



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

The Grammar of Sign Languages - 36650

Last update 21-02-2022

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Linguistics

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Diane Brentari

Coordinator Email: dbrentari@uchicago.edu

Coordinator Office Hours: by appointment

Teaching Staff:

Prof Diane Brentari

Course/Module description:

This course will provide an overview of the grammar of sign languages—shared properties among them and crosslinguistic differences. Topics to be covered in this course include phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and prosody. No previous knowledge of a sign language is required.

Course/Module aims:

This course provides an overview of the grammar focusing on issues of (1) iconicity, meaning and morphology; (2) language acquisition and language emergence; (3) the influence of communication modality on linguistic and neurophysiology.

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

Students will be able to describe properties that signed and spoken languages share and do not share. Students will be able to describe properties that differ across sign languages.

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lecture & Discussion

Course/Module Content:

**Course/Module content*

Week 1: Introduction to the Lexicon and issues of Modality

Week 2: Phonology & Phonetics

Week 3: Word classes, Agreement, Affixes, Classifiers

Week 4: Word Order, Sentence Types, Subordination, Coordination.

Week 5: Semantics Negation, reported "speech"

Week 6: Prosody, Prominence

Required Reading:

WEEK 1

Pfau, M. Steinbach, & B. Woll, eds. 2012. Handbook of Sign Language Linguistics, Berlin:Mouton. chapter 25 (25: Language and Modality, Richard Meier)

Brentari, D., & C. Padden. 2001. A language with multiple origins: Native and foreign vocabulary in American Sign Language. In D. Brentari, ed., *Foreign Vocabulary in Sign Language: A Cross-linguistic Investigation of Word Formation*, 87-119. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

WEEK 2

Brentari, D. 2019. *Sign Language Phonology*. Key Topics in Phonology Series. Cambridge University Press. chapter 1, 3

*Required reading

WEEK 1

Pfau, M. Steinbach, & B. Woll, eds. 2012. *Handbook of Sign Language Linguistics*, Berlin:Mouton. chapter 25 (25: Language and Modality, Richard Meier)

WEEK 2

Brentari, D. 2019. *Sign Language Phonology*. Key Topics in Phonology Series. Cambridge University Press. chapter 1, 3

WEEK 3

Pfau, M. Steinbach, & B. Woll, eds. 2012 *Handbook of Sign Language Linguistics*, Berlin:Mouton. chapter 5,8 (5: Word Classes and Word Formation, Irit Meir; 8; Classifiers, Inge Zwitserlood)

Benedicto, E., and D. Brentari. 2004. Where did all the arguments go?: Argument-changing properties of Classifiers in ASL. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 22(4), 743-810.

WEEK 4

Pfau, M. Steinbach, & B. Woll, eds. 2012 *Handbook of Sign Language Linguistics*, Berlin:Mouton. chapter 14, 16 (14: Sentence Types, Carlo Cecchetto; 16: Coordination and Subordination, Gladys Tang & Prudence Lau)

WEEK 5

Pfau, M. Steinbach, & B. Woll, eds. 2012 *Handbook of Sign Language Linguistics*, Berlin:Mouton. chapter 15, 17 (15: Negation, Josep Quer); 17 Utterance Reports & Constructed Action, Diane Lillo-Martin)

WEEK 6

Brentari, D. 2019. *Sign Language Phonology*. Key Topics in Phonology Series. Cambridge University Press. chapter 4, 116-131.

Brentari, D., J. Falk, A. Giannakiou, A. Herrmann, E. Volk, and M. Steinbach. 2018. Production and Comprehension of Prosodic Markers in Sign Language Imperatives. *Frontiers in Psychology: Language Sciences (Special Issue on Visual Language)*

Additional Reading Material:

Meir, Irit, and Wendy Sandler. 2002. *A Language in space*. Haifa: University of Haifa Press.

available in Hebrew online at the HUI library:

<https://kotar-cet-ac->

[il.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/KotarApp/Viewer.aspx?nBookID&eq;96620495](https://kotar-cet-ac-il.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/KotarApp/Viewer.aspx?nBookID&eq;96620495)

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 20 %

Assignments 60 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 20 %

participation/attendance

Additional information:

The required readings and assignment materials will be available on the Moodle site.