

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

Subject Code	CBS1A01V
Subject Title	Fun with Language
Credit Value	3
Level	1
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	None (Students from CBS/ENGL are excluded from taking this subject)
Objectives	<p>Whatever else people do when they come together, they talk. We live in a world of language. The possession of language distinguishes humans from other animals. To understand our humanity, one must understand the nature of language that makes us human.</p> <p>This introductory subject provides an overview of human languages and their interesting aspects. Principles pertaining to language use will also be introduced by making use of everyday examples in the local context. The purposes are to raise consciousness about language use and to remind everyone of the ways to have fun with language. This subject is suitable for those who are interested in language and do not have any prior knowledge.</p>
Intended Learning Outcomes	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) make intelligent and informed judgments concerning aspects of language; b) communicate effectively in speech and writing about linguistic issues; c) develop the ability to discuss varieties of language without prejudice and appreciate the scientific aim of describing and understanding language; d) identify and propose preliminary solutions to language problems in Chinese (Cantonese and Putonghua) and English, as and where appropriate, in a scientific manner; e) have a sufficiently deep understanding of linguistics to apply it, where desirable, to other areas of study or to employment. f) apply logical thinking and deduction to problem solving in general.
Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Introduction</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>What is language?</u> b. <u>Animal communication vs. human language</u> c. <u>Innate language capacity in humans; language acquisition</u> 2. <u>Different Aspects of Language</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Sounds and sound patterns</u> b. <u>Word structure</u> c. <u>Sentence patterns</u> d. <u>Word and sentence meanings</u>

	<p>3. <u>Doing Things with Language</u></p> <p>a. <u>Speech acts</u></p> <p>b. <u>Conversational conventions</u></p> <p>4. <u>Language and Society</u></p> <p>a. <u>Language contact</u></p> <p>b. <u>Dialects and accents</u></p> <p>c. <u>Life and death of language</u></p> <p>d. <u>Writing and writing systems</u></p>																																														
<p>Teaching/Learning Methodology</p>	<p>Besides face-to-face lectures, discussions via Blackboard and web-based study materials will be used. Take-home assignments and in-class exercises are closely related to the use of language in the local context and thus students are strongly encouraged to apply the concepts and methodologies they learn to solve practical real-world linguistic problems.</p>																																														
<p>Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="534 797 1481 1341"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="6">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed</th> </tr> <tr> <th>a</th> <th>b</th> <th>c</th> <th>d</th> <th>e</th> <th>f</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. In-class exercises & small take-home assignments</td> <td>10 x 5%</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. project written report</td> <td>25%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. project presentation</td> <td>25%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100 %</td> <td colspan="6"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This subject intends to provide an overview of human languages and their interesting aspects. Topics covered vary from origin of language, language types, forms and varieties, language evolution and changes, functions of language, relationship between language and society, language processing and language acquisition etc. A number of exercises and small assignments, each with different focus and covering specific topics, will be given to students to help them grasp the basic concepts and to develop their abilities in handling language issues.</p> <p>Towards the end of the study period, students will be required to conduct a project on resolving a problem in language or to produce an essay containing in-depth discussion of a linguistic phenomenon. This final piece of work would require students to make use of the knowledge learnt in this subject and to demonstrate that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes.</p>	Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed						a	b	c	d	e	f	1. In-class exercises & small take-home assignments	10 x 5%	✓		✓		✓	✓	2. project written report	25%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3. project presentation	25%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Total	100 %						
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ assignments 	40 Hrs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reading 	30 Hrs.
	Total student study effort	109 Hrs.
Reading List and References	<p>Essential Reading: Fromkin, Victoria, Robert Rodman, and Nina Hyams. 2010. <i>An Introduction to Language (9th edition)</i>. Boston, Heinle.</p> <p>Selected Reference List: Crystal, D. (2010). <i>The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language</i> (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pinker, S. (1995). <i>The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language</i>. New York: Harper Perennial. Trask, R.L. (1997). <i>A Student's Dictionary of Language and Linguistics</i>. London: Arnold. Yule, G. (2010). <i>The Study of Language</i> (4th ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Jackendoff, Ray. 1994. <i>Patterns in the Mind: Language and Human Nature</i>. New York: Basic Books. Pinker, Steven. 1995. <i>The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language</i>. New York: HarperPerennial. The sci.lang FAQ (http://www.zompist.com/langfaq.html) 胡裕樹主編。1992。《現代漢語》。香港：三聯書店。 袁家樞等譯。1980。《語言論》。北京：商務印書館。 李新魁。1988。《香港方言與普通話》。香港：中華書局。</p>	

Teaching plan for “CBS1A01V Fun with Language”

Class 1	Introduction
Class 2	Animal Communication vs. Human Languages I; Language and Thoughts
Study Visit	Morning: Guandi Temple and Cheung Chau Afternoon: Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum
Class 3	The Sounds of Languages I
Class 4	The Sounds of Languages II
Class 5	Language Typology: Word Order & Language Universals
Class 6	Sentence Patterns I
Class 7	Sentence Patterns II
Study Visit	Morning: Forest of Steles Museum and Small Wild Goose Pagoda Afternoon: Xi'an Museum and Xi'an City Wall
Class 8	Semantics
Class 9	Pragmatics
Study Visit	Zhongnan Mountain and Louguan tai
Class 10	Language Acquisition I
Class 11	Language Acquisition II
Study Visit	Big Wild Goose Pagoda, Ci En Temple, Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses Museum
Class 12	Language Variation
Class 13	Language Contact