

Degree programme	Type	Course
Catalan Philology: Literary Studies and Linguistics	OP	4
Spanish Language and Literature	OP	3
Spanish Language and Literature	OP	4
English Studies	OP	3
English Studies	OP	4
Science, Technology and Humanities	OP	4
English and Catalan Studies	OP	3
English and Catalan Studies	OP	4
English and Spanish Studies	OP	3
English and Spanish Studies	OP	4
Catalan and Spanish Studies	OP	3
English and French Studies	OP	4
English and Classics Studies	OP	3
English and Classics Studies	OP	4

Contact lecturer

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Teaching staff

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Group languages

You can consult this information at the [end](#) of the document.

Prerequisites

No specific requirements are needed to follow the course beyond some elementary notions of linguistics. It is nonetheless advisable to be able to read scientific texts in English.

Objectives

This course is presented as an introduction to the principles and methods of the biolinguistic approach in the language sciences. This approach proposes a view of language understood as a natural object, as one of the characters of the human species and, therefore, one that may be studied applying the very same principles and methods one uses when studying, for example, its anatomy. The approach thereby implies asking such questions as what are the basic neural structures underlying human linguistic capacities and how they work, what is their evolutionary history and how they develop in the individual. The main goal of the course is, therefore, to offer students some of the basic theoretical tools for them to be able to understand and assimilate some of the major achievements in this interdisciplinary area, such that they may pursue their research in the camp, if so they wish.

Learning outcomes

1. Summarising acquired knowledge about the origin and transformations experienced in its several fields of study.
2. Accurately drawing up normative texts.
3. Solving problems autonomously.
4. Identifying the main and secondary ideas and expressing them with linguistic correctness.
5. Drawing up brief original works about these topics.
6. Analysing various types of linguistic data.
7. Establishing typological generalizations.
8. Use and interpret texts of interdisciplinary nature about the connections between linguistics and other disciplines.
9. Identifying different theoretical options or ways of dealing with the same problem from alternative theoretical frameworks.
10. Interpreting the mentioned methods on the basis of sociolinguistic models.
11. Solving problems of grammatical analysis.
12. Using the basic linguistic methods of data compilation and treatment.
13. Write text commentaries from a critical standpoint.
14. Summarise the knowledge acquired about the origin of the various fields within the discipline and the transformations they have undergone.
15. Identify principal and secondary ideas and express them using correct language.
16. Produce normatively correct written and oral texts.
17. Plan, organise and carry out work in a team.
18. Solve problems self-sufficiently.
19. Use and interpret texts of an interdisciplinary nature on the connections between linguistics and other disciplines.
20. Write brief original texts on these topics.
21. Apply findings presented in specialist papers to the analysis of similar or related phenomena.
22. Identify different theoretical options or ways to address the same problems from alternative theoretical frameworks.
23. Use basic methods for compiling and processing linguistic data.
24. Analyse different types of linguistic data.
25. Produce creative papers and personal projects in the corresponding area of study.
26. Gain familiarity with the different programmes of naturalistic study of the mind and their functioning.
27. Approach language through specific methods for requesting and using linguistic data.
28. Know the structure and evolution of the faculty of language, and the interactions between language and cognition.
29. Evaluate the problems posed by the study of language and cognition based on the methods and concepts of philosophy, linguistics, cognitive science and other disciplines.
30. Identify formally correct and incorrect arguments by translating natural language utterances to formal language, and applying first-order logic to make demonstrations and deductions.
31. Understand the concepts of numbering system, algorithm and computability, and appreciate their historical and practical importance.
32. Programme simple algorithms and appreciate the logic of their functioning.

33. Identify and evaluate the importance of the human factor in the development and use of symbolic systems.
34. Make an informed judgement on the social and ethical challenges posed by artificial intelligence.
35. Understand the notion of computability, and the concept of programme stored on a computer, as a set of instructions for executing an algorithm, and identify the difference between a machine with a fixed programme and a self-programmable machine.
36. Integrate elements from different areas of knowledge to analyse a situation and suggest actions or solutions.
37. Promote team spirit and the integration of others' points of view.
38. Applying the results presented in specialised articles to the analysis of similar or related phenomena.
39. Solve problems of grammatical analysis.
40. Interpret these methods on the basis of sociolinguistic models.
41. Solve complex linguistic analysis at any level and with the appropriate tools.
42. Appropriately use the different available formal and technical resources.
43. Recognising different processing systems of the natural language according to their possible applications and development principles.
44. Managing the different data collection, processing and analysis techniques in a manner that is consistent with the objective of the study.
45. Construct normatively correct texts.
46. Synthesise the knowledge acquired on the origin and transformations undergone by the different fields of study of the discipline.
47. Identify main and secondary ideas and express them with linguistic correctness.
48. Identify different theoretical options or ways of approaching the same problems from alternative theoretical frameworks.
49. Solve problems autonomously.
50. Use the appropriate and specific terminology of the literary studies.
51. Interpret these methods on the basis of sociolinguistic models.
52. Establish typological generalisations.
53. Analyse various types of linguistic data.
54. Solve complex problems of linguistic analysis at any level and with the appropriate instruments.
55. Write short original papers on topics related to linguistics.
56. Preparing an oral and written discourse in the corresponding language in a proper and organized way.
57. Identifying main and supporting ideas and expressing them with linguistic correctness.
58. Establish typological generalizations.
59. Solving problems autonomously.
60. Applying the results presented in specialised articles to the analysis of similar or related phenomena.
61. Planificar, organizar y realizar trabajos en equipo.
62. Preparing an oral and written discourse in the corresponding language in a proper and organized way.
63. Solving complex problems of linguistic analysis in any level with the appropriate tools.
64. Plan, organise and carry out teamwork.
65. Develop an organized and correct oral and written speech, in the corresponding language.
66. Identify the main and secondary ideas and express them with linguistic correctness.
67. Use and interpret texts of interdisciplinary nature about the connections between linguistics and other disciplines.
68. Applying the results presented in specialised articles to the analysis of similar or related phenomena.
69. Accurately drawing up normative texts.
70. Create an organised and correct discourse, spoken and in writing, in the corresponding language.
71. Resolving problems independently.
72. Solve complex problems of linguistic analysis at any level and using the appropriate tools.

Contents

1.- Introduction. Methodological problems in the study of language and cognition from the biological perspective.

2.- Evolutionary biology: A brief historical introduction from Darwin till today.

3.- The form/function problem in biology and its translation to the field of language and cognition.

4.- Evolutionary developmental biology: The role of the organism in biological explanations and the evolution of language.

5.- Developmental ecology: The role of the environment in biological explanations and the acquisition of language.

Learning activities and methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Preparing the oral presentation and writing the review essay	75	3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12
Theoretical sessions	45	1.8	1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35
Oral presentations	30	1.2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12

The course combines three types of activities: theoretical sessions in charge of the teacher, oral presentations about specific topics in charge of the students, and individualized work. The latter two coform the basis for the final assessment of the course. The idea is that the teacher will set the bases for each of the subjects and, thereafter, that the students present orally some of these fundamental questions in class in order to foster debate.

The calendar will be available on the first day of class. All the relevant information will be made available through Moodle: the description of the activities, teaching materials, and any necessary information for the proper follow-up of the subject. In case of a change of teaching modality for health reasons, teachers will make readjustments in the schedule and methodologies.

Once the teaching assessment polls have been made public, 15 minutes of one of the face-to-face sessions will be reserved for students to be able to answer them.

Annotation: within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continuous assessment activities

Title	Weight	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Theoretical test	10%	0	0	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72
Review essay	40%	0	0	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 38, 45, 46, 48, 49, 59, 69, 71

Oral presentation	50%	0	0	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 45, 46, 48, 49, 59, 69, 71
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Students will be required to prepare an oral presentation. This presentation shall be based on one of the chapters of the course's handbook (see bibliography). The teacher will base his assessment on the oral presentation and the student's participation in class during an obligatory face-to-face interview. This activity represents a 50% of the final qualification. Moreover, as an individual activity connected with the theoretical aspects of the handbook, each student will be required to deliver a written test. This test represents a 10% of the final qualification. Additionally, students should write a review essay of the course handbook. This activity will represent a 40% of the final qualification. All activities will be marked on a scale from 0 to 10 and, afterwards, a final mean will be calculated. A PASS grade is obtained with a mark greater than or equal to 5. If tests or exams cannot be taken onsite, they will be adapted to an online format made available through the UAB's virtual tools (original weighting will be maintained). Homework, activities, and class participation will be carried out through forums, wikis and/or discussion on Teams, etc. Lecturers will ensure that students can access these virtual tools, or will offer them feasible alternatives.

Erasmus and exchange students who request to advance an exam must present a document from their home university justifying their request.

Not Assessed: Students will obtain a Not assessed/Not submitted course grade unless they have submitted more than 30% of the assessment items.

Resitting: The condition for being able to have access to resitting is having obtained a global mark above 3.5 and below 5: This figure must be derived from the assessment of activities representing at least two thirds of the global assessment of the subject. Given that the presentation is not eligible for reassessment, resitting will consist in delivering a summary of one of the five subjects of the course PLUS delivering the review or a refurbished version thereof.

Revision procedure: At the time of carrying out any of the evaluation activities, the teacher will make public through Moodle the dates and procedures for the revision of said activities.

Plagiarism and use of AI: In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject. Use of AI is only allowed as an aid for the preparation of the material for the oral presentation, such as editing and generating images and other graphic elements. Other uses are strictly forbidden and shall be treated as cases of plagiarism.

Non-continuous assessment: Those students opting for non-continuous assessment must deliver the following three activities: 1.- A video recording of an oral presentation of one of the chapters of the course's handbook (50% of the final grade); 2.- A written commentary of the contents of the chapter presented in activity 1 (10% of the final grade); 3.- A review essay of the course handbook (40% of the final grade). As for reassessment, the same principles and methods as for ordinary assessment will be applied.

Bibliography

Course handbook:

Benítez Burraco A. & L. Barceló Coblijn. 2015. El origen del lenguaje. Madrid: Síntesis.

Some suggested readings:

Arthur, W. 2011. Evolution. A Developmental Approach. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Balari, S & G. Lorenzo. 2013. Computational Phenotypes. Towards an Evolutionary Developmental Biolinguistics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Benítez Burraco, A. 2023. El origen del lenguaje: De Adán a Babel. Córdoba: Almuzara.

Berwick, R. C. & N. Chomsky. 2016. Why Only Us. Language and Evolution. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press

Boeckx, C. & K.K. Grohmann, eds. 2013. The Cambridge Handbook of Biolinguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boeckx, C., M.C. Horno-Chéliz & J.-L. Mendívil-Giró, eds. 2012. Language, from a Biological Point of View. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Garcia-Fernàndez, J. & D. Bueno. 2016. L'embrió inconformista. Com influeix en la nostra evolució el desenvolupament embrionari. Barcelona: Edicions Universitat de Barcelona.

Lorenzo, Guillermo. 2013. Biolingüística. La nueva síntesis. Accessible en línea amb llicència Creative Commons a <http://www.unioviedo.es/biolang/la-nueva-sintesis/>

Minelli, A. 2007. Forme del Divenire. Torino: Einaudi (Traducció anglesa: Forms of Becoming. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Striedter, G.F. 2005. Principles of Brain Evolution. Sunderland, MA: Sinauer.

In the Web:

The online journal Biolinguistics: <https://bioling.psychopen.eu/index.php/bioling>. Free Access.

The website of the Evolution of Language International Conferences: <https://www.evolang.org>. All conference proceedings to date are freely available.

Several publications of the Frontiers group, www.frontiers.org, accessible free and dealing with several topics of interest for the course.

Software

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Course groups and languages

The information provided is provisional until November 30. After this date, you will be able to consult the language of each group through this [link](#). To access the information, you will need to enter the course CODE

Type of teaching	Group	Language	Semester	Shift
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed