

# Trends in Linguistics

Autumn 2012 - Tuesday 2-4pm

Linguistics Research Centre Seminar Room

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|-------------------|--|--|
| <b>Convenors:</b> | Esther de Leeuw  | Linnaea Stockall                               |
| Office:           | ArtsOne 1.09   | ArtsOne 1.10                                   |
| Email:            | e.deleeuw@qmul.ac.uk   | l.stockall@qmul.ac.uk                          |
| Office Hours:     | Semester A: Tuesday 11am-12pm and Wednesday 1-2pm (not in reading week) and by appointment | see public calendar/drop in and by appointment |

## Module Goals

The primary aim of this course is to provide incoming MA students with an advanced introduction to the range of research theories and methodologies in linguistics through a detailed overview of the research programmes and expertise of all linguistics permanent staff. This will ensure that all MA students have an opportunity to interact with staff, and become familiar with the full range of research that is conducted in the department, allowing students to (a) start to become familiar with postgraduate level research in linguistics through hands-on exposure to real ongoing projects in all major areas of the field; (b) make informed choices about the kinds of topics they wish to pursue further in the second semester and in their dissertation work, and (c) begin establishing relationships with potential supervisors from the beginning of their degrees. Additional goals of this module are to introduce students to external organisations which incorporate linguistics in their remits and facilitate research partnerships with these organisations.

## General Framework

This module will be demanding and will require students to read 10-50pgs a week. Student participation is an essential component of this class and students are expected to actively participate in the discussion on a regular basis (see guidelines for the discussion). The successful student in this module will be one who carefully and critically reflects upon the readings, draws connections between the different readings and topics, shares his or her thoughts with the class, and produces well-developed and thoughtful assignments.

Each week, we will have a different invited speaker, and topic, and a different student, or students, in charge of managing the class discussion.

Each two hour class will be divided into two sections:

### First Hour [2-3pm]

The student or students in charge of that week's discussion will lead the class through a critical discussion of the assigned reading(s) for that week. This discussion session is

designed to ensure all students have an opportunity to discuss their thoughts and questions about the week's topic in a constructive environment. The students leading the discussion will prepare a short handout to help guide the discussion [see below for details], but all students are expected to be active contributors to this discussion. The module convener will not take an active role in this discussion, but may contribute some questions or thoughts as appropriate.

The goal of this discussion is not to reach any definite conclusions about the topic, but rather to ensure a basic grounding in the background and technical issues relevant for understanding the week's guest presentation.

### **Second Hour [3-4pm]**

The week's guest speaker will join us for a discussion of their work or project. Depending on the speaker, this might be a more informal two-way discussion, or it may be a more formal one-way presentation. The general purpose of these presentations is for you to be aware of the research undertaken by the person, or the organisation that the person represents. Moreover, the presentation is aimed to guide you in conducting future research project(s), i.e. for the research proposal required for this module within the framework of either the Research Practicum, or for your MA thesis.

**NB:** The order of these sections may be reversed on particular weeks where we deem the alternate order more appropriate to the guest presentation.

## **Assessment**

| assignment                        | percent | due date        |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| 1. class discussion/participation | 40      | before 11.12.12 |
| 2. research proposal              | 60      | 8.01.13         |

**All written work must be uploaded to Moodle/QMplus. The Moodle upload will constitute the definitive timestamp. Only pdf files will count - no .doc or .docx files under any circumstances.**

### **1. Leading Class Discussion & Handout + Participation [40% of mark]**

Each student will lead a discussion of the paper or papers that the week's guest speaker has assigned as readings. Leading a discussion DOES NOT equal giving a presentation: the student or students leading the discussion are expected to have prepared a short (1-2pg) handout that summarizes some key points in the readings, defines some key terms, raises some critical questions and provides a general outline to help structure the discussion. More complete guidelines are given in the document Discussion Guidelines.

### **2. Research Proposal [60% of mark]**

Each student will develop a (2500 word) research proposal inspired by one of the topics we cover in this module. This may be the topic the student is in charge of leading

the discussion for, but it does not have to be. Students are not obliged to actually carry out the research they propose.

Additional guidelines for preparing this proposal will be provided. Students are encouraged to meet with one of the module conveners and/or with potential supervisors to discuss their ideas for this proposal **well in advance** of the deadline.

Students will develop this proposal in three steps:

**2.a. Proposal Draft**

**Due: 4 December 2012**

Students will submit a short (500-700 words) preliminary draft of their proposal by 5pm, December 4, 2012.

**2.b Meeting with Module Convenor**

**Before: 14 December 2012**

All students must meet with Esther or Linnaea (we will tell you which of us to meet with) between December 10 and 14 in order to get feedback on their proposal draft.

**2.c. Revised Proposal**

**Due: 8 January 2013**

Students will revise their draft proposals with the help of the comments from one of the module conveners. The final draft should demonstrate substantial improvements inspired by the revision process.

## **Readings**

All readings will be announced via the moodle site for this module. Each student is responsible for downloading and (if necessary) printing their own copies of readings. Students **MUST** bring readings to class for reference during the discussion.