

Literature and Languages

Spring 2013

Foundations of Language

LIN912

Pre-requisites: none

Module convener: Dr Andrew Smith

Language is a remarkable phenomenon, unique to humans and quite different to other communication systems. This module will provide an introduction to the structures of language and the ways in which language works. You will gain an understanding of how language is structured on various levels, an awareness of the diversity of human language, and an appreciation of how language is represented in the mind, how it is acquired by children, and how it evolved in the first place.

You will explore the production and classification of speech sounds, and how they combine to form a system of sounds in a language; how words are formed, their structure and the rules governing alternations between forms; the structure of larger linguistic groupings like phrases and clauses; the nature of linguistic meaning and its inference in context.

No prior experience of linguistic analysis will be assumed. The course will be based on two lectures and one seminar per week.

Assessment

The module will be assessed by two written assignments, the second of which is a report describing an exotic language based on data you are given.

Set Text

Yule, George. (2010). *The Study of Language*. 4th edition. Cambridge University Press.