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# *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

## *Syllabus*

### *Language Documentation and Linguistic Fieldwork: Theory Meets Practice - Part 1 - 10904*

*Last update 02-11-2015*

*HU Credits: 2*

*Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)*

*Responsible Department: school of language sciences*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: 1st Semester*

*Teaching Languages: English*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Aynat Rubinstein*

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*Teaching Staff:*

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Prof Jeff Good  
Dr. Heather Bliss  
Dr. Sebastian Fedden  
Dr. Heriberto Avelino

Course/Module description:

*This intensive one week course provides a comprehensive and up-to-date introduction to the methodology of linguistic fieldwork and language documentation. Classes by invited lecturers will address the following four topics:*

*1. Data management for language documentation (Jeff Good)*

*This course will address issues in the collection and management of data when doing linguistic fieldwork, with an emphasis on how to create transparent records that can form the basis of a documentary linguistic corpus. Topics to be discussed will include: How to make effective audio and video recordings in uncontrolled environments, time-aligned annotation, designing lexical databases, creating metadata for project management and archiving, and the role of ethical considerations in corpus design. Students will be given exercises that will help them practice the skills they need to conduct language documentation in the field.*

*2. Working with a speaker (Sebastian Fedden)*

*When we conduct fieldwork on a language we rely on the knowledge, intuitions and grammaticality judgments of a native speaker to investigate the linguistic questions we are interested in. This course provides students with hands-on experience in working with a native speaker of a language they do not know. The focus of this course will be on structured elicitation in the areas of morphology and syntax. Students will learn how to come up with their own research questions and how to use structured elicitation to answer them. Other fieldwork techniques, such as transcribing and translating a story, to see how the grammar of the language works in discourse, will be covered as well.*

*3. Phonetics and phonology in the field (Heriberto Avelino)*

*In recent years, a wealth of new linguistic data is becoming available through the flourishing of language documentation projects. One area that still needs further development is the investigation of the phonetic structures of the world's languages. This course looks at the theoretical, empirical and practical aspects of fieldwork phonetics and laboratory phonology applied in the field. This course provides the student with hands-on experience in methods of experimental phonetic research done in the field. A number of techniques and methods such as acoustic analysis, aerodynamics of speech, kinematics, visualization of laryngeal*

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dynamics with high speed video as well as perceptual experiments will be covered.

#### 4. Challenges and methods in syntactic fieldwork (Heather Bliss)

Some of the most basic grammatical phenomena upon which our syntactic models are built are the most challenging to test in a field setting. In this course, we will review the standard diagnostic tests for c-command, constituency, and categories: the primitives of syntactic theory. Drawing on a diverse range of languages, we will see examples of how tests for c-command (e.g., scope, binding), constituency (e.g., pro-forms, movement), and categories (e.g., distribution, derivation) can sometimes yield generalizations that translate into hierarchical structures, but other times fail to converge, or even fail to apply. In some cases, this is because an enriched discourse context is required, and in other cases, it points to the need for a language-specific battery of tests. In a mock field setting, students will put these lessons to practice, working in linguist/consultant pairs to test the tests and apply various methods for establishing discourse contexts (e.g., storyboards, figurines, pictures, narratives) and for developing language-specific diagnostics for syntactic structure. Beyond syntax, these methods are also applicable for studies focused on semantics and pragmatics.

#### Course/Module aims:

This course aims to provide students with an intensive introduction to current principles and methods of linguistic

fieldwork. Participants will gain and develop skills that will allow them to work independently in the field on

theory-driven research projects and language documentation.

#### Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Approach and work appropriately with speakers  
Collect and analyze data related to a variety of phenomena.  
Develop and structure elicitation sessions.  
Collect and analyze longer texts.  
Store documentary material.

#### Attendance requirements(%):

100

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*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Class lectures with practical (“hands-on”) components*

*Course/Module Content:*

- 1. Data management for language documentation*
- 2. Working with a speaker in a fieldwork setting*
- 3. Methodology of phonetic and phonological fieldwork, with test cases of theory-driven research*
- 4. Methodology of morphological and syntactic fieldwork, with test cases of theory-driven research*

*Required Reading:*

*To be assigned*

*Additional Reading Material:*

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*Course/Module evaluation:*

*End of year written/oral examination 0 %*

*Presentation 0 %*

*Participation in Tutorials 0 %*

*Project work 100 %*

*Assignments 0 %*

*Reports 0 %*

*Research project 0 %*

*Quizzes 0 %*

*Other 0 %*

*Additional information:*

*The language of instruction is English, but essays submitted for grading may be written in Hebrew as well as in English. A list of essay topics based on the content covered in the course will be distributed during the week.*