COURSES BY PÉTER SZŰCS

2025 FALL

- **Exploring the structure of English**
  This course offers an introduction to key aspects of the structure of the English language. Its primary aim is to broaden and deepen students' understanding of English by examining its historical development, morphological and syntactic properties, meaning/usage dimensions, and patterns of variation. While the focus is on the English language, we also adopt a broader perspective, situating the language within a wider cross-linguistic context (including comparisons with Hungarian). By the end of the course, students will be equipped with both the knowledge and the confidence necessary to engage in high-quality language teaching and to approach English with a scientifically informed perspective.

- **Introduction to linguistics**
  The aim of this course is to familiarize students with the nature and the scope of linguistic inquiries. We will focus on the following four core areas of linguistic investigation: morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. By completing the course, students will be able to understand and analyze some of the basic factors that govern language.

- **Syntax and morphology**
  This course gives a broad overview of a number of topics in syntax and morphology. Using a range of data, the primary goal is to enable students to take a scientific perspective on language, understand the logic of proper argumentation and to grasp some of the basic concepts in contemporary linguistics. Each topic is supplied with some recommended reading material, but the focus is going to be on classroom discussion, based on distributed handouts.

- **Targeting the noun phrase**
  This course aims to improve students' knowledge and understanding of English grammar, focusing noun phrases and related topics. While we take a primarily descriptive perspective, some basic insights of theoretical linguistics will also be provided. The course will enable students to be more confident in the use and understanding of noun-related constructions and overall grammar.

- **Trends in linguistic studies – with focus on morphology**
  This course provides students with a solid foundation in contemporary linguistic theory, with a particular emphasis on morphological research. Designed as an foundational course, it assumes only a basic familiarity with linguistics. Beginning with the general principles of scientific inquiry, the course gradually builds toward core concepts in linguistics, explores central issues in morphology, and culminates with an introduction to some current research trends in the field. The course's perspective is that of generative grammar in the broad sense, with a strong emphasis on cross-linguistic comparisons. By the end of the semester, students will not only have deepened their understanding of morphology but will also have developed a stronger scientific mindset and greater confidence in engaging with linguistic research.

OTHER COURSES

- **Syntax**
  Building on previous syntax courses, we set out to discover some of the data, concepts and approaches of modern syntactic research. We will survey the following areas: the syntax of infinitival constructions, the properties and analysis of constructions related to information structure, the nanosyntactic approach to morphosyntax, the internal structure of pronouns, ellipsis, and a brief overview of LFG, a non-Chomskyan generative framework. Completing this course will not only enable the students to have a grasp on advanced syntactic topics but it will also familiarize them with the process of linguistic argumentation.

- **Vocabulary building**
  The fundamental aim of the course is to consolidate and expand the students' vocabulary of English. A secondary goal is to introduce students to some fundamental concepts and issues in the linguistic theory related to the mental lexicon. Thus we are going to discover fields such as word-formation, lexical relations, figurative language, varieties of English and sociolinguistic variables. The contextualized presentation of the vocabulary items and the variety of practice methods will ensure the efficiency of learning.

- **Issues in biolinguistics, neurolinguistics and psycholinguistics**
  This course gives a broad overview of a number of topics pertaining to the philosophy of language, psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics. Using a range of data and a variety of theoretical approaches, the goal is to enable students to take a scientific perspective on how language relates to general cognitive processes, to engage in meaningful discussion about the language-mind-brain interface and also to understand the logic of proper scientific, rational argumentation underlying the relevant fields.

- **Hungarian from a linguistic perspective**
  This course will introduce students into the study of the Hungarian language. We will focus on issues that have a broader linguistic relevance and that play a central role in the grammar of Hungarian. The course is designed in a manner that makes every class self-contained: we work with toy grammars of Hungarian, we use examples with a limited set of Hungarian words that we learn together in the classroom, and we try to describe the system and build elementary rules together. Wherever relevant, we compare Hungarian to other languages, and we discuss what aspects of the language are easy for an average language learner and what aspects require more demanding.
  By the end of this course, students will have an understanding of the fundaments of Hungarian grammar, and they will also have learnt some Hungarian.

- **Challenging Grammar**
  This course complements other courses about the fundamentals of linguistics and linguistic thinking. The main goal is to present such linguistic phenomena to the students which are challenging either from the point of view of syntactic analysis or the meaning/interpretational side. Thus, the course will make students think about language, it will provide a deeper understanding of English grammar and it will also familiarize students with some of the indispensable concepts and approaches of linguistic research.

- **Targeting the Verb Phrase**
  This course aims to develop the students' knowledge of English grammar. It focuses on the verb phrase and related topics from a descriptive perspective. The following topics are to be covered throughout the semester: verb forms, finite and non-finite clauses, tense and aspect, modality, conditional and unreal clauses, passive structures and reported speech.

- **Advanced topics in language studies – Language and culture**
  This course is about aspects of language which interact with culture, in the broadest sense. Using a range of perspectives, the primary goal is to advance students' conceptual thinking, understanding of language, linguistics and proper argumentation. As a result, they should also be able to form an informed opinion of a number of public issues pertaining to language.

- **Grammar in Context**
  This course is designed to help students deepen their familiarity with various grammatical structures in English. The course will be different from traditional grammar classes in several ways. One, we will assume a deeper/wider perspective on linguistic structures, and see how underlying principles and the discourse contexts affects the use and acceptability of these. Two, language will be observed in a natural context, with the aim of authentic materials (TV shows, series, YouTube videos). Finally, although grammar is our main focus, the coverage of the course will extend to vocabulary building as well. Thus, the course is integrative in its approach, improving a variety of linguistic skills. This, besides being an intellectually stimulating and fun experience, will hopefully also result in a much better and deeper understanding of language in use.