ENG 437-001 Invented Languages Syllabus
Department of Languages, Cultures, and Communication
Stephen F. Austin State University
Spring 2019 • MW 1:00-2:15 p.m. • F183

Professor	Dr. Jessie Sams	Office hours	MW 2:30-3:00 p.m.
Office	LAN 229		TR 2:00-3:00 p.m.
Email	samsj@sfasu.edu		F 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Twitter	@quothalinguist	Finals week	MT 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Tumblr	jessiesams.tumblr.com		R 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Required text   Peterson, David J. 2015. *The art of language invention*. New York: Penguin Books.

Course description
Examination of how language works and typical features of world languages in order to construct an invented language; also, examination of existing constructed languages (including Elvish, Na'vi, and Esperanto). Students will invent their own languages to better understand the challenges of constructing a language and linguistic principles at work in natural languages.

Course objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to
1. identify the goals of the major subfields of linguistic study: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics.
2. apply aspects of natlangs to their conlang.
3. justify the decisions made for including specific language features.
4. synthesize researched information from scholars with their conlang.
5. create a final product that demonstrates an understanding of the concepts learned throughout the semester and incorporates aspects of synthesis, analysis, and creativity.

Course policies and requirements
The two overarching principles for the course are the following:

(a) Adults make arrangements.
(b) Poor preparation on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part.

These two principles are reflected in all the following policies.

Student policies
1. If you have a quick question, you can email me with your specific question. Take the time to construct an email with a specific concern or question clearly stated to maximize the efficiency and productivity of our email exchange. The only email I regularly check is my SFA email.
2. If you have a complex question, want to discuss a concept in more depth, have a question about your grade, or want to go over draft revisions, you need to see me during my office hours.
3. When you come to my office hours, show up prepared so we can get right to work. If there is a line at my door, I will limit each student to 10 minutes.
   a. If you show up while another student is in my office, please knock on the door to get my attention so that I know you are in the hallway waiting and then take a seat in the hall.
   b. If you need to turn something in or grab a graded assignment, you can simply hand me the assignment or request the graded assignment. You do not need to wait in the line.
   c. Unless you and other students have the same question and have pre-arranged to come into my office as a group, I will see students one at a time in the order in which they arrived.

4. I expect you to attend every class and to keep up with the course schedule. If you are absent, you need to find out from fellow classmates what you missed during class, and you will need to get any handouts you missed from a fellow classmate. If you miss class on a day I hand back graded work, you will need to come to my office hours to pick up your work.
5. I also expect you to actively participate during the course; participation includes joining in on class discussions, working in groups during in-class activities, showing up to class prepared for the day's lesson, and participating on Twitter.
6. I begin taking attendance on the first day of class and take attendance once at the beginning of every class period; only the students who are there at the beginning of class are counted present for the day, so any student who is tardy is counted as absent. Once I have put away the roll sheet, I will not take it out again to count students as present even if a student shows up one minute after I finish taking roll.
    a. If you leave class early, it will count as an absence.
    b. Any disruptions, unacceptable behavior toward other students, and/or lack of active participation will result in a recorded absence.
7. The due dates provided on the course schedule in this syllabus are final, and all assignments are due, in hard copy, at the beginning of class.
    a. Unless otherwise directed, all work must be typed in 11- or 12-point Times New Roman font. If any other font is used, there will be a 5-point reduction on the grade of that assignment.
    b. You can trade in a token for a 24-hour extension on a homework assignment, draft, or Twitter assignment.
    c. Any homework assignment or draft handed in late or early must be handed in directly to me during office hours.
8. You need to keep track of your own grades, absences, and tokens; if you have a question about any of those, you need to speak with me in person during my office hours.
9. Like the movies, classes can be disturbed by noisy phones and constant texting. Be considerate to your neighbors and professor by turning off your cell phone's ringer when you come to class, and have the courtesy to wait until after class to text and/or update your social media page about the amazing lecture you just witnessed.
10. As in any relationship, the student/professor relationship is strengthened by communication. If I send something out, pay attention to it. If you have a question/concern/emergency, communicate that to me immediately. The only way I have of getting in touch with the class is your school email address; make sure you check your SFA email regularly.

Post-semester policies on graded work: For fall semesters, I will keep any graded work that has not been claimed in my office until March 1 of the following spring semester; for spring semesters, I will keep graded work until October 1 of the following fall semester. If you would like to pick up your graded work from the previous semester, let me know 48 hours in advance so that I can locate the work and have it ready for you when you come by my office hours to pick it up. Any work that has not been claimed by the specified dates will be recycled.

Acceptable student behavior: Classroom behavior should not interfere with the professor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic, or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The professor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance available to help SFA students succeed.

Assignments: This semester, you will complete five types of assignments.

- *Twitter assignments*: Throughout the semester, you will actively participate on Twitter.
- *Homework assignments*: You will complete up to five homework assignments, depending on the bundle you select.
- *Drafts*: You will write three drafts throughout the semester, which will become portions of the final paper.
- *Final paper*: You will submit a final paper that describes your conlang and, at minimum, consists of revised versions of the three drafts completed throughout the semester.
- *Presentation*: You will briefly present your conlang to the rest of the class during our course's scheduled final exam.

Grading: This course uses an approach to grading called specifications grading. Instead of grading every assignment on a point-value or letter-grade scale, each assignment will be assessed as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Assignments are "bundled" based on a hierarchy of learning goals for the course, and final grades will be assigned based on which bundles of assignments students have satisfactorily completed. Guidelines for each assignment will include the specifications necessary to meet to earn a satisfactory grade.

Each letter grade is associated with a specific set of bundles and, thus, a specific set of learning outcomes. For a bundle to count toward your final grade, you must have met all specifications for that bundle, and to satisfactorily pass a bundle, all specifications for each assignment must be met.

Bundle	Learning goal(s) associated with bundle	Satisfactorily pass …
C	• Apply key concepts to natlangs and conlang	• all individual Twitter assignments • HW assignments 1-3 • all Draft guidelines • Final Paper guidelines • Presentation
B	• Apply key concepts to natlangs and conlang • Evaluate and justify conlang features	• all individual and peer response Twitter assignments • HW assignments 1-4 • all Draft* guidelines • Final Paper* guidelines • Presentation
A	• Apply key concepts to natlangs and conlang • Evaluate and justify conlang features • Synthesize information about conlang features with research • Create a conlang-specific fable/poem	• all individual, peer response, and networking Twitter assignments • HW assignments 1-5 • all Draft** guidelines • Final Paper** guidelines • Presentation

Attendance: Along with the assignment specifications, you must be present for class. Attendance and active participation are expected for this course, and good attendance is often positively correlated with performance on assignments. For every absence beyond the third absence, your highest grade for the course is reduced by a letter grade; for instance, if you are aiming for a B in the course, your fourth absence drops you down to a C.

The following policies apply to attendance:

1. I take attendance once at the beginning of class; tardiness is recorded as an absence.
2. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, which means you do not need to bring me any notes for missing class. If you know in advance that you will miss class for an excused absence, plan accordingly for that absence.
3. I begin taking attendance on your first day of class.
4. If you have to miss class, make sure that you ask a classmate what you missed and that you understand the material covered. You must get any missed information (lecture notes, handouts, guidelines, etc.) from a classmate. If you miss class on a day I hand back graded work, it is your responsibility to pick up your work to find out if you need to revise.
5. Any disruptions, unacceptable behavior toward other students, and/or lack of active participation (e.g., sleeping) will result in a recorded absence.
6. A seventh absence for the course automatically results in a failing grade.

Tokens: You will begin the semester with four "tokens" to use at your discretion throughout the semester. You may trade in a single (virtual) token for any of these reasons:

- erase an absence (one token erases one absence);
- receive a 24-hour extension on a homework assignment, draft, Twitter assignment, or revision (one token per 24-hour extension)—if you use an extension, please note that homework assignments and drafts must be handed to me in person;
- revise and resubmit a homework assignment (one token per revision/resubmission).

A great deal of student choice is built into the specifications grading system: you get to decide how much you wish to challenge yourself and how hard you want to work to demonstrate and apply skills throughout the course. You might decide that a C is sufficient for your goals—that choice is entirely appropriate and worthy of respect, and it may allow you to focus on other areas that you have placed as higher priorities this semester. If you strive to earn an A in the course and maximize your learning, you should know that you are taking on that work and challenge yourself, and you should make sure you are in a personal and academic situation to achieve that level of engagement. Please note that, during the semester, you may choose to move to a lower bundle, but you may not move to a higher bundle.

Final grades are final. I do not offer extra credit, and I do not bump or round up grades at the end of a semester. Grades do not reflect my personal feelings about students; instead, they solely reflect a student's demonstrated mastery of the concepts and skills introduced in class through completed work on assignments. Mastery and hard work do not necessarily mean the same thing.

Comparison of workload by bundle: The charts and information below provide the expectations for each bundle level by assignment type. All assignments are graded on a P/R scale: you either satisfactorily passed the requirements (P) or need to revise and resubmit (R).

Twitter assignments: All bundles require active Twitter participation throughout the semester, but Bundles A and B require interaction beyond the initial tweets on Twitter. The more active you are on Twitter beyond the minimum requirements, the more feedback you will be able to receive on your ideas.

Twitter assignments	C	B	A
Individual tweets	✔	✔	✔
Peer responses		✔	✔
Twitter networking			✔

Homework assignments: The first four homework assignments are designed to provide you with practice applying concepts learned in class to natural languages (natlangs), and the final homework assignment provides an opportunity to practice translation concepts in your own conlang. HW5 differs

from the other assignments in that each student participating will have their own individual due date, determined by their position in the relay.

Your work will be graded, indicating which data sets or entries are incorrect or inconsistent; if you do not pass a homework assignment, you must use a token to revise and resubmit it, and you have until the class period following the day I hand back the graded assignment. If you are absent the day I hand back the graded assignments, you need to contact me either in person or via email to find out if you need to revise.

HW assignments	C	B	A
HW1 WALS	✓	✓	✓
HW2 Nouns	✓	✓	✓
HW3 Verbs	✓	✓	✓
HW4 Lexical entries		✓	✓
HW5 Conlang relay			✓

Drafts and final paper: The draft and final paper guidelines differ, according to the bundle you select. The C-level guidelines are the foundation; the B-level guidelines are marked with one asterisk (e.g., Draft 1*), and the A-level guidelines with two asterisks (e.g., Draft 1**). Regardless of the bundle, all drafts/papers must meet these basic guidelines:

- typed in 11- or 12-point Times New Roman font (the only exception is for your examples that you provide in a non-Roman writing system, if you create or use one)
- single-spaced or 1.5-spaced
- formatted with bolded section headings, using the section headings provided for you by the draft guidelines
- written in comprehensible sentences

If you need to complete revisions for the draft to be a passing (P) grade, I will provide you with a document of substantive notes that you need to directly address in your revisions. However, if the basic guidelines listed above are not met in any given draft, your work will not be read through in its entirety; rather, you will receive an automatic revision grade without substantive notes. If you need to revise and resubmit a draft, you have one week from the date I hand back the graded drafts. If you are absent that day, you need to contact me to find out if you need to revise either in person or via email. You do not need to use a token to revise drafts.

You must pass each draft before moving on to the next one at the same bundle level; in other words, if you cannot pass Draft 1** guidelines before Draft 2** is due, you need to change your course goals to the appropriate bundle.

Draft requirements	C	B	A
Provide and describe conlang's features	✓	✓	✓
Introduce and discuss features, making connections		✓	✓
Integrate outside research to contextualize conlang's features			✓

Final paper: As each draft is graded, you will also receive notes for future revisions for the final paper; these notes must be addressed when you submit your final paper. You can pass a draft while still requiring revisions for the final paper. You must pass the final paper to maintain your selected bundle—you cannot revise the final paper.

Presentation: You will present facts about your conlang in a brief 2-4-minute presentation that incorporates either a PowerPoint or a large poster (the students in the back need to be able to see what you've written). The facts you present are up to you; the only restriction is that you must include at least two sentences in your conlang that you read aloud when you present. To get a passing grade, you must present for at least two full minutes and incorporate your two sentences that are read aloud. Your presentation will be cut off at four minutes exactly (I will hold up time cards), so be sure you effectively manage your time and prepare.

If you do not receive a passing (P) grade on the final paper and presentation, your course grade will drop down by one grade level. You are welcome to visit me during my office hours to go over any questions you might have as you work on your final paper and presentation.

Final project requirements	C	B	A
Final presentation	✓	✓	✓
Final paper that compiles three drafts with required revisions	✓	✓	✓
100-word glossary with at least 10 etymologies		✓	✓
Sixth section added with 100-word story written in conlang			✓

Academic integrity
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism.

- Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.
- Plagiarism is presenting words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.
- Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp.

Any problems with plagiarism or cheating in this course will result in an overall loss of the bundle in question. This policy applies to verbatim plagiarism, mosaic plagiarism, improper citations, missing quotation marks, and auto-plagiarism (using your own past work and turning it in for this course). All work must be original and written specifically for this course. Losing a bundle means losing the ability to work for a higher final grade in the course. Furthermore, use of excessive direct quotations (higher than 40% of your work) will result in an unsatisfactory grade on that assignment.

Withheld grades: Semester grades policy
The following is taken from SFASU's Policy Manual (2012), "Semester Grades Policy" (A-54).

> At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If

students register for the same course in future terms, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

For this course, a grade of WH must be requested by the student, negotiated between the student and professor, and approved by the professor *before* the final week of classes begins (i.e., before "dead week"). Not all requests will be granted; each request will be taken on a case-by-case basis. For the request to be granted, the student must have completed all work prior to the WH request and must be passing the course at the bundled level of a B or higher. If the WH is approved, all work for that WH must be completed by the end of the first week of the following academic semester.

Students with disabilities
To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as early as possible in the semester. ODS is located in the Human Services building, room 325; their number is 468-3004 (or 468-1004 for TDD). Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

For this course, if you are registered with ODS and have an accommodation and/or auxiliary aids, you need to speak with me during office hours about the accommodation/aids. Please do this as soon as possible during the semester.

Course schedule: January 22-May 17

Week		Topic	Reading	Due	Bundles
1/22-1/25	M	NO CLASSES			
	W	Intro: Twitter, conlangs	p. 1-23		
1/28-2/1	M	Conworld building			
	W	Culture and language			
2/4-2/8	M	Language families			
	W	Typology		HW1 WALS	C, B, A
2/11-2/15	M	IPA: Consonants	p. 25-40		
	W	IPA: Vowels	p. 40-52		
2/18-2/22	M	Syllable structure	p. 52-58		
	W	Stress and syllables	p. 66-72		
		Dothraki sound inventory	p. 89-96		
2/25-3/1	M	Grammar: Word order			
	W	Inflections/Morphemes		Draft 1: Intro/sounds	C, B*, A**
3/4-3/8	M	Inflections/Nouns	p. 97-135		
	W	Inflections/Verbs	p. 136-148	HW2 Nouns	C, B, A
3/11-3/15	M	Inflections/Verbs	p. 148-158		
	W	Morphological language type	p. 199-207	HW3 Verbs	C, B, A
3/18-3/22		SPRING BREAK			
3/25-3/29	M	Swadesh list/basic vocab	p. 178-197		
	W	Lexical categories			
4/1-4/5	M	Word-formation processes			
	W	Evolution		Draft 2: Grammar	C, B*, A**
4/8-4/12	M	Lexical entries		HW4 Lexical entries	B, A
	W	Writing systems	p. 209-235		
		Castithan writing	p. 247-258		
4/15-4/19	M	Fonts/Romanization			
	W	NO CLASSES			
4/22-4/26	M	Glossing conventions			
	W	Translation practices		Draft 3: Words/Writing	C, B*, A**
4/29-5/3	M	Conlang relay/Translation			
	W	Return to culture			
5/6-5/10	M	Fables/Fairytales			
	W	Course review		HW5 Conlang relay	A
5/15	W	1:00-3:00 p.m.		Final paper	C, B*, A**
				Presentation	C, B, A

Along with this schedule, you also have a schedule of Twitter assignments, which is provided on the following pages.

Course schedule: Twitter assignments

Twitter assignments are due before 3:00 p.m. CST on the date listed; you will be given time at the end of every class period to tweet, and you are expected to tweet even if you are absent. Because every prompt or question in these assignments is directly connected with the work you will be doing on your drafts, you are encouraged to use the content you tweet in your drafts. Furthermore, you may receive feedback on Twitter and need to consider that feedback as you work on your drafts/revisions.

Date		Twitter assignments
1/23	W	Provide one fact about yourself that relates to conlangs, conworlds, or linguistics.
1/28	M	Provide a basic description of your conworld.
1/30	W	Imagine you are in your conworld. What do you see around you?
2/4	M	Provide a basic description of your speakers.
2/6	W	Provide an interesting cultural fact about your conworld.
2/11	M	What language's sounds are you most fascinated by, and why?
2/13	W	What sounds will you include in your conlang?
2/15	F	Peer responses
2/18	M	What syllable structure does your conlang have? Provide three example syllables.
2/20	W	What stress pattern do you want for your conlang? Provide two multisyllabic examples.
2/22	F	Peer responses
2/25	M	What word order do you want for your conlang?
2/27	W	What is one inflectional morpheme you want to include in your conlang?
3/1	F	Peer responses
3/4	M	Provide a noun in your conlang, along with its inflections.
3/6	W	Provide a verb in your conlang, along with inflections.
3/8	F	Peer responses
3/11	M	Provide a short sentence (at least three morphemes) in your conlang and its translation.
3/13	W	What morphological type most closely fits your conlang? Provide an example.
3/15	F	Peer responses
3/25	M	Provide five basic words in your language with translations.
3/27	W	What is one way your conlang's words reflect your speakers and their world?
3/29	F	Peer responses
4/1	M	What methods will your conlang use to build new words? Provide an example of each.
4/3	W	Provide an example of language evolution in your conlang.
4/5	F	Peer responses
4/8	M	Provide one word along with a full dictionary-style definition.
4/10	W	Will your conlang have a writing system? If not, why not? If so, what kind?
4/12	F	Peer responses
4/15	M	What is a written or oral tradition your speakers have in their culture?
4/22	M	Provide a sentence in your conlang with its gloss and smooth translation.
4/24	W	Provide a sentence in your conlang with its gloss and smooth translation.
4/26	F	Peer responses
4/29	M	Provide a word in your conlang that does not have a direct translation into English; describe its meaning/use and its connection to your conculture.
5/1	W	Provide one specific aspect or feature of your conlang that reflects your conculture.
5/3	F	Peer responses
5/6	M	What is your speakers' most important story, fable, or text, and why?
5/8	W	Provide a one-sentence summary of that important story/fable/text in your conlang, along with a translation.
5/10	F	Peer responses
5/15	W	Peer responses: After your groupmates' presentations, mention them in a tweet with a comment or response to their work.

Course hashtag: Tag all your tweets for this class with our course hashtag #437conlangery. If they are not tagged, they will not be graded.

Professionalism policy: All Twitter interactions must be professional and polite. You do not have to agree with everything everyone says or be all sunshine and rainbows, but you do need to learn to express your disagreement or critiques professionally and politely. Any interactions that are unprofessional in any way may be grounds for failing the entire course.

If you (1) do not want your personal Twitter account to be held accountable for this course's professionalism policy or (2) have a private personal account that you do not want to take public, create a new public Twitter account specifically for this course, and make sure you use only that account for tweeting course-related content, being sure to keep your tweets professional.

Peer responses: Before the fourth week of classes, students aiming for Bundles A and B will be placed in "twoops." If that applies to you, every week, you need to respond to at least one tweet from that week from each of your groupmates with something specific, such as a suggestion, potential source of further inspiration, connection, or question. These replies are a form of peer review and allow you to draw inspiration from your fellow classmates' work and their processes. You are encouraged to respond to tweets outside your group, too, but you are not required to do so.

Twitter networking: Throughout the semester, students aiming for Bundle A must have five "points of contact" with non-SFA conlangers during specified date ranges. If that applies to you, for each one, you will need to select a different conlanger; for instance, if you retweet Doug Ball for the first one, you might direct a question to Christine Schreyer for the second one.

For your tweets to count toward your grade, you need to include the course hashtag and complete the assignment during the date range provided.

Range	Twitter assignments
1/23-2/6	Retweet a conlang-relevant tweet.
2/11-2/27	Direct a conlang-specific question to a conlanger, connecting the question to some specific aspect or feature of that conlanger's language.
3/4-3/27	Retweet a conlang-relevant tweet with a substantive comment specifying a connection to our course.
4/1-4/15	Mention a conlanger in a shout-out for a specific feature/aspect of their conlang, specifically a conlang that is not widely known.
4/22-5/8	Quote information from a conlanger with a connection to our course or your conlang, mentioning the conlanger in your tweet.