

ENG 542: ISSUES IN BIOLINGUISTICS

Linguistics Section • Department of English Studies • University of Cyprus

Spring Semester 2010: Tuesdays & Fridays, 10.30 – 12.00 @ Room M 105

www.punksinscience.org/kleanthes/courses/UCY10S/IBL/index.htm

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DESCRIPTION

From theoretical linguistics to biolinguistics might be an appropriate sub-title for this course, which will take us straight into the more biologically oriented area of cognitive science with a fair bit of philosophy of language, Cartesian philosophy and the mind/brain, and the like all the way up to the 21st century reappraisal of Darwin's evolutionary theory, evo–devo, and genetics — and in the midst of it all: language/grammar and generative approaches to it. The true focus of the course is thus an introduction to the challenge posed by interdisciplinarity: How can findings of theoretical linguistics be integrated with the rest of cognitive science — and indeed with biology, or the natural sciences at large? Although generative grammarians have always advocated a cognitive science/biolinguistics perspective, in practice few concrete attempts have been made at genuine collaboration.

ASSESSMENT

Regular attendance is strongly advised! Besides the class lectures, you will be graded as follows:

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| 1. abstract | <i>20% of the final grade</i> | March 26 or May 6 (by email) |
| 2A. presentation | <i>30% of the final grade</i> | May 9 (at GACL 4 workshop) |
| 2B. review | <i>30% of the final grade</i> | May 9 (instead of presentation) |
| 3. paper | <i>50% of the final grade</i> | May 24 by 12pm (by email) |
| 4. presence & active participation | in class throughout (± x grade points) | |

Don't forget: **This is a small class and if you miss one, it will be noticed.** If you miss more than one, notice will be taken more than once too, and if you're not around, you can't participate actively! As in previous semesters, **I take a tough stance on plagiarism**, so familiarize yourselves with the dangers and don't even try it. As for other aspects of evaluation: **The paper and an accompanying abstract are a must for everyone**, but you'll have the **choice of either giving a presentation** (details to be announced) or **write a critical review** of published work (details to be sorted with me). *You will all meet with me regularly throughout the semester to discuss your work and progress!*

READING

There's a textbook that every student should have a copy of because we'll be closely following its structure and contents. Copies have been ordered through Moufflon Bookshop (it should be here...).

Cedric Boeckx. 2010. *Language in Cognition: Uncovering Mental Structures and the Rules Behind Them*. Malden, Mass. & Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

You will also have to make an effort to read beyond the book! It has plenty of references, others will come up in class — and **the more you read, the better you'll be able to cope** with the course.