



LING 4150 Forensic Linguistics

Fall Semester 2023

MW 11:50 a.m.–1:10 p.m.

Languages and Communication Building (LNCO) 2945

Instructor: Irena Grunche-Tine

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Office Hours: M/W 3 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Office Location: LNCO 2930

Required Materials: Available in the Canvas course

Course Description

Short version:

This course presents an overview of forensic linguistics with an emphasis on the areas where linguistics and the law intersect. The course focuses especially on the nature of legal language, language and disadvantage before the law, the expression of defendants' rights, linguistic methods applied to statutory interpretation, and the role of language in the legal process.

Long version:

This course presents an overview of forensic linguistics as defined by the International Association of Forensic and Legal Linguistics (www.iafl.org) as:

All areas where law and language intersect:

- **Language and Law:** legislation; comprehensibility of legal documents; analysis and interpretation of legal texts; legal genres; history of legal languages; legal discourse; multilingual matters in legal contexts; discourse analysis of legal resources; language and disadvantage before the law; language minorities and the legal system; language rights; power and the law; intercultural matters and mediation in legal contexts.
- **Language in the Legal Process:** interviews with vulnerable witnesses; communicative challenges of vulnerable witnesses; police interviews; investigative interviewing; language testing of asylum seekers; bilingual courtrooms and second-language issues; courtroom interpreting; courtroom interaction; courtroom translating; courtroom language; police language; prison language; language addressed to judge and jury in common and civil law courtrooms.
- **Language as Evidence:** authorship analysis and attribution; plagiarism; speaker identification and voice comparison; compiling corpora (statements, confessions, suicide notes); computational author identification or profiling; consumer product warnings; language as evidence in civil cases (trademark, contract disputes, defamation, product liability, deceptive trade practices, copyright infringement); dialectology and sociolinguistics; semantics; pragmatics and speech act analysis.

- **Research/Teaching:** practice and ethics of expert testimony; presentation of linguistic evidence; linguists as expert witnesses; teaching/testing of forensic linguistics/language and law; language education for law professionals. (From <https://www.iafl.org/forensic-linguistics/>)

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of the relationship between language and the law as measured by your performance on reading reflection papers, a midterm exam and a final exam,
- conduct primary and secondary research on an area of forensic linguistics as measured by your ability to write a high-quality research report,
- present the results of your forensic linguistics research as measured by your ability to create and deliver a classroom presentation.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The class revolves around topics and associated readings related to our experience in forensic linguistics. You will be expected to read the assigned readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss elements of the readings. The readings act as a springboard for lectures and class discussion.

University Policies

1. ***The Americans with Disabilities Act.*** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.
2. ***Addressing Sexual Misconduct.*** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).
3. ***University Safety Statement.*** The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency

alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Our classrooms provide opportunities to embrace diversity and promote equity. As educators, we commit to engaging all students in higher education. This commitment requires that we are willing to listen, learn and change; that our classrooms challenge assumptions; and that all members of our community are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe space for learning and growth. Respectful debate and civil disagreement are encouraged and expected; mocking, belittling, and bullying will not be tolerated.

Course Policies

Attendance & Punctuality: You are expected to attend class on time.

Participation: You are expected to participate in class discussions having read the assigned readings and completed the assigned reflection paper assignments ahead of time.

Assignments

- **Reading Reflection Papers** submitted by the posted due dates. You will summarize and critique your choice of one of the assigned readings for the week. (Note: The instructor will let you know in advance if there is a specific article you should review.) Criteria for what to include in your review are available on Canvas.
- **Midterm Examination.** This will be a take-home test given to you in Week 7 and due at the beginning of Week 9.
- **Court Observation.** You will conduct a minimum two-hour observation of a federal or state court and then submit a report of your observation by the beginning of Week 12. Details of this assignment are available on Canvas.
- **Final Presentation.** This will be a presentation on a topic covered in the syllabus and it will be done in the final week of classes.
- **Final Examination.** This will be a take-home test given to you on the last day of class and due by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 13.

Submitting Assignments

Each assignment and exam, except for the Final Exam, will be due on a Monday at 1:00 p.m. Students are welcome to discuss readings and exam questions with each other before individually completing and submitting assignments and exams. All submitted work must reflect each individual student's own thoughts, analysis, and writing. Cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Dean of Students.

All assignments and exams, unless otherwise announced, must be completed in Microsoft Word and uploaded to the designated area of Canvas by the due date. Do not submit assignments via email.

Late Assignments

Points will be deducted from assignments submitted after the due date. One point (1% of the course grade) will be deducted when an assignment is submitted after 1:00 p.m. on the due date, and an additional point will be deducted each subsequent day at 1:00 p.m. until the assignment has been submitted to the designated area of Canvas.

Late Midterm Exams will be treated in the same way as late assignments. The Final Exam, however, must be submitted before 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 13. Final Exams submitted after 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 13 will receive 0 points.

Grading

Reading Reflections Papers (5 papers x 6 pts a piece) = 30 points

Midterm Examination = 20 points

Court Observation Report = 20 points

Individual Presentation = 10 points

Final Examination = 20 points

TOTAL = 100 points

Letter	Scoring
A	100% - 94%
A-	93.9% - 90%
B+	89.9%–87%
B	86.9%–84%
B-	83.9% - 80%
C+	79.9%–77%
C	76.9%–74%
C-	73.9% - 70%
D+	69.9%–67%
D	66.9%–64%
D-	63.9% - 60%
E	59.9%–0%

Course Schedule

(see Canvas for daily reading assignments and other details)

<u>Week</u>	<u>Weekly Topics and Due Dates</u>
Week 1: Mon Aug 21 Wed Aug 23	Introduction to the class and to forensic linguistics
Week 2: Mon Aug 28 Wed Aug 30	Legal interpretation and corpus linguistics
Week 3: Mon Sep 4 Wed Sep 6	Criminal law – Pre-trial investigations – Profiling and identifying suspects <i>LABOR DAY (NO CLASSES)</i>
Week 4: Mon Sep 11 Wed Sep 13	Criminal law – Pre-trial investigations – Profiling and identifying suspects [Reading Reflection Paper 1 due]
Week 5: Mon Sep 18 Wed Sep 20	Criminal law – Arrests and police interviews – Understanding one’s rights
Week 6: Mon Sep 25 Wed Sep 27	Criminal law – Arrests and police interviews – Invoking one’s rights
Week 7: Mon Oct 2 Wed Oct 4	Criminal law – Arrests and police interviews – False confessions [Reading Reflection 2 due; Midterm Exam distributed]
Week 8: Mon Oct 9 Wed Oct 11	FALL BREAK <i>NO CLASSES</i> <i>NO CLASSES</i>
Week 9: Mon Oct 16 Wed Oct 18	Civil law – Trademark and name disputes [Midterm Exam due]
Week 10: Mon Oct 23 Wed Oct 25	Civil law – Contract disputes [Reading Reflection Paper 3 due]
Week 11: Mon Oct 30 Wed Nov 1	More on corpus linguistics and the law

Week 12: Mon Nov 6 Wed Nov 8	More on the analysis of deception and fraud
Week 13: Mon Nov 13 Wed Nov 15	More on forensic authorship analysis [Reading Reflection Paper 4 due]
Week 14: Mon Nov 20 Wed Nov 22	The language of the courtroom [Reading Reflection Paper 5 due]
Week 15: Mon Nov 27 Wed Nov 29	The forensic linguist
Week 16: Mon Dec 4 Wed Dec 6	Class presentations [Individual class presentations; Final Exam distributed]
Finals Week Wed Dec 13	Final Exam [Final Exam due by 3 p.m.]

Note: This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that the instructor may modify it with reasonable notice to you. She may also modify the Course Schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas under Announcements.