



Linguistics Modules - Module Information Sheet

2018/19

1. General information

Module Code	PLIN0036	Title	Linguistics of Sign Languages					Credits	15
Module Tutor	Kearsy Cormier			Contact	k.cormier@ucl.ac.uk				
Other tutor(s)	Robert Adam (r.adam@ucl.ac.uk)		Elizabeth Manrique (e.manrique@ucl.ac.uk)						
Module available at the following levels									
Level 4 UG		Level 5 UG	X	Level 6 UG	X	Level 7 UG	X	Level 7 PG	X
Module description									
This course introduces students to the linguistic study of signed languages, including sign language phonology, morphology, syntax and sociolinguistic variation, and why it is important for linguists to study signed languages. The bulk of the module will focus within the core areas of linguistics: phonology, morphology, lexicon, syntax, semantics/pragmatics, and discourse. Other areas covered will include notation/dictionaries, sociolinguistic variation and language contact. The module will end by considering current issues in sign language linguistics and the implications of sign languages for linguistic diversity and universals.									
Prerequisites	None								
Timetable	https://timetable.ucl.ac.uk/tt/moduleTimet.do?firstReq=Y&moduleId=PLIN0036								
Week by week summary									
1	Introduction to sign language and to the language experience of deaf people								
2	Phonetics & phonology								
3	Morphology								
4	Lexicon								
5	Notation & dictionaries								
6	Syntax								
7	Semantics, pragmatics & discourse								
8	Language contact & bilingualism								
9	Sociolinguistics & language change								
10	Issues in sign language linguistics								
Information for students on other programmes and Affiliate/intercollegiate students:									
If you want to take this module, you should select it on Portico as usual. Any general queries about taking the module can be addressed to Alexa Richardson: enquiries-linguistics@pals.ucl.ac.uk.									

2. Teaching

Teaching methods and tutorial/lab arrangements									
The module will be delivered with weekly one-hour lectures followed by one-hour backups. Backups will involve discussion of your reading and/or topic(s) linked to that week's lecture. Some backup sessions may involve examining sign language data. Backups will be held together for PLIN7309 and PLING151.									
Communication									
For general questions about the course (e.g. relating to course content, reading, backup exercises, assessment, etc.), students are encouraged to use the Moodle forums in the first instance. We will aim to answer questions on the Moodle forums within 48 hours. In all other matters, students should communicate via email. Replies may take 3-4 working days. If your query is urgent, please mark it as urgent in your subject heading.									
Workload									
Students are expected to attend at least 80% of all lectures and backups, and to keep up with all readings for the unit (backup discussions will be based on reading). Students should expect to spend approximately 70 hours on private									

reading over the term. Note that within UCL regulations, you could be barred from assessment if your attendance falls below 70%.

Core texts

See Moodle (weekly tabs) for readings required and recommended for each week. All readings should be available in the UCL library (via the main catalogue or UCL reading lists: <http://readinglists.ucl.ac.uk/modules/plin7309.html>) or if not will be made available for you on Moodle. Check with your tutor if any are not available. Note that not all readings are available online, so make sure you plan ahead.

Textbooks

Johnston, T. & Schembri, A. (2007). *Australian Sign Language (Auslan): An introduction to sign language linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Supplementary reading list

Brennan, M. (1992). An introduction to the visual world of BSL. In D. Brien (Ed.), *Dictionary of British Sign Language/English* (pp. 1-133). London: Faber & Faber.

Deuchar, M. (1983). Is British Sign Language an SVO language? In J. Kyle & B. Woll (Eds.), *Language in sign: An international perspective on sign language* (pp. 69-76). London: Croom Helm.

Deuchar, M. (1984). *British Sign Language*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Meier, R. P. (2002). Why different, why the same? Explaining effects and non-effects of modality upon linguistic structure in sign and speech. In R. P. Meier, K. Cormier & D. Quinto-Pozos (Eds.), *Modality and Structure in Signed and Spoken Languages* (pp. 1-25). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Neidle, C., Kegl, J., MacLaughlin, D., Bahan, B., & Lee, R. (2000). *The syntax of American Sign Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Orfanidou, E., Woll, B., & Morgan, G. (Eds.). (2015). *The Blackwell guide to research methods in sign language studies*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Sandler, W. (2006). Sign language: Overview. *Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics* (pp. 328-338). Oxford: Elsevier.

Sandler, W., & Lillo-Martin, D. (2006). *Sign language and linguistic universals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Sutton-Spence, R. & Woll, B. (1999). *The linguistics of British Sign Language: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Libraries and other resources

- UCL Library: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/>
- Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts: <http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/llba/advancedip> (Requires UCL login)
 - o Very useful resource! More powerful and targeted than Google, especially the Advance Search function.
- British Sign Language Corpus (<http://www.bslcorpusproject.org/data/>). Includes open access BSL personal narrative and lexical elicitation ('what's your sign?') data from 249 deaf signers around the UK. English translations are not yet available.
- BSL SignBank (<http://bslsignbank.ucl.ac.uk>). A dictionary of BSL based on signs from the BSL Corpus.
- ELAN software for sign language transcription and annotation:
 - <http://www.lat-mpi.eu/tools/elan/>
 - <http://www.und.nodak.edu/dept/linguistics/textbooks/UsingELAN.pdf>

Additional information

Late work and extenuating circumstances

Any requests for extensions to deadlines, or for extenuating circumstances to be taken into consideration by examiners, should be made by completing the relevant form. Instructions are available on the Moodle page for this module, under the Assessment tab. No extensions or special consideration can be given outside of this process, and there is a grading penalty for late submission of coursework. Information about this policy can be found on the course Moodle page, under the 'Assessment' tab.

Recording

Lectures for this module are recorded via the UCL Lecturecast system, and a link to recordings will be made available via the Moodle page for this module. Please note that recordings can fail for a number of reasons.

3. Assessment

Level 4/5/6 undergraduate		
Mode of assessment	Weight	Format
Exam (include duration)		
Coursework (include word count)	30% (1000 words)	Journal article report
(Add more if needed)	70% (2000 words)	Essay
(Add more if needed)		
<i>Other assessment information</i>	For the article report, choose one of 3 suggested journal articles, or choose one yourself. For the essay, choose one of 3 given topics.	

Level 7 postgraduate		
Mode of assessment	Weight	Format
Exam		
Coursework	30% (1000 words)	Journal article report
(Add more if needed)	70% (2000 words)	Essay
(Add more if needed)		
<i>Other assessment information</i>	For the article report, choose one of 3 suggested journal articles, or choose one yourself. For the essay, choose one of 3 given topics.	

4. Types of feedback

Types of feedback students on this module can expect to receive	This type of feedback is provided (X)
Generic tutor feedback	
Oral feedback is given to the whole class (eg this may be about coursework, an in-class or online task)	
Electronic feedback to the whole group (eg see oral feedback above)	X
Printed feedback to the whole group (eg answers to an exercise done in class, feedback relating to general performance on coursework or a task etc)	
Coverage of topics in class which have been raised by members of the class (eg in areas where students ask for clarification/elaboration, these topics are addressed in class)	X
Electronic responses to the whole group via the VLE or via email (eg sending replies to individual queries to the whole group)	X
<i>Other generic tutor feedback (please give details)</i>	
Automated feedback	
Tests / quizzes within VLE These are tests which do not count towards the module mark, but serve to inform students of how well they are understanding materials taught.	
Personal Response Systems used within class (eg to test that students understand a concept, to survey which topics students would like elaborated)	
<i>Other automated feedback (please give details)</i>	
Specific, targeted tutor feedback	
Oral responses within class (eg demonstrators talking to students in lab, stats and computing classes)	
Oral responses outside class (eg students are invited to telephone or meet with module staff with individual queries regarding topics taught)	
Electronic responses to queries from individual students are provided (as above)	X
Summative comments on coursework (eg handwritten feedback at the end of a written assessment which counts towards the module mark)	X
On-script comments in the body of individual summative coursework	

Indication of achievement against set marking criteria (eg for an individual essay or a lab report)	
Feedback using a standard feedback form (eg essay feedback form or lab marking forms)	X
Oral feedback on coursework talking to individual students about their coursework on the phone or in person, this could be summative points or specific comments on parts of the essay / lab report / project	X
Electronic feedback on coursework This could be via email or on a VLE (eg using Gradebook on Moodle)	X
<i>Other specific, targeted tutor feedback (please give details)</i>	
Feedback from people other than module staff	
Peer feedback: fellow students commenting on/marking each other's work, or working together on a task (eg group work providing students with feedback on their ideas/understanding)	
Self-feedback (eg students evaluating their own coursework, worksheet answers, etc)	
Feedback from seminar tutors Students may receive feedback on their understanding of topics/answers to queries/feedback on coursework from their tutor (eg poster, Research Project presentations etc)	
<i>Other feedback from those not teaching module (please give details)</i>	
Feedback related to examinations	
A mock examination is given to help students prepare for the final exam	
Marks for the previous year provided online , with a breakdown of marks for individual questions	
Samples of real student work , such as coursework, exam essays, and projects from previous students on the module.	
<i>Other exam-related feedback (please give details)</i>	

5. Specific transferable skills (categorised into skill areas)

Transferable students on this module can expect to develop	
Academic	
Learning Actively - Able to approach learning as an active agent, taking responsibility for the process and outcomes	X
Analysing Data - Able to filter and organise information to develop an argument and work toward a conclusion, applying numerical analysis where appropriate	
Thinking Critically - Able to consider claims made against the evidence available and to develop one's own view systematically	X
Using Sources - Able to locate and use appropriate books, journals, websites and other sources to gather relevant data	X
Solving Problems - Able to use systematic approaches to overcome difficulties in producing a desired outcome	
Managing Projects - Able to plan a coordinated set of tasks and enact over time to produce a substantial result	
Self-management	
Reflecting on Learning - Able to review dispassionately one's approaches to learning and the outcomes and progressively improve the process.	
Managing Time - Able to prioritise tasks and commitments to achieve optimum results in a designated timeframe	X
Being Creative / Innovative - Able to generate and apply original approaches to tasks and problems and produce improved outcomes	
Assessing Oneself - Able to identify one's own strengths, weaknesses, progress made and action needed to improve effectiveness	X
Being Independent - Able to work at own initiative with minimal supervision, taking responsibility for action and outcomes	X
Managing Resources - Able to allocate and conserve funds and other resources on a day to day basis and to support projects	X
Communication	
Writing - Able to communicate in textual forms (essays, reports, journal entries, web pages etc.) in an appropriate style with a clear narrative flow	X

Listening - Able to hear and appreciate the content, background and purpose of what someone else is communicating to you	X
Using Information Technology - Able to use digital technology for managing information and to mediate communication for learning and other purposes	X
Presenting - Able to speak to an audience, using visual aids as appropriate and respond to questions	
Communicating globally - Able to understand and manage factors affecting communication across cultures, including learning other languages	X
Planning and making decisions - Able to identify steps needed to work towards goals and communicate them, including means of monitoring progress	X
Working with others	
Working in teams - Able to co-operate with others, to contribute your strengths and learn from theirs with a common purpose	X
Negotiating - Able to respect the needs and interests of others when they differ from your own and to find common ground	X
Leading - Able to galvanise a team into cooperative action, to manage, guide or facilitate a group to maximise success	
Understanding others - Able to recognise the variety of ways in which people can think and approach tasks, adjusting your own to suit	
Assessing self and peers - Able to assess your own performance objectively and to give and receive constructive feedback with others	
Managing change - Able to adapt to changing circumstances and maintain focus on the group's declared goals	
Other transferable skills developed in this module	