	quizzes
Acoustics	4.1 SegmentSpectro	Segment a waveform/spectrogram	10	quizzes homework 1A&B homework 3
	4.2 ReadSpectro	Read a waveform/spectrogram	10	quizzes homework 2
	4.3 IdentifyDisplay	Identify whether an acoustic display is a waveform, spectrogram, spectrum; or, identify dimensions of a display	2	quizzes homework 2
	4.4 ReadFrequency	Use an acoustic display to determine or compare frequency (and explain how you did it)	2	quizzes homework 2
	4.5 HarmonicsFormants	Correctly use harmonics and formants: read them from a display, convert from one to the other, use the relationship, make or read a formant chart	2	quizzes homework 2
Application	5 Apply	Apply your phonetics knowledge to a novel problem	5	quizzes

How does this translate into a grade?

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Criteria

- To get a mid-range D (65%): Get at least halfway to mastery on all fourteen of the skills in **1-4**
- To get a mid-range C (75%): Get at least three quarters to mastery on all fourteen of the skills in **1-4**
- To get a mid-range B (85%): Master all fourteen of the skills in **1-4**
- To get a mid-range A (95%): Master all fourteen of the skills in **1-4**, plus skill **5**

Formula

What if you fall somewhere in between, like there were a couple of skills where you didn't make it halfway, but there were others where you made it all the way? And what counts as a C+, or B-?

Here is the formula (remember this is just for 60% of your grade: the rest is the production exam and your project):

- Starting grade: 45
- plus, for each of the 14 skills in **1-4**, 40/14 times the percentage of the skill you have mastered
- plus 2 percentage points for each success on skill **5**

If this seems too complicated, don't worry about it! I will include the running formula result in the online gradebook, so you can always see where you are. And you can try out scenarios to see how your grade might change.

Additional information

- After you reach mastery on a skill, there's no additional credit for getting more questions like that right—you can skip them or do them for fun. (If you try them but get them wrong, there's no penalty).
- Your skills grade only goes up over the quarter; it can't go down.
- This is the second time I'm using skills grading in this course. Last time, we ended up adding extra quizzes on Thursdays towards the end of the course, by student request, so we'll probably do the same this time.

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Standard messages

These are policies that apply to all your courses

[messages from Title IX office, library, student mental health services, services for students with disabilities, writing center]

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[redacted], Spring 2018

Student information sheet: please fill out and turn in

1. Your name: _____

2. Your name in IPA (don't forget to mark stress, **tone**, or pitch accent, depending on the language!):

If your name is Korean, adding the hangeul will also help me. If your name is Chinese, writing the characters too might help me, as would pinyin with tone marks, if you know how.

3. What pronoun should we use to refer to you (e.g., *she*, *he*, *they*): _____

4. What is/are your native language(s): _____

Dialect information is helpful (California English, Buenos Aires Spanish, Taipei Mandarin, etc.)

5. Other languages you speak or have studied?

6. What are your main areas of interest within linguistics?

7. Since a lot of you are juniors or seniors, any ideas about your career plans after graduation?